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THE MARTYRS OF HELL

By LOLA RIDGE.

Not your martyrs anointed of heaven
The ages are red where they trod;
But the hunted—the world's bitter leaven,
Who smote at your imbecile God:
A being to pander and fawn to;
To propitiate, flatter, and dread
As a thing that your souls are in pawn to,
A dealer that barter the dead;
Who gloats with a vengeance unsated,
And sells the lost souls in His snares
Who were trapped in the lusts He created—
For incense and masses and prayers.
They are crushed in the coils of your halters:
'Twere well, by the creeds ye have nursed,
To send up a cry from your altars,
A mass for the martyrs accursed.
Just a passionate prayer for reprieval.
For the Brotherhood not understood—
For the heroes who died for the evil.
Believing the evil was good.
Here's a toast that has never been given;
Listen, thralls of the Book and the Bell:
To the souls of the martyrs unshriven,
The bondmen who dared to rebel —
To the Breakers, the Bold, the Despoilers,
Who dreamed of a world overthrown;
They who died for the millions of toilers,
Few — fronting the nations alone;
To the Outlawed of men and the Branded,

Whether hated or hating they fell,
I pledge the devoted, red-handed,
Unfaltering heroes of hell!

OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS

IT is fashionable among a certain element of the intellectual base to insist that, after all, progress is but a fiction. We are today no nearer the solution of Life's problems—so runs their legend — than were the ancients. The Greek philosophers were no less profound than their modern colleagues; we think the same thoughts, live essentially the same lives, and just as ineffectively question the ever mute Sphinx.

'Tis a fallacy of the poor in faith, the weak in sight and hope. We have not, indeed, solved all the problems that have vexed mankind since the dawn of civilization. But life is a tangled skein whose threads must be unwound laboriously, one by one.

Aeons have rolled into the ocean of eternity ere man first struck the mental flint that discovered to him the very presence of Life's Sphinx. The scales of superstition and ignorance fell one by one from his sight, till at last he dimly beheld the tangled skein. And as the light grew, and the waters of time clarified man's vision, his unsteady hand groped among the threads, tugging here and there, seeking the beginning or end, ever seeking in darkness. In vain he pleaded for aid, divine or human; in vain he implored. Yet not all in vain: his cries strengthened his voice, and his tears purified his sight. The agony of suffering was slowly piercing the tangle, and the enigma was imperceptibly dissolving in the tears of his great need. And lo! suddenly he beheld a beautiful maiden, and in her hand he saw firmly grasped the loose end of life's woof.

Nor could the liberating Ariadne altogether unravel the tangled skein. But the modern Theseus is following her through the winding paths of the labyrinth, out into the open road of final solution.

And the maiden's name was Mechanical Invention.

THE smug and self-satisfied are but too apt to forget that they live in houses built on sand. They follow the usual course of their lives, make profits out of the widows and orphans, and proclaim with pious uncton that we live in the best of all worlds.

But once in a while something happens, a link in the social chain is broken, and the whole rotten fabric begins to totter and threatens to fall. Then the good people wake up and wonder what has disturbed the even tenor of their lives. One after another they miss their customary pleasures, and grow angry at the deprivation. Soon they realize their very existence imperiled, and consternation reigns in the camp of respectable stupidity.

What happened? 'Tis the slave becoming unruly. The greedy workingman again making impertinent demands. Only the workingman. But the whole elaborate structure is trembling and its very foundations seem to be sinking. The recent strike of the French postal and telegraph employees has shaken respectable society to its very core. It is, indeed, terrible to realize

that our leisure and comforts, nay, our very necessities, depend upon the good will of mere labor. Why, if labor were so minded it could suddenly stop all the wheels of civilization; not a stroke of work could be done; we might even be degraded to the pangs of vulgar hunger.

Why, it is terrible.

IT is probably the first time in the history of modern labor that the tremendous power of solidaric effort has been so conclusively demonstrated. Never before have we witnessed such a convincing object lesson as to the efficacy of direct action and the invincible strength of co-operation. The General Strike of the workmen of but one department of industry was sufficient to put a great country absolutely at the mercy of the strikers. What, then, would happen if the producers of several or of all industrial departments were to assert their rights to life, backing such assertion by a general national and international strike?

Mighty Labor, the world is yours, if you but will it.

IT is to be hoped that the organized labor of this country will soon grow out of its diapers and attain manhood.

If the United Mine Workers intend to follow the usual ridiculous tactics of "preparing" for a strike by protracted dilly-dallying with the operators, it were the part of wisdom to capitulate at once. Much time, energy, and suffering would thus be obviated. But if the miners really want to make their demands heard and respected, they cannot afford to waste time in baby-acting, conferring and carrying on long palavers with the mine owners. The latter merely want to prepare themselves—with scabs and millions of tons of mined coal.

The Achilles of capitalism has but one vulnerable spot: the pocket. To force the exploiters to make concessions, the producers must use drastic methods, acting quickly, energetically, effectively. Instead of preparing the enemy by interminable and profitless discussions and parleys, he should be treated as an enemy. Nor should the interests of labor be entrusted to weak, incompetent, or treacherous leaders. Direct action is the motto. Solidaric cooperation of rank and file, the means. If you strike, strike hard. The method of sudden and complete cessation of work, a determined stand, and no compromise, will alone ensure speedy victory.

WE learn from recent statistics that crime in New York keeps ahead of the city's growth. The same holds true of the county and State. While population has increased four per cent., the rise in crime has grown ten per cent. The overcrowded condition of penitentiaries and prisons in New York State is not peculiar to the later. Information from many other States indicates that similar conditions also prevail there. The prison officials, almost without exception, attribute the increase of crime to "two circumstances: the hard times and the influx of aliens."

The two circumstances are, in reality, but different aspects of one and the same cause. For, indeed, the influx of aliens is but an indication of the hard times prevalent in European countries. Hard times in America and increased immigration from abroad merely mean that the masses everywhere, in all countries, are suffering want and poverty. Yet these masses work and produce. Why are they in want? What becomes of the products they create in such abundance?

The answer to this question will at the same time explain the prevalence of crime. Monopoly and privilege, aided by government, have divorced the producers from the machinery of production. Helpless without the latter, labor is forced to sell its power for whatever pittance the lords of the land and the captains of industry are willing to give. Deprived of the full equivalent of their work, the masses cannot buy back their products. Hence "overproduction," in the midst of nameless misery, hard times, and "superfluous" labor power.

What is the jobless man to do? Unemployment has become the chief problem of our civilization. It fills our prisons, builds new ones and overcrowds them, and still crime is on the increase, and hard times grow harder. And all the while the masters of life wax more insolent and reckless, turning the earth into a furnace of misery and suffering, and the State continues to torture and murder the children of its own iniquity.

But the hour of atonement is approaching. The ghost will not down.

It would seem that in our Christian civilization the difference between right and wrong is one of terminology only. Thus the hungry man who takes a loaf of bread is a thief; but he who steals four-fifths of your product is called a manufacturer. To appropriate a dollar that does not belong to you is robbery; to grab a million acres is business. If you kill in sudden passion, it is murder. If you electrocute your enemy with deliberate preparation, it is justice.

When a wrong is right is decided, in all orderly communities, by the government. That is a body composed of the most learned, incorruptible, and unselfish social elements. The decisions of government are based on a book of classified right and wrong. This sacred book is called the Law. The Law is steadily enlarged by the addition of new laws, abolishing former laws. Laws may contradict and nullify each other, but the Law is unchangeable. Laws come and go, but the Law remains intact. The Law is always the Right. It cannot err. It knows no distinction of sex or color. It kills alike male and female, white and black. It knows neither pity nor mercy. Only Duty: the duty of upholding the Existing, the Accepted Fact, the Law and its Makers.

Great is the Law. It transcends right and wrong. Tis the Law.

ANARCHISM AND MALTHUS

By C. L. JAMES.

JOHN STUART MILL, who knew little about the difference between Anarchism and Socialism, but sympathized with both, as far as he understood them, has left on record the sentiment that the Malthusian theory, long considered the fatal objection to Socialism, might prove the strongest argument in its favor. Being much of that opinion myself, I have long desired Malthus,

a writer of whom everybody talks and whom nobody reads, to be more generally understood. His life and character strike me as very irrelevant to his reasonings; but since prejudice always insists on getting them in, and generally tells lies about them, here is the truth. Daniel Malthus was the friend and executor of Rousseau. It need not be said, he was a radical. He was also an author to whom some literary merit is attributed; but he always wrote anonymously. His social grade was that of an English "gentleman," living on an income derived from some sort of stock. That he was pretty rich, and that he met with financial reverses, may be inferred from the facts that he passed through the University of Cambridge as a student in the most expensive class; but his son, Thomas Robert Malthus, the economist, was sent there on a cheaper plan; at which time we also find that the family, though increased, had moved into a smaller house than that where he was born. Here, during the winter of 1797, the father and son had some arguments about the merits of Political Justice, a book recently published by William Godwin (husband of Mary Wollstonecraft, and father-in-law of Percy Bysshe Shelley). Godwin was an Anarchist of that early unscientific type which preceded Marx and Proudhon. Like his French contemporary, Condorcet, he vaguely entertained those ideas to which Saint Simon, about twenty-four years later, gave precision. That prodigious increase of wealth-producing arts which marked the last quarter of the eighteenth century was transforming military into industrial organization. The trades of the soldier, the legislator, the judge, the jailer, the sovereign, and the hangman, would soon be discarded as useless by a generation whom commerce was bringing to understand human solidarity. Commerce itself, by its effect in cheapening the means of life, would be obliged to make way for Communism. The Golden Age, the Paradisiacal State, was not only before, instead of behind us—it was at the door. The courageous optimism, which could think so when the greatest of popular revolutions was, after fearful bloodshed, in the act of transformation into a conquering military despotism, does credit to Godwin's heart, and his imagination; and the elder Malthus was delighted. But the younger pointed out difficulties. In Godwin's Utopia, life was to be maintained so easily that the "struggle for existence" (a phrase used by Malthus) would have ceased and population, naturally, would increase fast. For things had by no means come to that in the United States, where the settlers were still killing Indians and working negro slaves; where they had fought seven years against a tax, and were in the act of domestic rebellion for cheap whiskey. Yet even in the United States living was so easy, that population, aside from immigration, doubled every twenty-five years. No such rate of increase could possibly continue. As this is a point on which ignorant critics of Malthus continually blunder, we will try to get it clear. The ignorant critics speak about destructive effects of this increase as if it were equally remote with the earth's falling into the sun, or the extinction of the sun itself. But anyone who can use a table of logarithms may convince himself in five minutes that the progeny of one Adam and Eve, doubling every twenty-five years, would pack like oranges in a box, not after geologic aeons, but in a few centuries. Of course no such result is possible. Yet it would evidently happen but that something hinders. What does? Increase of the death rate. This comes in various forms, all horrible to contemplate. Densely peopled countries, India, China, Egypt, Ireland, are mostly very liable to famine. Those happier in this respect have had dire experience that crowding and pestilence go together. Even where these destroying angels spare to smite for the sins of the people, the mortality of cities, notwithstanding all their opulence and knowledge, is invariably higher than that of the poorer, ruder country. But above all other things, war has been not only a check on overpopulation, but a proof that even very ignorant people know a check is needed. That they may not starve, cannibals fight and cut each other. Shepherds, indeed, cannot starve while their flocks are fed; for the flocks increase faster than the men.* But the flocks must have food as well as the men; and, because they increase faster, they reach the limit beyond which they cannot be supported, sooner. Then the shepherd-peoples also resort to war. They sweep across three continents under the black banner of Mahomet, or, perhaps, they are defeated, and almost annihilated, in a battle like that of Aqua Sextiae, by the richer and more civilized neighbors whose territories they have invaded. Either way, the problem of over-population is solved for some time, so far as they are concerned with it. In agricultural countries, war is less popular. But when a government able to suppress it through a wide region arises, famine takes its place, unless the birth-rate be reduced at the same time. A great object-lesson of the kind had recently been seen in India. The first of her recorded famines on a large scale occurred under Anrungebe,— the first sovereign who really ruled all India. And observe, this could be attributed to nothing but cessation of war, which, when famine threatened, had previously offered a more hopeful way of dying; for, except cessation of war, there had been no important change in the customs of India to account for so terrible a change in the results. The alternative of war or famine is likewise so generally understood that, though backward agricultural peoples are less pugnacious than the cattle-breeders, war was everywhere, always, the principal fact in their history, till it ended, as war normally does, in extensive conquests like those of the Great Moguls. In the highest state of civilization, where there are important manufactures and extensive commerce, there is less war than anywhere else. But even so typically modern a country as England had been at war fifty years in the preceding hundred, and if we clear our minds of cant about "rights," "international law," "the balance of power," and other diplomatic flim-flam, we shall find that the true object of a modern war is a commercial advantage; that nations get ready to fight for a

commercial advantage when the pressure of increasing population makes the advantage sufficiently necessary. That increase of the population is the fundamental cause of war,—"*teterrima causa belli*"—as it always was. Now, Mr. Godwin is witness that war is the cause of government, slavery, serfdom, laws, punishments, un-equal distribution of wealth. If, therefore, his Utopia, which is to banish all such things, were established, it could not last; and we should soon have them all back unless a way be found of checking propagation. But, in truth, too much is conceded in supposing his Utopia established at all. Since men were cannibals, some slow approaches to it have, indeed, been made. The tortoise of industry may be tiring out the hares of lust and plunder; but Mr. Godwin himself shows us that they are a long way ahead of her still; and to imagine them laid asleep by his Arcadian rhetoric is to show ignorance of human nature. All which led Malthus Jr. to another series of reflections. What he called Positive Checks on population—those which increase the death-rate—are inevitable, if propagation goes on at American speed, which, under Utopian conditions, it should exceed. But, generally speaking, it does not go on so fast. There are, then, Checks on population, of a different sort—Preventive—those which diminish the birth-rate. It is evident that there are many checks of this kind—among them vicious practices. But on these, Malthus, a clergyman, had no mercy. He classed them as Positive Checks,— appearing to hold, rather dogmatically, that they restrain increase as much by raising the death-rate as by lowering the birth-rate; nor did he withhold this censure from the least injurious among them, such as those afterwards proposed by the Malthusian Socialist, Robert Owen.[2] The only check, which Malthus would admit to be truly Preventive, or Prudential, is continence. This check is, certainly, far from inefficacious. The lowest savages, who graze like apes, know, indeed, nothing about it. But in the stage of hunting nomadism, a young man is not allowed to marry till the cruel rites of barbarian confirmation have proved him fit for his father's trade of war. If he cannot pass, he is good for nothing but a priest; and where priests do not fight (as sometimes they do) the general rule is that they are celibates. Among cattle-raising nomads, polygamy prevails; and men who are not smart enough to acquire stock can get no wives. In the agricultural state, and still more the commercial, it is mere commonplace that to marry without the means of supporting a family is imprudent. Thus, from the lowest conditions of man to the highest, we find continence increasing uniformly with civilization, except as superstition sometimes intervenes to cause a factitious increase, which, we may suspect, of being rather apparent than real. In that increasing celibacy whose causes are economic, much, no doubt, is loose; but much is genuine. It requires some force of character, some foresight, some judgment, to do what Jacob did for Rachel. Yet this is what many young men do in all social states, from the nomadic shepherds upwards, but increasingly. If the qualities they show be among those which make success in the battle of life, as they very clearly are, has not Godwin's materialistic philosophy confounded effect with cause? Is it not this improvement of habits which has made increase in wealth and knowledge? If the latter tails, as we see it has so far failed, to "*substitute the industrial régime for the military,*" is not that because the improvement of habits is by no means as general as are some of its superficial effects? A beggar may be made more comfortable in London than a king in Darkest Africa; but there is no making a fool anything else than a fool, or saving him from being pushed to the worst place among competitors wherever he may happen to live. From these discussions sprang the famous essay of Malthus which was published in 1798. The prodigious sensation which it immediately produced caused five editions to follow during the author's life. The second, and most important, appeared in 1803. This book, with expansions, revisions, replies to critics,— in short, the subject of this book, variously handled—is coextensive with Malthus' literary activity. (He had, indeed, written an earlier pamphlet called *The Crisis*, in defense of Pitt's administration; but, by his father's advice, he kept it out of print.) The first edition of the Essay described its topic as the Principle of Population viewed with relation to the Future Improvement of Mankind. The motive of a critique on Godwin's *Political Justice* was still in Malthus' mind. He had also another reason for introducing his study in this way. Professing to be a Christian, and having recently taken holy orders, he knew well enough that he would be attacked on the ground of impugning the Divine goodness; and that no one would be so savage as his fellow-priests for this and other reasons. He, therefore, must have his theory about the future improvement of mankind, which, if not so rose-colored as Godwin's, must be sufficient for the pious purpose of vindicating the ways of God to man. Malthus professes, accordingly, to desire the future improvement of mankind as much as Godwin can desire it.' The only question between them is about practicable means. Having argued as above that Godwin's Utopia, if set up, would fall; and, moreover, that it could not be set up, without a radical change in regard to an important relation which Godwin had forgotten to mention; Malthus proceeds to contend that his law of population, though it may seem hard to rebellious flesh, is, in truth, the law of human progress from the brute state of the lowest savage upwards. As distinctly as his most illustrious pupil, Darwin, does Malthus perceive that "*the struggle for existence*" is what makes us progressively better fitted to exist." It is also what makes us more worthy. Terrible as have been the struggles, it is to them we owe it that we are not picking worms out of rotten trees, or ranging the sea-shore for carrion. It is because our ancestors were cannibals that they have, everywhere except in the most inaccessible jungles and islands, exterminated those weaker brothers of theirs who could be content with wild fruits or dead fish. That, as here, so at every later step in the struggle, whether between nations or individuals, the world

has been made better by the success of the strongest, bravest, and shrewdest, can scarcely, indeed, be disputed, but it will not be adequately understood without our realizing that the improvement has been moral, no less than physical and intellectual. On a general view, it seems evident enough that the vices—sloth, cowardice, conceit, spite, envy, vanity, ill-temper, gluttony, lasciviousness,—are decided handicaps in the struggle, which must be, and are, wearing down, through the ill-success of those in whom they principally prevail. Of two only—avarice and falsehood—can it be pretended that they help anyone to outdo competitors. But too is allowed in granting that they generally do. They may help an individual on a pinch. But compare nations, classes, sects, parties, whose lives are longer than those of individuals—nay, compare, not two but many, individuals—and it will be clear enough that neither piggishness nor rascality pays; that cunning, though an advantage in itself, is no such advantage as a reputation for veracity; that though generosity is often imprudent, it is not prudent to lack generosity. And thus the cynical saying that prudence is the only virtue God rewards may be transfigured into this reverent sentiment that all the virtues can be deduced from the promises of one who will grant a sure reward to even prudence. Thus the actual causes of past improvement guide us to the process of future. The general direction is that in which Godwin can see no obstacles. War, slavery, punishments, in equalities of fortune and station, and the passions which cause them, are very bad things, to be avoided by everyman, for himself, no less than for the sake of humanity. The man, who will not fight if he can help it, is wiser than the bully. But it does not do to forget that the best-tempered men will fight for life and those things without which life is worthless; that it is the direction of advantage in such necessary strife which has displaced those who thought fighting a sufficient end by those who very reluctantly adopt it as a means; that the one great error, of imprudence in giving life before providing material to support life, will continue as long as committed, to make the struggle for existence inevitable. In the second edition of the Essay, all this elaborate Theodice disappears. [3] So do many rhetorical passages, chief among them the famous one about "Nature's mighty feast," which all the world quotes, and generally garbles. There was a reason for this change. Malthus was now a famous man. Attacks on his doctrines from the side of superstition had come, of course: but they did not amount to as much as he expected; and he had ceased to care for them.[4] By Socialists, if the term at this early date be proper, his work had been rather well received than otherwise—Godwin particularly using expressions which implied that he had learned by it; as, from his life and associations we should infer, he easily might. The day when demolishing Malthus appeared a part of every radical's appointed task did not come till Ricardo (died 1823) had drawn certain inferences from the theory of Malthus, about which more anon. Of more interest to Malthus' scientific mind were criticisms on statistical and other positive grounds. to keep strictly within facts. Even the title was altered accordingly. His subject is declared to be, not the future improvement, but the past history and present prospects of mankind. In the substance of his reasoning there was one modification which his opponents naturally worked for all it was worth. In the edition of 1798 he had described the positive checks on population as "Vice and Misery," the preventive as based upon "the fear of them." A criticism, in which he admitted force, was that he had said nothing about hope. Ambition, the desire of improving one's condition, is certainly a chief cause of continence, and this is something more than fear of vice and misery for oneself or his posterity. Acknowledging this, the tone of theorizing is certainly more optimistic than before. This change in Malthus' language, rather than his meaning, together with the confession that he should have been more explicit at first, is the basis of the criticism often made by Coleridge and others, that the theory is a truism from which nothing can be inferred. That it is no truism, but an extremely complicated equation, may certainly be inferred from the facility with which critics misunderstand it, the multiplicity of ways in which they manage to do that, and the oft-recurring argument ad verccundum—it is very strange that Menu, Confucius, Moses, Solon, Cato, even the ascetic Roman Catholic publicists, should have held up increasing the species as a sacred duty; and that discovering the direful results of doing so should have been reserved for Mal- thus![5] Of the four subsequent editions, nothing need be said here, except that they become progressively more statistical, comprehensive, and bold, until even friendly critics thought he would have been clearer for taking less pains to be clear.

(To be continued.)

[1] This is one of Henry George's arguments to show that population may increase indefinitely—an argument utterly idiotic as the next sentence shows.

[2] If he were wrong in this, he at least had something to say. Under the Roman Empire celibacy, of course, as a rule, improves, which, even under the Republic, had become a common way of avoiding the pecuniary pressure, increased to immense proportions. This saved the Roman peace from ending in famine, like the Mogul. But it did not avert dissolution of the Empire. Malthus would have been quite in the ordinary way of thinking if he attributed Roman misfortunes to Roman vice; and maintained that a chaste celibacy might have had better results.

[3] George says that the Malthusian theory did not originally involve the idea of progress. Referred even to the later editions of Malthus, this is incorrect; but for the first it is ridiculous, and shows at once that George never read what Malthus wrote in 1798.

[4] Those acquainted with Malthus in after life say he was one of the gentlest and most amiable of men; which we are also told about Ricardo and Adam Smith. But there are letters of his tutor extant, from which it appears that he had been a most pugnacious boy; and a phrenologist, reading his works with knowledge of their occasions, would find ground on every page for saying: "Firmness and combativeness, Large!" Malthus said that the charges of discouraging benevolence, and commending infanticide and abortion, etc., etc., gave him pain, when they were honest misunderstandings; but, considered as polemical tricks, he had learned to despise them, and got over answering.

[5] George, whose "refutation of Malthus" is useful because it gives in epitome those of every one else, with exquisite consistency, suggests both these views; sometimes wondering ironically that this great truth never was discovered before; sometimes intimating that it does not amount to a great truth, because everybody knows all the truth there is in it. and governs himself accordingly. That Malthus actually stated all the truth there is in this, would never be suspected by a reader of George.