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Black and Red Feminism

From 19th Century France

Texts by Jeanne Deroin and André Léo

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Now, who suffers most from the present crisis, the dearness of food and the cessation of labour? The woman, particularly the isolated woman whom the new regime takes no more care of than the old.

Who has least to gain—immediately, at any rate—from the success of the Revolution? Again, the woman. It is man's enfranchisement, not hers, that they are fighting for.

And when, moved by the sublime impulse which attracts us all now to liberty, she yet offers her aid to this forgetful Republic, she is thrust back with contemptuous insolence!

From one point of view the history of France since '89 could well be written as the *History of the Inconsequences of the Revolutionary Party*. The woman question would take up the longest chapter, and in it we should read how this Party managed to hand over to the enemy half of its troops, who asked no more than to be allowed to march and fight in its ranks.

ANDRE LEO.

Translation from Raymond Postgate, *REVOLUTION FROM 1789 TO 1906*, 1921.

(from "la Sociale," No. 39, May 8th, 1871—18 Floreal, Year 79.)

• • • However, we must argue a little. Can the revolution be made without women? For eighty years they have been trying to do so and have not yet succeeded.

The first revolution gave women the title of citizens but not the rights. It left them deprived of liberty and equality.

Repulsed by the Revolution, women fell back upon Catholicism and under its influence made up that great reactionary force, imbued with the spirit of the Past, which strangles each Revolution at its birth.

When will it be realized that this has gone on long enough? When will the intelligents of republicans be able to comprehend their principles and serve their own interests?

They demand that the women should no longer be under the yoke of the priest, and they are displeased when women are freethinkers. They are willing woman should not act against them, but reject her assistance.

Why?

I can tell you.

Because many republicans—I do not mean the true republicans—have only dethroned Emperor and God to take their place themselves.

And naturally to satisfy this desire they must have subjects, male or female. Woman must no longer obey the priest; but she must not be independent either, any more than before. She must be neutral and passive, under the man's direction: she has only changed her confessor.

Well, this arrangement has no chance.

On this point God has an immense advantage over a man. He remains unknown: that is why he can be the ideal.

Again. Religion condemns reason and forbids science. That is simple, radical and clear: a circle which one does not come out of, once one is in, except by breaking it.

But the Revolution, the new spirit, exists only by the exercise of reason and liberty and the search for truth and justice in all things. This is not a circle, but a straight line prolonged to infinity.

Where can this way end? What limit can be placed to the advance of this spirit or that? Who has the right to place it?

The Revolution means—since we must take its side—liberty and responsibility for every human being, with common rights as their only limit and without any privilege of race or sex.

Women will not abandon their old faith except to embrace the new with enthusiasm. They will not and cannot be neutral. The choice lies between their hostility and their devotion. Some, no doubt, despising obstacles, strong and convinced will persist in spite of their humiliations. But such natures are rare. Most human beings are impressed chiefly by facts and discouraged by injustice.

SOCIALIST DEMOCRATS

OF BOTH SEXES

FOR

THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

In the name of God and the solidarity which links all the member of the great human family;

We affirm that women have the same right as men to liberty, equality and fraternity.

Liberty, for woman as for man, is the right and the power to develop and exercise freely and harmoniously all his physical, intellectual and moral faculties, without any limit but the respect of the rights of each. All liberties are solidary; one cannot undermine any without damaging the others.

Equality is, for man as for woman, he right and power to take part in all the acts of social life, to the degree that one's faculties and aptitudes allow.

To split humanity into two unequal parts, to refuse to woman here rights to liberty and equality, is to undermine principle and sanction the right of the strongest and of privilege.

Fraternity is the practice and liberty and equality for all, male and female; it is the respect of the rights of all the members of the great human family, the dedication of all to each and each to all.

To refuse to woman her rights of liberty and equality is to perpetuate antagonism, to mistake the respect for human dignity and the principles of fraternity and solidarity which are the basis of universal harmony.

Humanity is male and female; the law formulated by man alone cannot satisfy the needs of humanity.

The law of God, the rights of the people and of woman are misunderstood; the woman, the child, the laborer are oppressed and exploited by incomplete, oppressive and foolish laws, to the profit of the strongest and of those privileged by birth or fortune.

We affirm, in the name of the holy law of solidarity, that no one has the right to be completely free and happy as long as there is one single being that is oppressed and suffering.

We affirm that social reform cannot be accomplished without the assistance of woman, of half of humanity. And just as the political emancipation of the proletarian is the first step towards his physical emancipation, just so the political emancipation of woman is the first step towards the complete liberation of all the oppressed.

That is why we appeal to all women and to all men of heart and intelligence, to all those (male and female) who have the courage of their opinions, respect for principles, and who never recoil from practice, to come to our aid, to enter into the real path of social reform, opening the gates of the city to the last of the pariahs, to woman, without whom we cannot accomplish the work of our social redemption.

1°. The adherents of the association are all women and all men who accept our declaration of principles, and who commit themselves to assist, to the degree enabled by their faculties and aptitudes, in the propagation, teaching and realization of these principles.

2°. The members of the association are either apostles, propagators or subscribers.

3°. Three commissioners direct the labors of the association: an apostolic commission, a commission of propaganda, and a commission of administration.

4°. The apostolic commission is composed of men and women who dedicate themselves to develop, teach and sustain by speech, in all the public meetings, and by their writings, the principles contained in our declaration.

5°. The propaganda commission is composed of all the men and women who have for mission to collect the memberships, and to establish a center of correspondence in all the arrondissements of Paris and all the departments.

6°. The administrative commission is composed of twelve members elected by the subscribers; it is occupied with all the details of administration; a regulation will fix its allocations.

7°. The subscriptions will have for aim: to transform our monthly journal into a weekly journal, the publication of writings approved by the apostolic Commission, the payment of travel expenses and of all the expenditures necessary for the propagation of principles.

For the members of the Apostolic Commission,

JEANNE DEROIN.	JEAN MACÉ.
HENRIETTE, ARTISTE.	DELBROUCK.
ANNETTE LAMY.	EUGÈNE STOURM.

The members of the Propaganda Commission send the lists of membership and subscription the first of each month to the seat of the Apostolic Commission, at the office of the journal *l'Opinion des femmes*, 29, grande rue verte.

Translation by SHAWN P. WILBUR

Prayer-charter of the non-liberties of the English Church, and edited with care by James I., so well fitted to regulate the affairs of heaven and earth. This book contains the principal Romish prayers, the Credo, Gloria in Excelsis; only you find the word "Roman" excerpted before "Church." Finally the Presbyterian must dress in a black gown. The Episcopalians alone refuse to lend their pulpits; and neither the waves of the ocean or the channel can efface the primitive baptism of the Tiber. They have just built a church (they reject the word chapel) in the Rue Bayard. Many continue to worship still in the "chapel" for *convenience*' sake. Motives purely divine are ever rare on our poor earth!

To conclude: the American reads first the newspapers at his banker's, or at the Grand Hotel, also a French democratic paper, — generally the "Opinion Nationale," — and some current literature (the women more we fancy of the latter. — *Trans*). An American newspaper in Paris is talked of.

And now your friendly chronicler, O citizens of the Union! asks pardon if, in his summary of your characteristics, he has not always leaned to the flattering side. He is not ignorant that you do not like scrutiny, and that you have harsh words for him who does not find everything with and among you *the best in the best possible country*. You accept with modesty hymns of praise and acknowledgments of your superiority to old Europe; pray remember here you are described in miniature. Your hospitality, audacity, your liberty, enterprise, and immense works are left behind you at home. What you *do* bring to Paris, above all, are the pretensions of your infant aristocracy; and although your chronicler has met among you warm hearts and Cultivated minds who appreciate *all* countries, he cannot find in your idlers the great motive-power, of your race. The time is not yet, according to his opinion, to salute you as the realization of our dogmas still discussed, and as the only bold and arch-inventors of "Go ahead!"

Anonymous translation, 1868.

American society. Be a Jew, above all if you be a Baron; be a Mahomedan; no matter how small a part you contribute to the diplomatic corps, you will be well received. Choose one of the thousand sects which meander in and out of Protestantism; there are some better than others, but there will be no objection to your choice. Only have an *idol*; otherwise you will pass" for a person, not dangerous precisely (for they are afraid of nothing in America), but immoral or *inconvenient*, which is worse. This exaction, if truly American, is characteristic of the race the world over. It belongs to the habit of human thought to confound the word with the thing, and to hold true believers destitute of ideal, who, distrustful of themselves, but with faith in the unknown, do not worship infallibly what they have themselves originated. It is now seven or eight years since the American Colony founded its religion at Paris, by the erection of a chapel in the Rue de Berri. Before that they met in the Rue de la Paix. The funds necessary were furnished by gifts and subscriptions; for Americans are fervent enough in paying for their religious services and ask naught of the State. They say the dread, among certain French Catholics, of a separation of Church and State astound them. "Ha! what," they say, "are these the people who are so ready to accuse *us* of looking only at the main chance, — 'the almighty dollar,' — and yet are capable of allowing *their* priests to starve, and their faith to perish, sooner than put their hands in their pockets?" And at this they shake their heads with a scandalized air, expressing great doubts as to the future of the Romish Faith and Church. This is thought by Protestants who are firm enough in *their* convictions to carry their gifts to an unaccountable number of francs. The American Chapel has a wide nave, supported by columns of red marble, at the end of which is a pulpit; this space is filled with benches, the rent of which is the principal source of revenue. There is a notice in each pew to this effect. A choir of fresh, young voices alternate with the prayers. Dr. Eldridge, the minister, is a Presbyterian, but uses the English liturgy. Here is the reason for this singular fact so little in accordance with the ecclesiastical custom, of a country where sects flourish like weeds. Americans in Paris are of every denomination, and the idea of, building separate chapels is out of the question. There was but one way, — to unite, through mutual concessions. Before this enterprise of making the genius of controversy submit to a plain necessity, would not the most audacious of the Old World draw back? The American does not hesitate, makes the attempt, and, what is more, generally succeeds. Sects in America live in tolerable harmony; they divide into families, and exchange pulpits. Two sects alone live outside this fraternal union, — the Episcopalians and the Unitarians, — that is to say, the disciples of the *definite* and *indefinite* dogma; the one built of solid blocks of granite, the other of mists and shadows. Unitarians were not taken into account in the building of the American Chapel, and thought to join the rich, numerous, and influential Episcopalians. Faithful to their traditions, the Episcopalian makes them no more welcome than the Romish Church. It was the Presbyterian, who must accept the Book of Common

LETTER TO THE ASSOCIATIONS
ON
THE ORGANIZATION OF CREDIT
BY
JEANNE DEROIN
(1851)

The delegates of the association and the members of the commission of the Union have been condemned for having acted with a political aim.

That judgment has just been confirmed by the denial of our appeal.

I impose silence on my conscience and do not come to protest that condemnation, but to draw out from it whatever can be useful to the cause of the workers, before which personal feelings must be silent and individual interests must step aside.

In the things that have been done, in that condemnation even, there is still a lesson and an encouragement.

That it what it is important to demonstrate.

The accusation, by relying on legal conventions and on the political and socialist antecedents of the accused, and by attributing to them a political aim, has proved that it was impossible to incriminate by itself the solidarization of the associations.

The constitution guarantees the right of association, and the associations cannot be legally prohibited from associating together in order to exchange their products, to provide credit to one another with the aim of obtaining an assured clientele and instruments of labor, and in order to come to the aid of children, the elderly, the sick and the infirm.

That aim, so brotherly and so eminently industrious and peaceful, is not in any way illegal, it is not hostile to individuals, but only to the principles of exploitation and servitude.

The adversaries that it encounters, the obstacles that it gives rise to, testify loudly to its importance and its power to improve the condition of the workers.

The workers must then persevere, but in a manner which avoids the obstacles that have stopped us, and which will convince our adversaries that it is really a question of a work of conciliation.

The obstacles rise principally from the suspension of the right of assembly, from the shackles placed on the freedom of the press, and from the opposition of those who imagine that the extinction of exploitation threatens their fortune and the future of the children.

Finally, the most grievous of all the obstacles is the hesitation to enter seriously on the path of practice.

The suspension of the right of assembly and the shackles placed on the freedom of the press permits no discussion.

But what is most important is not to *discuss*, to formulate theories or plans of organization, but to *act*, to put into practice the simplest and most certain means for arriving progressively and peacefully at the goal.

The means that is indicated by the necessities of the present situation, and which has long been proposed in various forms by the most enlightened economists of our era is *the organization of mutual credit*. It is enough to consider the motives and the aim of that work, in order to deduce the means of giving the first impetus; then the organization will develop and perfect itself progressively by the modifications that will be made to it, step by step, by practice, according to the indications given by experience.

These motives will emerge from the moral and material situation of the associations.

The associations have been formed with the aim of liberating the workers from exploitation and patronage.

The majority have based their act of association on the most elevated principles of democracy and socialism; but the difficulties of the present situation, the habits of the past and the lack of cohesion in this great industrial movement, are obstacles, constantly reborn, to the prosperity of the associations, and alienate from it a great number of workers who dread having to suffer greatly without attaining the desired result.

And, in fact, when some laborers want to associate, it is often very difficult for them, with the modest contribution of each, to constitute a social capital sufficient for the acquisition of the instruments of labor, and the raw materials, necessary for the exercise of their profession.

They loan at interest or take on credit, and they are obliged to impose the harshest privations, and to deduct from the common fund only the minimum of what they normally earn with the bosses, and sometimes they are even reduced to half or a quarter of a day's or week's pay, in order to pay for the materials that they have acquired through borrowing.

It is necessary for them to procure, from day to day, what is necessary for the maintenance of this material, and the acquisition of raw materials, that they can only buy at retail, at higher prices, and nearly always, in this case, of inferior quality.

The need for money often obliges them to hurry, which takes perfection from labor.

That penalty prevents them from admitting as associates some skillful and intelligent laborers, but who cannot contribute their share of the social capital.

Sometimes also—and this is the most grievous thing that can happen—these same pecuniary difficulties lead them to admit, with an

Halles Centrales; or to the Brewery, if you want a crowd. If you crave a national dish, go to Rue Godot-de-Maury and eat “buckwheats” at Charley's. Though they like French cooking, certain habits are always dear to Americans. Potatoes and rice take very much the place of bread at their tables; and when some of their family at home send them a barrel of flour from the West, the house-keeper sets at once to work, and they soon taste again most excellent pies, cake, and pudding, with all the affection that the sensations of the stomach can add to the emotions of the soul.

As we are on the subject of house-keeping (though since the days of Louis XIV. the French find little poetry in it), with the American it is an essential element in daily life. We call attention to the protests which they have raised this year in the Colony against the high prices in Paris, and, above all, against Parisian servants; the *two* questions are *one* and enough to complain of. We should have little faith in the scandal, had we not been told that families have been fairly driven from their own firesides, by the manners and exactions of our servants, to seek a so-called place “to board.” We wait with patience for our transatlantic friends to solve this, for us, abstruse problem, which comes nearer and nearer to a forced solution, that we are the worst served of people, and that the dishonesty of our cooks and gaudins should call down on our Babylon the anathemas of the biblical heavens! Perhaps the evil may arise from the opinion, generally given out in Paris, that Americans value things only according to their dearness. If any one asks you the best shop for this or that, think of the dearest, and answer accordingly; and if you recommend a poor professor to them, warn him not to ask a reasonable price if he wants a situation. Good Americans! do not the Parisians know your fancies and serve you accordingly? In the poor little tradesman who wheels his wagon on the street, there is the embryo philosopher or diplomat. His eye has taken your measure from head to foot, and his price is adjusted to your taste and fortune; your nationality, your pretensions, your manners, and character are fathomed at a glance; a cosmopolitan, he will entice you into his net, by pity, persuasion, effrontery, or the fear of his jests, or the need of his esteem. He will do for a sou loyally, what the tradesman in black, with whom you deal, will do for francs, but with more banality.

Whatever may be the inconveniences of the French capital, it is a well-known proverb, “When good Americans die, they come to life again in Paris.” Can there be anything more touching, energetic, or flattering to us? But, joking aside, coming from a religious people, it seems to us terribly heretical. What, Paris for Paradise as the abode of the just! Confusion for beatitudes! Theatres for contemplations! Operas for canticles of the redeemed! O ye Americans of Paris! what has become of your Christian spirit?

Do not let us go too far on the authority of this proverb (we think it certainly *far enough*.— *Trans.*); for if you have the misfortune not to belong to any of the religious sects duly constituted in this age so full of faiths, you must take care not to reveal the fact in any of the salons of

negation, — the impossibility to do amiss, — true chastity has liberty for her sister. The American mothers are very much scandalized at many other things in Paris, for they seem to have the firm opinion, that, in marriage-union, no other third party, except a child, ought to be admitted. Young girls, on their side, are both astonished and indignant at the strict watch to which French girls submit. In spite of themselves, they have thought it best to make some concessions on this point, and allow themselves to be attended by a maid, when they go out without their parents. Strange pledge of security! and made to give a very sad idea of our manners. But, O young ladies!—you, born in a land where the monarchical influences have never germinated, — why do you submit to these shameful systems of “espionage”? Would it not be better for you to give us the example of your disdain for them, and teach our ladies the manners of genuine liberty? Paris, after all, is not a forest, and a look of disdain, or a shrug of the shoulders, silence itself, might fain suffice to make a too artistic idler or impertinent *Gandin*, ashamed of his enterprise.

Is it then true that, for want of other tyranny, the regard for opinion, whatever it may be, in America, is a burden? I am assured that for this temporary submission, young American girls, once in America again, and having therefore regained their lost liberty, do not care to return again to Paris. At home, they come and go at their own sweet will, meet young men familiarly, flirt with them with great furor, and walk with them without rendering account to any one of time or actions, being *absolute* at home. Even at Paris, in this latter particular, they only save appearances, for the more the child grows, the more she proclaims her independence, extends it, fosters it. The elder sister assumes the right of a mother over a younger, and, as the young star rises in the zenith, the mother fades away and sets. Another extreme without doubt. But this people, a new stem in a new soil, grows with the vigor of youth and a future; here is its originality and its strength.

Whilst young American girls are little pleased with a life in Paris, it is not so with the young men. Why this difference? For many reasons apropos to their nature and peculiar nationality and humanity in general. Remember, that in the United States, if we regard the nature of man and woman in the same manner as with us, the deductions drawn from this idea are utterly different. Here, weakness is delivered up to force; there . . . the contrary, or nearly so. In America, seduction is, in fact, a *crime*, and punished and despised; in France, an amiable *vice*, and made a boast of. Now, whatever the relations of a people to their institutions, we cannot deny the force of example, of occasion, and those ferments in human nature, in its infusorial state, always ready to generate, under favorable auspices, their unhealthy creations. In fine, art, the opera, the ballet . . . Paris offers so many beauties and pleasures!

If you wish to dine with the dollars of the Union, go to Peters', but the pleasure will cost you dear; or to Phillipe's, where the more economical and knowing drink the best wine and eat the produce of the

eye to a sufficient social contribution, a loan, either from men who have not understood the principle of fraternal solidarity which should be the basis of the associations, or from the secret agents of the reaction who introduce themselves there in order to make trouble, to stir up suspicion, discouragement, and thus bring about disorganization within and discredit without.

Finally, credit is a great cause of embarrassment, and sometimes of considerable losses, as it has been issued to date among the associations.

The credits are inscribed on the registers, and are often paid off only at long intervals, or in fractions so negligible, that a real harm is done to the lenders.

And the debtors do not always find, in this mode of credit, all the help that is necessary for them; they often cannot obtain sufficient advances and an extension sufficient to give to their labors all the expansion necessary to put them at their ease; and sometimes the period of the payments arrives during the times, which every new establishment almost always encounters, when they still have to struggle arduously.

Sometimes also false associations—which usurp that title, either to serve the designs of the enemies of association or in view of some particular interest, and which are made up of a personnel very dubious with regard to principles—deplete the other associations by credits obtained in the name of fraternity, in order to continue exploitation under the aegis of the egalitarian level, and thus splash back on the principles of association the discredit which surrounds them.

Thus, if, on the one hand, credit is necessary to advance to the workers who want to associate the instruments of labor that they need, and in order to come to the aid of associations already formed;

On the other hand, credit, such as it is practiced now, is often a cause of ruin and discredit for the lenders and debtors.

But, if we consider that the majority of these credits have been made against products or labors of the lenders, we will recognize that they could be acquitted more easily by the products and labors of the borrowers, who very often cannot meet their obligations, because they cannot find distribution for their products, or because they lack labor.

If the creditors' association, instead of inscribing the credits on their registers, accepted, in payment of their products or labors, some bills of credit, having a numeric denomination in order to facilitate exchanges, but payable only in the labor or product of the debtors, they could employ these bills to procure the objects of their habitual consumption, which they would be obliged to pay for with the cash that they have on hand, if that credit remained inscribed on their books.

By this act they would assure their custom to the debtors.

By supposing that the products or labors of the debtors are not objects of habitual consumption for the lenders, the placing in circulation of these bills of circulation will facilitate for them the means

of exchanging them against products or labors which will be most useful to them.

And if a great number of associations of various professions put mutual credit into practice, the debtors would experience no difficulty in paying the debt, being able to immediately exchange the bills that they would receive in payment for their labors or products, for the products or labors that they need, until the time when they could be paid off.

The circulation of these bills of credit assuring to each of the associations adhering to the mutual credit the business of all the other subscribing associations.

In order to form a mutual credit bureau, it is not necessary to form public gatherings. All that is required, to give the first impetus, is a few associations of various professions which have understood all the present advantages and all the possible results of this mode of credit.

The bills of credit should have a character of unity, and come from a common center, in order to give the mutual credit a more powerful guarantee, and to avoid making an emission of bills surpassing the resources of the credit issued.

But when two or three associations of different professions resolve to establish mutual credit, and take the initiative to establish a credit bureau, no discussion will be necessary to lead the other associations: those who do not want to take part will not receive the bills, and they will await the results.

There will be nothing to discuss; it is not a question of a theory, but of a practical fact, and practical means are the best means of propaganda; the least *fait accompli* often has more value than an axiom.

The associations that wish to subscribe at the founding of the Bureau of Mutual Credit, will make a loan to that bureau, by subscribing an emission of bills of credit which cannot surpass the amount of consumption that they can make of the products and labors of the other adherent associations for three or six months.

That loan must be based on consumption, because it is an advance made in proportion to the consumptive needs of the lenders.

That loan can cause them no inconvenience, it does not put them in a deficit and it assures them the business of the other subscribing associations.

And each of those associations, by subscribing thus a loan in bills of credit equal to their consumption from the other adherent associations, acquires, by that act, the business of those associations and the right of credit.

And every association that has need of credit must first subscribe an emission of bills of credit equal to its consumptive needs from the other the other adherent associations.

The total credits can not surpass the total value of the consumption of the subscribing associations among themselves.

their positions. "I shall not allow my wife to work" is an expression of masculine pride, which really expresses dependence. Save an emancipation party formed under the inspiration of Miss Stanton, American women certainly accept their position with fortitude, like spoiled children, and, full as worldly as other nationalities, do not seek to exceed them in aught but luxury, of which they are passionately fond. In spite of the charming liberty which young people have, to make themselves seen and known, we fear very much that pure love, free from the luxury of an establishment and all the finery of a wedding outfit has not yet gained in any land letters of naturalization.

American manners, we all know, give to young girls the most entire liberty. Having the entire charge of their virtue and interests, being taught the dangers of life, they are capable of braving them; but we must concede this task is easy for them, thanks to the respect with which men surround them. A young *lady* can travel from one end of the Union to the other, without fear of dishonorable pursuit, or even the least rudeness. An American girl is easily distinguished from a French one by her general appearance: her dress is more degagée. They were the first to adopt masculine hats, worn far on the forehead, leaving exposed large masses of hair, by which in truth, we cannot, more than any one else of our time, verify, either race or nationality. They cheerfully wear their skirts short and of fanciful cut, loaded down with ornaments of jet, and appear in high boots, while "suivez moi" of all colors float from their necks. If they are devoid of those timid graces which we expect to see in our young ladies, they have, by way of compensation — liberty. Utterly self-reliant, they walk as daughters of a conquering race, who have made themselves a place under the sun; and if this trait sometimes extends — as the slander, says — to arrogance, you know an excess of this obtains more or less everywhere. This self-possession, assurance, if you will, is owing to the admirable conduct of their men. Why should they not go straight onward when they know their path is clear wherever they deign to put their tiny feet?

However, things have so little equilibrium in our worlds (were they new), that, in virtue of the above system, it is the man whose reputation and safety is in peril through the unpunishable onslaught of a weakness too carefully protected. How many soft looks attract him! till he allows himself to be charmed by these delicious smiles, and, forgetting himself, in such an attractive intercourse, wakes to an expiation or marriage sanctioned by all the tribunals in the Union, if need be. But, in truth, to the eyes of Americans Paris must seem a world upside-down. They and others complain very much of the little security and respect yielded to women among us; of the intrigues of the French, and the indulgence of opinion for this "hanging matter." They are quite right. The most certain mark of dignity in a people is the respect they have for their own nature, according to the conditions of their life. Love is license, wherever liberty is dead; that is to say, respect for one's self; and despite the terror of those who bring virtue to this plight, to this

everything came from Europe, — religion, literature, laws, science, arts, souvenirs, and even the blood in their veins.

An immense number of books and papers are published in the United States; yet the foundation of every good library is English and French classics, and all those who in this rising civilization belong to the world of letters have their eyes turned to the East. In truth, London and Paris are to the New World what Athens and Rome were to us in the times of the Renaissance. It may be said, without invidious comparison, that however dazzling may be the progress of the New World, however humiliating our backslidings, we still believe in the immortal vitality of all peoples, and we do not believe in the preconceived plan of History, nor its eternal plagiarisms. Individual right has severed at a blow the theocratic, aristocratic, and monarchical circle, where the old Clio drove her chariot and the two extremes severed find their sap flow on ad infinitum.

As for the families settled in Paris for the education of their children, music and French are their first object. The education of an American girl appears to be very complex; that of the boys much less so, for, in general, having his own fortune to make, he throws himself at once into the commercial arena. But the young ladies, whether they are destined to be teachers or that they study merely for mental improvement, follow studies which we regard as rather pedantic; they are the women who study Latin, Algebra, or Geometry, and even undertake without fear the sciences. Look at them and be reassured! The care of their toilettes has not suffered, and the accusation of brusqueness, so often made against learned women, falls to the ground before the display of their luxurious frivolity. See if the waves of silk, gauze, and lace, which surround them, are in less profusion, and if the details of their dresses are less scientifically feminine or the ensemble less fresh. It would be more difficult to discover if the interior erudition was of the same force, and what amount of genuine capacity the samples displayed conceal; but one fact is undisputed, in an inverse sense, the superiority of the women to the men in the New World. While, usually, at the age of fourteen, the young American boy ceases to study, and enters the office of his father or other merchant, the young girl pursues her studies, improves herself by teaching, and, married or single, has many hours for study.

All those who know American domestic life speak of reading as one of the principal occupations. We see them crowd to literary and scientific lectures, but we reproach them for not asserting this superiority in matters of dignity as well as independence. The theory which makes of Woman a queen in chains, governing by grace and charm, is in full sway the other side of the ocean. The first pride and duty of an American husband is to insure *idleness* for his wife and sufficient money for her toilette. Many women in America are occupied in teaching, or in the service of the State, etc., chiefly unmarried, — a not uncommon thing in New England, which vies with the Old World in excess of female population. When they marry, they resign at once

Thus, for example, if only three associations began the foundation of that Bureau of Mutual Credit, each of them could subscribe to an emission of bills of credit which would surpass the value of the consumption that it could make of the labor and products of the two other associations, during three or six months.

And that credit will be accorded with preference to that one of the three which, its labors or products not being sufficient to the needs of consumption of the two others, should give more expansion to its operations.

These bills of credit that it will employ in payment for the labor and products of the two other associations, will give it the ability to dispose of the cash that would otherwise have been necessary for that payment.

The consumption that each subscribing association can make of the labor and products of the other adherent associations will increase in proportion to the number of associations of various professions that subscribe to the mutual credit.

And the emission of the bills of credit being in proportion to the consumption of those associations among themselves, the use of the cash will become less and less necessary to them for the greatest part of the objects of habitual consumption.

They could employ, to acquire the instruments of labor and raw materials that they could not obtain from the subscribing associations, the cash that they will receive in payment for the products or labor made for non-adherents.

And the clientele of each of the associations being composed of all the other associations and becoming more and more numerous, the credits would be employed to give the greatest possible expansion to production, by facilitating for those associations whose products and labors do not suffice to the consumer needs of all the others, the means of procuring the necessary instruments of labor and raw material, and to increase the number of their associates, so they can always satisfy the demands of the bearers of the bills of credit.

The subscription of each new association will simultaneously increase production and consumption, and by adding a new loan, will increasingly facilitate the mutual exchange of labor and products, by giving a greater extension to the circulation of the bills of credit.

When associations of the same profession subscribe to the mutual credit, they will become committed to not competing for the price of their labors and products, so that the price will be the same for objects of the same quality; because the associations have to struggle against competition, it would be obliged to reduce more and more the part of remuneration of its associates, or no longer find an outlet for its products.

The price of the labors or products of the association subscribed to the mutual credit should no longer be inferior to that of foreign commerce, because competition from without would be so much more difficult to sustain in this regard, that the bosses, manufacturers and merchants in possession of the cash which accumulates in their hands

the instruments of labor and allows them to loan them according to their will to the laborers, and when they have made a ruinous competition among themselves, they can reduce more and more the price of hand-labor, in order not to pay the costs of war.

Competition is contrary to the principles that are the basis of association; it is not liberty for all, but only for those who can withstand it; it is always the right of the strongest; it is not peace and union, but war at the expense of the workers.

The associations belonging to the mutual credit will have no interest in decreasing the price of hand-work, but, on the contrary, to maintain it as high as possible, in order to bring about the association of a great number of intelligent and industrious workers.

The emulation of the workers will have for its motive the desire to do honor to the bills of credit; being simultaneously lenders and creditors, by the fact of the circulation of these bills, they will all have an equal interest in the success of the operations of the mutual credit bureau. A register must always be open to the claims of the consumers belonging to the mutual credit; the poor quality of the products or labors exchanged against the bills of credit must be a cause of expulsion from the membership of the producers.

The associations of the same profession will also find in that that bureau a means of withstanding competition from without; with the help of the credit that they receive from it, they could buy in bulk and at a common cost the instruments of labor and the raw materials that they don't find in the subscribing associations.

Finally, the foundation of a bureau of mutual credit will be a means of conciliation between the all the classes of society, since all those who would want to testify to their sympathies for the workers could make an advance to labor by depositing, in cash, the quantity of consumption that they want to make with the associations belonging to the mutual credit, and by accepting in exchange the bills of credit refundable in products or labors of the associations belonging to the mutual credit.

That advance made to labor will facilitate the acquisition of the instruments of labor and raw materials cannot be obtained from the adherent associations.

The credits in cash will preferably be granted to the associations that cannot procure, except with cash, the instruments of labor and the raw materials necessary to the exercise of their profession.

And as these associations will also subscribe a loan in bills of credit equal to the value of their consumption from the other associations, they can take part, in that same proportion, in the circulation of the bills of credit, without having to fear that it could hinder their operations.

The associations belonging to the mutual credit having a real interest in giving the greater extension possible to the circulation of the bills of credit, when the resources of the bureau of credit permit it, they will be especially occupied with founding associations of laborers in

has its scoriæ." Such is the social and economical fact to which the disdainful smile and contemptuous word have reference. Where does aristocracy not exist?

Assuredly not among Americans in Paris Is the word tabooed. If you wish a presentation at the embassy, or the entrée to their salons, let the wealth come from Petroleum or Shoddy, do not forget your ancestry. One of my literary friends, a man honorably known, was much surprised, on reading his letter of introduction, to find himself less recommended for himself than for his grandfather, — a local distinction which signifies as little as possible in the United States. This is not a singular instance; it arises from a law, more human than national, which consists in prizing what we do not possess. Americans, a people without ancestry, and almost always parvenus, hold naturally in great esteem the distinction of race. Some boast a descent from the first founders of the colonies and get laughed at. Virginia, colonized by the cavalier partisans of the Stuarts, is the State where they make the greatest pretensions to nobility; and the sacramental phrase for all Virginians is, "belonging to the first families;" a malicious joker acids, "No one ever saw the *second*." As for titles, if you have one, do not drop it; once made known, it will never be forgotten. A title will bring you sweet smiles, and make a decided difference in your favor when weighing your merits, if you have any wish to contract a marriage with these transatlantic beauties with their Californian wealth. These young republicans find that even a ducal coronet suits à merveille their blonde hair, and "Madame la Comtesse;" a most charming complement to their elegant toilettes. There have been a number of alliances between the France of other days and the America of to-day; and the world is talking of such a marriage at this moment, which, to the great scandal of the *Colony*, was to be arranged after the French custom of intermediate parties. Do you not see that, aristocratic as these noble Americans wish to appear, they cling to their prejudices, and cannot comprehend a marriage brought about other than by mutual acquaintance and appreciation?

Our indiscreet chronicler tells us that among these trailing dresses of satin and velvet, which fill the carriages at the Bois, ornament our Boulevards, or sweep majestically the salons of the Rue de Presbourg, or even the Tuileries, there are some which come from the oil regions. What of it? And if it is looked upon askance in a democratic country, as is perhaps natural, in our eyes at Paris such oil does not spot. We, only wish to convey the idea, that if in the commercial whirlpool of New York, or the oil regions, or the mines at the West, any one has made a good haul to his net, directly the young ladies are excited with the desire to see Europe, and they are off. Every American has a wish in the course of his life to see the Old World. Some affect to despise this old country; but it is, after all, the land of their ancestry, the chain which connects this new people to human traditions. However promising the future, the need is felt of a past. Despite their wealth and their liberty,

home to say that they have been presented, and would feel humiliated not to have that privilege; having come to see the curiosities of Europe, ought they to neglect the greatest to an inhabitant of the New World? The ardor with which they follow it up is explained by the frequent shifting of scene upon the stage of our epoch. Are they sure to find again the theatre lighted, and the same actors on the stage? Each month the ambassador from the United States is obliged, upon a simple request, to present a batch of some hundred of his countrymen. Why not? Neither serfs nor seigneurs, they are all Americans; preferences are not allowed, otherwise the minister would not know on what to rely.

These foreign democrats have not renounced their power, and are not without influence in the choice of their agents. Look you how this usurping democracy penetrates into the sanctuaries of aristocracy! A certain number of them are acclimated to the splendors of a court; and at Paris especially many are guests at imperial residences. There are some young persons whose fearless eccentricities make even those born on the borders of the Danube grow pale, and whose intrepidity, the roles *lesmoins voilés* of the stage would not abash. But we must not listen to this malicious chronicler, who, American or not, has for his only country — the world; otherwise we should be obliged to speak of the lowness of the American corsage. At first this fashion, along with the Bible and other customs, was of pure English tradition; and there is one extenuating circumstance to bring forward: it is, that the waves of the ocean bring us shoulders far more beautiful than those of the British Channel. Such a matter of detail is not so very characteristic, we must confess; nor the duty of the compatriots of our Parisian ladies to moot it.

The salons of the American minister are naturally the central point of American society in Paris. Mr. and Mrs. Bigelow formerly *received* every Wednesday in the daytime, but gave soirees very irregularly, and by invitation; this was not thought enough by the Colony. General Dix, besides his weekly reception in the daytime, is at home every Saturday evening. The tone of these reunions is less solemn but more frigid than our own. The necessity of an introduction, in order to address a person, is as rigid in this republican circle as in England; and yet the American manners and conversation have an exterior of frankness and “*laissez aller*,” with perhaps a little coarseness. Some Americans beg not to be judged *en masse* in Paris; from the corners of their lips plays one of those smiles which we call “*Saint Germain*,” and at the same time with a certain intonation and provincial style the word “*shoddy*” slips from their tongues. This word, almost untranslatable, means this, as near as may be: “Money being the sinews of travel, those citizens of the Union who come to Paris, ought to be, and are in general, the rich, not rich after European fashion; that is to say, aristocratic in manners and education. In America the incessant labor of the triple furnace of commerce, industry, and speculation, if it produces enormously, preserves but little; but the rich in America, if veritably enriched, are the same as the race known the world over. Moreover all refinement

professions whose products and labor are lacking and will be necessary to respond to the demands of the holders of the bills of credit.

It is quite evident that if some workers of ALL the professions belonged to the mutual credit, they could, by means of the circulation of the bills of credit, directly exchange their products and labors, and eliminate the use between them of cash, which will no longer be needed except for the uses of foreign commerce, until the moment when all the laborers will be included: but it is necessary to gradually substitute the remuneration in products of labor for payment in cash.

Because the products of labor should only be exchanged against labor or the instruments of labor, in order to acquire, progressively and peacefully, by that exchange, the instruments of labor that are in the hands of the capitalists.

To acquire by labor, by means of the gradual elimination of cash, the instruments of labor: such should be the object of the constant efforts of the laborers.

This means is the sole peaceful means of attaining the real aim of association, which is the honestly acquired possession of the instruments of labor, in order to be freed from bossism and the salariat.

It is labor that makes the earth fruitful; it is labor that produces all that is necessary to the needs of life and well-being; it is labor that produces all the marvels of science and the fine arts; cash is only a product of labor and a sign of agreement which produces nothing; let us leave it in the hands of the capitalists, who make an instrument of exploitation of it.

It is by labor that we must redeem the instruments of labor, that labor has produced.

It is the sole means, for the laborers, to acquire the possession of the instruments of labor without undermining property.

The establishment of the mutual credit and the circulation of the bills of credit would be at once a work of emancipation and a work of conciliation: the first step towards the peaceful solution.

Proletarian and privileged, we have only one single enemy to combat, and it is poverty.

It causes the sufferings of the former, and troubles the security of the latter.

It is the true and only cause of revolutions; it is not only political liberties that the people want to win; they only demand them in order to help themselves to acquire true liberty, that is to say the complete development of free exercise of all human faculties, well-being for all by the means of an equitable division of labor, instruments of labor and products of labor.

Revolutions cannot produce the well-being toward which the suffering classes aspire, they almost always serve as stepping stones for a few ambitious types to come to power.

And when they are achieved, they continue the habits of the past. They find no other means to combat poverty, when the sufferers grow

weariness and irritation, than the compression which provokes resistance and prepares new battles.

And when the sufferers resign themselves, they are left with alms, which adds moral degradation to poverty, and which is an outrage to human dignity.

It is because the rights of the disinherited are misunderstood that revolutions are providentially necessary; and, in that case, the justice of the people is the justice of God.

And it is the disagreement on the choice of means to combat poverty and constitute well-being which has caused reactions up to the present.

But social science has come to bring the light.

Socialism is the synthesis of all the social truths taught by the reformers.

The various schools differ in the means of organization, but, deep down, they all have the same basis: SOLIDARITY;

The same principal means: ORGANIZATION OF LABOR;

The same goal: WELL-BEING FOR ALL.

They differ on the degree of solidarity;

On the mode of organization;

On the nature and enlargement of well-being that suits the human being.

These differences manifest the wisdom of the ways of Providence, which intended that the teaching of social verities should simultaneously penetrate the various classes of society, in the forms most in harmony with their various needs and aspirations.

And the discussions that rise from these differences must cast light on the great questions of social economy.

But practice alone can give a certain solution to these grand questions, rectify the errors of theory, and demonstrate the truth by the facts.

The suppression of our liberties and the blindness of power, not permitting the various schools to procure the means of putting into practice their systems of organization, which can be put to work in a coordinated manner, and on a vast enough scale, only with considerable capital and a great freedom of action.

The discussion continues, becomes complicated, and sometimes embittered from the difficulties of the present situation, and minds remind divided.

It is important then for the laborers, left to suffer and wait, to enter the path of practice by a simple and easy means, which springs, it is true, from social science, but which does not prejudice in any way the pursuit of social and political questions. Already the association of tailors in Clichy has employed the bills of credit. It is necessary only to give it a greater circulation, to centralize operations, and to organize the manner of establishing the exchange of products between a great number of workers in various professions.

The favorite quarter for Americans is the Grand Hotel on the Boulevard Italiens, which, from its central position, and its interior arrangements for luxury and comfort, enjoys a colossal reputation on the other side of the ocean. The American starts from New York for this hotel. It is there he lands, there he wakes up, gets information, according to his means or projects, and either settles himself there, or goes to some other hotel or boardinghouse, or hires an apartment, and keeps house. Enter the court, go upstairs and take your stand in the large reading-room opposite the chief entrance. Every moment the carriages which come and go, contain ten Americans to one Englishman or foreigner. From the hotel the traveller finds his way easily to all points, wherever necessity or curiosity calls him. The first visit is to his bankers, Rue de la Paix, to Bowles & Drivet, Rue Scribe, Tucker, Munroe, perhaps to Norton, Rue Auber.

Since the war the Rothschilds may wonder what has become of their excellent clients, — Americans. Gone, Mr. Rothschild; the sympathy between the banker and the planter were too evident for the North to be without any grudge; and as for your Southern patrons, *they* have vanished along with their fortunes. It was the North in old times — more enterprising and greater travellers — who came to Paris. It is not always well, Mr., Rothschild, to heed too much private preferences or prejudices, and a banker of this age should show a certain modesty of opinion. The office of an American banker is a place where one sees and is seen; you find there all the newspapers, and learn, above all, the first and most important news, — *the rate of gold*. To-day, you pay \$1.35 currency for \$1.00 gold, — not as bad as it was, — for, during the war, he who wished to spend a thousand francs in Paris, must receive three thousand in paper; economy ruled (for once. — *Trans.*). Anon comes a more favorable breeze, under whose influence the breadths of satin and the cashmeres expand again from the hands of Laure, Oude, & Leroy; the jewellers of the Rue de la Paix receive anew their former visitors, and one may dream of splendid toilettes and enjoy them; the numbers of soirees are redoubled, and the world of society revives with renewed life and vigor.

As soon as the feminine part, which rule in numbers as well as influence in the Colony, arrive in Paris, they hasten to realize, at prices relatively cheap, the Paris fashions, that the Custom House at home has made so very dear. They run to Lucy Hoquet, Alexandrine, order dresses of Vignons, Wolffs, at Rogets. Dressed at last in the richest and newest toilettes, they order a carriage for the Bois, run to the opera, to the Italiens, and the theatres, and to the embassy to put their names down for presentation at court, and order a court dress at once. These republicans, — I will tell you in confidence, and you will see it everywhere in this regard, — these republicans are very fond of worldly pomp, and have not the prejudices against monarchies that we have. Does this astonish you? Consider a moment; their opinions are so disinterested! Monarchs belonging to others do not alarm them; they are travellers who wish *to see everything* and wish upon their return

THE AMERICAN COLONY IN PARIS, 1867.

When you pass through the Champs Elysees from the Place de la Concorde up to the Arc d'Etoile, or throughout the whole quartier of St. Honore, towards the Monceaux Park, you often meet women richly dressed, light-haired men, young girls with a quick and decided step, lovely curly-haired children, in whose faces you can see both candor and self-possession. All these persons, either apart or together, have the same expression; strong faces, piercing eyes, matured character apparently, and countenances expressive, agreeable, and often handsome. They have nothing of English coarseness, though apparently of the same type, yet with a demeanor much more fresh and unartificial. Such are Americans living in Paris, perhaps making a home there or living at some hotel.

Every nationality meets in the Bois de Boulogne and its fine avenues, but there is an evident preponderance of the English and American customs and language, for the signs on the shops even tell us this. Even if the same language and way of life unite the English and Americans in parts of Paris, here it ends, for the Anglo-phobia as a national sentiment is more lively in the United States than in France. It is by tens of thousands that we can count Americans in Paris this year, and at all times they form quite a large society, composed of two elements, — one the more active, the other stationary; one, only the visitor, the other to remain for a year or two or more. There are even a certain number of Americans acclimated as to a second native land, and connected for the most part with French families; this stationary portion is composed of bankers, diplomats, and families come for the education of their children, or artists to study in our collections. The American is accused of want of artistic taste. This judgment is over-hasty, when we remember that they are new people occupied with toil and industry. The American artist claims it, and already his effort and ambition show the development of this precious instinct, which exists in all people, but which requires leisure and education. What we may expect of American art, we can judge this year, as many of the American artists have sent their works to the Exhibition. We may mention Woodberry Langdon, of French origin; May, author of a beautiful King Lear; Rogers, whose patriotic groups of sculpture give us the heroes and deeds of the late war; while Hill unrolls for us the stupendous scenery of California. In the French School of painting, the Americans arrayed by our "*rapins*" among the class of "*epicieres*" of the age, seek in preference "genre" pictures. Couture is one of their prime favorites, and a Yankee has recently bought one of his pictures, less *epicier* than malicious. Judge of it yourself: it is of a courtesan guiding her chariot to which are attached bankers, diplomats, and other noted men who form the elite. To carry this cruel satire upon the Old World to the New, is hardly, generous. O Yankees, must we send our artists to Washington?

The bill of credit is in reality only an effect of commerce, a simple quittance or receipt, having by itself no numeric value; its guarantee is in labor, it represents some labor and facilitates the exchange of products; it is a means of organizing mutual credit, it is a purely industrial fact, which is not prohibited by any law, and to which one cannot legally put any obstacle, without undermining commercial and industrial transactions.

The organization of mutual credit is a practical fact, a fact of industry and commerce; but that fact is accomplished with a social aim, which is to acquire by labor, progressively and peacefully, the instruments of labor, necessary to the worker in order to exercise their professions, without being subjected to patronage and exploitation,

That aim is a social aim. We neither cannot wish to deny it, it is in accord with the aim of the members of all the associations which are really fraternal, and founded in order to free the workers from exploitation and patronage.

This aim is in agreement with the needs of the situation, and with the political and social opinions of all the democratic socialists, whatever the nuance of those opinions.

What is the basis of the question for political men? (I do not speak of the intriguers and the ambitious.) Why are they justly irritated when one limits all our liberties. It is because they demand for themselves and their children the right to live by laboring, and because they want to preserve the means of reaching that aim. What do the socialists of all schools demand? What is the aim of what our adversaries call the socialist utopias? It is to insure for all the means of true liberty, the complete development and free exercise of all human faculties by the organization of labor, which is to say by an equitable division of labor, instruments and products of labor.

And all the socialist democrats, by participating in the organization of mutual credit, will accomplish a work of peaceful liberation and conciliation, without ceasing to watch over the maintenance of the Republic, and without neglecting the interests of a greater and more complete realization. They will only rally around a practical means, in order to immediately improve the situation of the laborers and prepare the way for the organization of labor.

The organization of mutual credit is a work of conciliation, it is to enter the path of peaceful progress.

It is the means of demonstrating, by the facts, that the socialist workers want to acquire the instruments of labor only by labor, honestly, progressively and peacefully, and the organization of mutual credit is a work of liberation.

By gradually substituting the loan in cash with the loan in labor and products of labor, by the circulation of bills of credit, that loan, far from being onerous, facilitates the enlargement of consumption and production, and the direct exchange of products, and it eliminates the interest which, at only 5 percent, becomes, at the end of twenty years, a veritable spoliation.

And, by gradually substituting remuneration in cash with payment in labor and products of labor, by the progressive extension of the circulation of bills of credit, which would become then a true labor-note, employed only to facilitate exchange, the instrument of exploitation will be paralyzed in the hands of the speculators. Labor being exchanged only against labor and the instruments of labor, the speculators, in whose hands the possession of cash has accumulated the instruments of labor, would exchange those instruments against the labor-notes for their consumer needs.

The possession of the instruments of labor, by freeing the workers from exploitation, will facilitate the organization of labor, that is, an equitable division of labor, of the instruments of labor, and of the products of labor, and will produce well-being for all.

The resources of the Credit Bureau increasing with the number of the subscribers to the mutual credit, it will be easy to extend the advantages of credit to the workers who cannot associate in order to labor in common, either because of the genre of their work, or from a preference for isolation, but who will not hesitate to subscribe to the direct exchange of products, and to the mutual loan that will connect them to the association, and free them from exploitation. It will become possible to make the necessary advances, and to give professional instruction to those who, by a fateful effect of social improvidence, have not learned a profession, and are constrained to servitude or exposed to the temptations of poverty and despair: they will be released.

And it will also be possible to free, from their entry into life, the child of the worker who is born a slave to poverty and deprived of their part of the common inheritance.

Francois I, claiming his part of the possession of Canada, said: "I would really like to see the article of Adam's will that excludes me from the division."

But the child of the poor man could ask more justly which article of Adam's testament excludes them from their part and their right in the possession of the earth, that instrument of labor that God has given to all the generations, past, present and future, that common heritage the is of divine right, inalienable and indivisible.

The earth belongs to all in common, like the sun (but happily, God has not put the sun in the hands of the speculators.)

The child who enters into life has not asked to be born, and often even its parents have not desire it. It is one more laborer sent by Providence to come to the aid of its brothers and sisters.

But in order for it to accomplish its mission, it has a right to the complete development of all its faculties. It should receive the complete education and professional instruction, according to his vocation and aptitudes, and the instruments of labor that are necessary to him.

Then he will be really indebted to society.

But with the present mode of remuneration of labor, let that remuneration be egalitarian or proportional, the father or the mother of the family having to provide for the needs of their children and

doesn't appear too difficult to work out. By bids, perhaps, on the amount of the tax? What I will dare to affirm is that the parasitical functions fed by luxury, the subterfuge, the old laws and the old property, would go quietly, followed by the rentiers, and idleness, that gnaws at the public wealth, would disappear from the earth. There would no longer be any capitalists than the old; and they would still labor according to their strength. Labor having become a synonym for nobility and independence, who wouldn't want to work?

Utopia! Says one; but the agreement of human liberty and justice, happily, is no utopia. Our present state of clarity suffices to show that such concepts are not simply dreams. We recognize in principle the rights of labor; we are undecided only on the means of fulfilling them.

Now, a means, founded on right, which reconciles individualism and communism, equality and liberty, the complete right of each and the right of all, how would that be impracticable, if not in the eyes of the proprietors?

ANDRÉ LÉO

A friend has informed the author that her conclusions are precisely those of Proudhon in his *Memoirs* on property. Should this essay be withdrawn because it does not offer an entirely new solution? If that is true, what does it matter? Truths need to be written more than once, and different minds usually present the same idea in diverse forms. In sum, this reduces to a question of priority, entirely personal, something indifferent to the idea and the reader alike.

A. L.

Translation by SHAWN P. WILBUR

needing, in order to exist and maintain themselves, no decree nor arbitrary convention. Current property is so abusive, that in the public interest our laws violate it at every instant, thus going itself, by necessity, against the principle of the established order—sometimes by prescription, monstrous negation of the recognized right, sometimes by the progressive increase of the tax on inheritances and the restrictions put on the right to bequeath, to receive, etc. Also, on the other hand, a social order of things cannot be decreed. Humanity, from time to time, renews its laws by the progress of customs and ideas, by a purer intelligence of justice; but, in the order of things as among animated beings, it is necessary that a birth and development correspondent to a decrepitude. Terrorism is as wrong in social matters as in politics. There is a right, feeble though it may be, in every existence, and it is neither just nor more fortunate to abolish capital than to decapitate kings. In fact, despite the violent theories, which are responsible for half the violence of the opposing interests, the progress of ideas and customs accuses; we no longer behead the crowned heads, we evict them; the time is not far off, let us hope, when the city, leaving the palace, will be open to them. From that day there will be no more restoration.

Thus, capital should continue to hire itself out, for all the legitimate reasons that are invoked in this regard. Only the expansion of an opposing force, more useful and more powerful, will reduce it to its true place. If the great instrument of labor, land, where everything starts and everything comes back, was cut off, as in justice it must be, from the domain of capital, capital would have, in fact, hardly any other role than that of the spade, to which it has so often, and too modestly, been compared. It would still be useful, but would no longer be indispensable. In the absence of the old spade, a new spade would have soon replaced it, an easy advance for the smithy worker to the farm worker—for it would be from now on to the laborer, certain of finding his place everywhere, exempt from all farm rent, except taxes, possessor of the entirety of his harvest and sole creator of wealth, that credit would belong naturally, as to the surest and truest force in the world. In such circumstances, what can an old spade do, threatened with rust. Rent itself out with good grace for a minimal charge; that is what it would do.

Do you see in this only the ruin of the capitalists? Why not see there above all ease and peace yielded to humanity by justice? In an order of things where labor, free and fruitful, would be assured to all, and tempered, without any doubt, by social prosperity, by sufficient leisure, what is there to regret? The excesses of idleness? Those of poverty?—We must, willy-nilly, to commit to the goal or lead the revolution. Its triple formula is not vain. It is another revelation; it must be accomplished.

In this system, what would the state do? Nothing more than it does today. It watches over the execution of the social pact, collects and distributes taxes. Each, charged by himself, responds with his acts and labors for himself. How will the lands be divided? I don't know; but that

sometimes of their parents, not however gaining more and sometimes gaining less than a bachelor, and are obliged to impose on themselves the harshest privations in order to provide for the needs of several with the labor of one or two persons.

Thus, a numerous family is for the worker a source of poverty and suffering, even in the heart of the association.

It is still insolidarity, the *each by himself, each for himself*, that produces all the sufferings of society.

Association, based on solidarity, should adopt all the children who, bearing equally, by being born, the right to live a complete life, physical, intellectual and moral; it should take care of the sick and infirm, because society is responsible for the health of its members; the majority of maladies and infirmities have for their cause the privations and the excess that result from a poor organization.

And it should surround with respect and recognition the old age of those crippled by labor and insure for them an honorable and sweet rest.

It should free from the yoke of poverty and the humiliations of charity those who have contributed to its prosperity, and who have acquired, by labor, the right to repose.

And when the resources of the bureau of credit allow the advance of the necessities to the children of the laborers subscribed, in order to acquire the complete development of their faculties and the instruments of labor necessary to exercise them freely, it is a debt that they have contracted and of which they will acquit themselves towards the invalid laborers.

And all the children of the subscribers to the mutual credit having the right to credit, the speculators by coming to exchange the instruments of labor against their consumer needs could insure the future of their infants, often compromised by speculations so dire for the laborers and sometimes for themselves.

And all will be freed or protected from the yoke of poverty and from the exploitation which produces it.

And when the workers in the countryside have understood the solidarity which should unite the laborers of all the professions, by subscribing to the mutual credit, they will free their children from all of the miseries with which they are burdened.

The bill of exchange has contributed to the liberation of the communes from despotism, from nobiliary feudalism.

The bill of credit will free the laborers from despotism, from financial feudalism.

The organization of mutual credit, the gradual elimination of cash, of the instrument of exploitation and corruption, is the honest and peaceful struggle against the principles of domination and exploitation.

It is the liberation of labor by labor.

It is the means of putting an end to violent struggles and of entering into the practice of a new faith, of the social religion, a religion of love and liberty which wants well-being for all,

Which has for dogma: SOLIDARITY;
For worship: LABOR;
For morality: THE LOVE OF HUMANITY.

JEANNE DEROIN

Translation by SHAWN P. WILBUR

One cannot deny that the land is the common property of humanity. Is it just, consequently, to alienate it in the hands of certain families?

It is here that the communists are right.

However, it is necessary to repeat, one cannot cheat a man of the price of his labor, a father of the right to transmit to his children that which is his, a friend of the same right with regard to his friends.

But why confuse these two different things: the materials on which the laborer works, and the product of the labor?

A custom exists in our countrysides: when a farmer comes into possession of plot of land, one estimates the value of farm implements, livestock and provisions that stock the farm; when he leaves it, they are estimated again and, according to whether the value has increased or diminished, the farmer finds himself creditor or debtor.

That is the very partial application, excluding the rents, of the true law of property.

The man is the farmer of the land.

His right of property consists of the fruits of his labor, in addition to the surplus value that he gives, or can give, by that same labor, to the capital that he uses. That product of his labor and capacity must be counted, either to him, or to his children, when he abandons the operation,—voluntarily, or by death. No inheritance is transmissible but that! But that is entirely just.

The same law applies to every parcel of occupied land. As for movable objects, created by industry, amassed by savings, they are naturally individual property, and consequently transmissible. Houses, as houses, equally so; but on the condition of a fee for the concession, always temporary, of the terrain on which they are built.

And capital? we are asked. Property in land is far from making up all social wealth. There is money, rent, notes, bonds... One can be very rich and not possess a square inch of land.

That is difficult: railways, factories, and canals, all rest on the common soil; and as for agiotage and interest, don't you understand what a rude blow would be dealt to them by such a caning in the social economy? To suppress in landed property that which is sinful and exclusive, is to scratch from the amount of the rent many digits; that is to relegate capital to the modest rank that it should occupy; more surely to the degree that the opportunities given to active and living labor diminish the influence of labor acquired. Caught between that immense reform and association, which will combat it in agriculture as in industry, capital could only yield; perish, no; for as long as it exists, that is as long as it represents a labor, it will represent a right.

But this right, subject, as the economists would have it, to the laws of supply and demand, will pass from its current royal condition to a more modest state, always by the force of things, but in accordance with a different order of things.

It seems to me that just things, which are the simplest, are recognized by that sign of following naturally from right and from

certainly, with regard to other, the right, by combining, is modified; but it cannot be annihilated.

Now, if this sacred right of possession of my works is acknowledged, if, possessing myself, the product of my strengths and will equally belong to me, this right is whole, complete, and every restriction violates it. That which is mine, then, being truly mine, I can dispose of as I please. I can give it today, tomorrow, later, bequeath it in the end. The right is not prescribed, in true justice. Thus, the right of property implies the right of inheritance.

Now let us see the consequences of this right, as it is exercised in current society. It is those that particularly strike the partisans of the abolition of inheritance. These consequences are the accumulation of the products of labor in the thin, white hands of those who have only been troubled to be born; it is the spectacle, displayed everywhere on our earth, of numerous families reduced to stagnate on a meager plot, or even possessing nothing, contrasted with the idle, possessor of vast spaces, and selling to the laborer the right to live, bidding cheap. It is the reward handed over to those who deserve nothing; it is inequality perpetuated. It is, by a strange filiation, the right to idleness derived from the right of labor become hierarchic, and by seniority becoming suzerain, which is to say oppressor, of new labor. It is right as the enemy of right, justice against justice!

Isn't this an anomaly whose crux one should seek?

Obviously, there is some error. If the right of property is a primordial, sacred right, it belongs to every man, and must be accessible to all. Setting aside the old refrains about the power of order, economy, labor, etc., it is necessary to recognize that everyone cannot possess a great number of hectares, rent from the state, houses, servants. If everyone were if everyone cannot belong to the leisure class, wealth, as it is presently constituted, is a privilege, and thus an immorality. It is untoward to say, for it makes many people angry and indignant. But how to proceed? This is not a personal opinion; it is a rigorous deduction from the new right. The political law recognized it, proclaims it, all men have an equal right. Now the principle of the rent is contrary to the principle of equality.

The point to grasp, in this debate, is where the individual right of property departs from the general right.

Wouldn't it be when it awards to the laborer, in addition to the product of his efforts, in addition to the improvements added by him to the cultivated land, that land itself?

The land is the property of humanity [propriété humaine]. It belongs as much to the generations to come as to the present generations.

As a result, to give to some man, of some era, perpetual right to the land, that is to possess the future humanity.

And isn't it an absurdity to attribute to a being which passes - and so quickly - an eternal possession?

WOMAN—HER POSITION AND DUTIES.

I BEGIN by asserting, what to me is an axiom, that *Woman must be either a slave and prostitute or free and chaste*. There is no middle ground.

Repress no longer the full action of women's powers; favor the free development of their intellect; present a truly noble end for their activity, and all fears for the weakness of their hearts, or the delusions of their imaginations, may be laid aside

You wish to knit more closely the bonds of family, oh men! yet you sunder them by the maxim, "Man for the forum and workshop, woman for the domestic hearth." Separated from husbands and sons, fathers and brothers, what remains for women but to console themselves, in actual isolation and servitude, by dreaming of a celestial country, where they shall have true rights of citizenship, and be no more pressed down by inequalities and privileges denied. Vainly you endeavor to establish civil equality now; Society rests on the family; so long as the family is founded in inequality, society will retrace its old devious paths, and sink back again into what is called "the natural order of things" From the beginning of the world there have been slaves and masters, the oppressed and tyrants, the privileged by *sex*, race, birth, caste, fortune; these will continue just so long as you refuse to fulfill the plain duties of fraternity towards those whom God has given you as sisters and companions.

Do you ask, what will be the mission of woman beyond the limits of the family? What, indeed! She will come to aid you—in re-establishing order in the wretchedly mismanaged establishment which is called the State,—in substituting just distribution of the products of toil for the habitual privation beneath which the broken down laborer now groans and suffers.

A mother of a family, worthy the name, loves by preference the weak and suffering among her children, but with anxious solicitude she seeks to protect all equally from hunger and cold, and strives to awaken in all their hearts a sentiment of mutual sympathy. Will she not do for the great family of society, what she now does for the small household, so soon as the narrow circle of domestic affections is enlarged and raised to the level of high humanitarian interests.

It is as Christians, as Citizens, as Mothers, that women should reclaim the position which belongs to them, in the Church, in the State, in the Family.

As Christians, because they are like men, children of God, and Christ himself has summoned them to be his apostles.

As Citizens, because they too are a part of the people, entitled to the rights of liberty and equality, enjoyed by other citizens.

Especially as Mothers, whose sacred functions are so often considered as incompatible with the duties of citizenship, should women reclaim their right to watch over and guide their children not

only in the acts of civil life, but throughout the whole range of political duties.

Thus far in the world's history, Politics has been used as the art of oppressing, rather than of governing, the people; and governments have been forced, therefore, to maintain power by the bayonet. To govern, it is thought, is to repress, more or less skillfully, more or less brutally, according to time and circumstances, the desires of men. Therefore have women been considered incapable of governing. But here is found the very reason, why they should insist upon their right to aid all men of heart and intelligence in transferring this Politics of violence and oppression, which has produced and must produce bitter hatred, and which is the source of all social suffering and misery.

The exhaustless desire to love and to be beloved, which God has planted in the heart of woman, is the powerful and fruitful germ of that matured love, which should always inspire her, and guide her to the fulfillment of the sacred function entrusted to her, of being a mother to the whole human family. When women shall comprehend that they owe obedience only to God; that all men are their brethren; that all women are their sisters; and that they are called to be mothers not only of their own children, but also of the children of their sisters, and especially mothers to all who are hungry and cold in mourning and sorrow, orphaned and outcast;—when women shall comprehend this sublime humanitarian maternity which should bind them all in one by the tie of solidarity, then will the Race really enter on the path of progress.

It is as mothers, that women should consecrate themselves to the work of preparing a better future for their children. Is there an intelligent mother, worthy of that name, who does not experience profound anxiety in seeing these frail creatures cast out to grow up amid the disturbances of revolutionary eras, and in thinking of the storms which an improvident system of politics, selfish at once and cruel, has brought upon their heads? All mothers, whatever their social position or their faith, must have the same interest, the same end.—the well-being of their children. All then should equally desire a social organization which would give them a feeling of security as to the future fate of beings so dear. This never has been given, never could be given by societies based, as those of the past have been, on the right of the strongest, on privilege, on the oppression of man. But this feeling of security can and will spring up in societies, based, as those of the future are to be, on the principles of fraternity and universal solidarity, of which woman should be the most ardent apostle.

If women of the privileged classes could but be made to understand that their present high condition can not protect their children from the vicissitudes of fortune; if they could but learn to remember that their own ancestors perhaps, once bent the knee as slaves and serfs, before the progenitors of the very half-clad beggar boys upon whom they now look down with pity; if the veil of the past could but be lifted before them; then would they comprehend that their maternal love must not be confined to their own children, but enlarged to embrace the

more emphasized. We differ only on the means of making equality a fact; but there, it is true, we differ greatly. By ignoring the old system of castes, which has had its day, we find the most restricted application of equality in the system, just examined, of the social “greased pole;” the most extensive application is communism.

Communism, by which I mean the common possession of social goods, which leads naturally to the abolition of inheritance, appalls, not only those who are by nature frightened of every change, not only those who, satisfied with their lot, do not want to be deprived of it; but also those more serious opponents who, recognizing in the individual the basis of the new right, consider as immoral anything that wounds or diminishes the responsibility, power and dignity of the individual being.

This sentiment, which is that of the greatest number, is always affirmed with energy—by rejecting the action of the very ones who serve as its pretext.

Under communism, in fact, the product of my labor, the fruit of the daily expenditure of my forces, of my individual faculties, the effort of my arms, of my intelligence, of my will, my work finally, the thing created, produced by myself, it would not belong to me!... I would have directed all my acts, all my thoughts towards an end chosen by me, an end which has become the ambition, the joy, the glory or the utility of my life, and I would have no right over my creation!... I would not dispose of anything! In order to have rights for all, I would possess nothing!—You don't think about it. While wishing to consecrate, according to your claim, the right of all, you violate individual rights. Your equality is not justice.

And not only is that unjust, but it is insane. For, by thus depriving the human being of the fruit of his labor, you remove the lure, the goad, and the reward of every activity. By killing his ambition, you kill his energy. You want to build a more prosperous society, and you diminish the individual! What a marvelous calculation!

To think, to desire something, without the proper means to accomplish it, is a constriction, a suffering, a lacuna in the being. If, in order to give a form to my thought, to transform materials, I need the permission of the social body, a permission which, naturally, can be refused me, it is no longer up to me to be myself, to fulfill my destiny. My ardor, my efforts, are useless; it is the rule which disposes, and my poverty in the heart of social wealth is not less than that of the actual proletarian; for the most bitter sense of the word “poverty” is *dependence*. It is by this that poverty brings low those that it strikes. This is how half of the soul is taken from the slave. Man has need of power, not over his fellows, but over the world. To create from nothing is nonsense. In order to create, it is necessary to possess, to have for your own, owing an account only to yourself for your attempts, for your mistakes, to be responsible and free.

Thus, the right of property is a true and necessary right. It is the most marked form of individuality in a being, considered alone. Most

However, everyone recognizes that a great uneasiness exists, which could become a great disorder. The political question finds itself resolved in right, summarily, by universal suffrage; but through the social fact it leads only to an immense misunderstanding, which must endure as long as the same effects of ignorance and misery. There is a vicious circle to break. Each possesses his part of sovereignty; that it the equal right, recognized by all. But equality remains fictive as long as each does not possess the same part of the advantages in compensation for the same duties.

We have, it is true, a system which consists of making social goods the reward of the strongest, or of the most skilled, all being admitted to the contest. Many take that for justice itself. At base, it is nothing other than the lottery applied to the social order, fate distributing capacities like lottery numbers. It is still a sort of greased pole [*mât de cocagne*]. But this vaunted system, however clever it may be, is not a social system worthy of that name. It changes the situation of individuals, but it does not change that of the masses; it smoothes over the obstacles that the lowly born would otherwise encounter, but it preserves, for the whole, the same relations of inequality. It matters little, indeed, from the general point of view, that some fortunate few are no longer in some unfortunate condition; what is important is that education, leisure and well-being, the moral and intellectual wealth of humanity, are always entrusted to the few, while the masses are deprived of it. Political right is an error, or a lie, if it does not involve social right.

Does liberty carry in itself, as the economists claim, the solution of the problem? It does not express it, in any case, and it leaves us all the uncertainty of its decisions. For liberty, that divinity so dear to the oppressed, that burning aspiration of the slaves, is not in itself an active principle. It is not a law susceptible to developments. It is not a science. Liberty corresponds, in the moral order, to health in the physical order; it is the absence of evil. It permits all, but it gives nothing. With it, the creative forces have all their power; but this is the normal state. If constriction alters them, liberty will add nothing. In all the previous states of humanity we have made of liberty an intoxicating being, a goddess; and if she cannot produce, what she should render to us is certainly immense in comparison with that which exists. But her benefits exist only by comparison to the evils of slavery. Liberty is the law of our individual expansion; it is not the social law; it is not an organizing principle.

The social law is justice.—And, under another name, justice is equality.

We can debate the applications of equality, but we cannot maintain that it is not the foundation of the notion of justice. The tribunals have had not other and they apply it with an elementary rigor, submitting to the same process and penalties the educated man and the ignorant one, the weak and the strong. All our judgments, to the extent that they are general, have no other basis than human equality. Every comparison is based on it. In these times, finally, no affirmation is more general and

young of this and all succeeding generations; then would they recognize the truth, that only when unitary societies shall pledge themselves to ensure the well-being of each of their members however humble, can security be felt for the happiness of any one, however honored.

And if women of the working classes would but comprehend that it is one of their duties to reclaim the right of being completely mothers; if they could but be taught that society is bound to exert a watchful providence over the child before its birth, by exempting the mother from exhausting toil during the period when she is fulfilling her sacred function of supplying society with new members,—members who will be active, intelligent, useful, and every way fit for advancing the general prosperity, in proportion to the harmonious development to all their faculties; then would they become convinced of the necessity of that grand social reform which can alone ensure them the right of preserving their children from misery, ignorance and despotism.

When women of all classes shall accept these great truths, then will all mothers unite to accomplish that grand *Mission* of humanity, which religion and the true science of society make known.

The mission of women in the present age, is an apostleship, whose end is the introduction of God's kingdom upon earth. The means of fulfilling that end, is to lead mankind into the way Which Providence marks out, by reconciling individuals, families, classes, nations, now separated from one another by hostile interests, varying opinions, and incessant competition. But the indispensable condition for this reconciliation is to put away once and forever, the causes of strife between the two grand halves of humanity, man and woman. And the very first step toward this reform is to proclaim on high the civil and political equality of the sexes, and to demand the practical realization of the rights of women, by the press, by speech, and incessant protests against the violations of those principles of liberty, equality) and fraternity, which are the law of God. It should be clearly understood, that the abolition of the privileges of race, birth, caste, fortune, can not be complete and radical, until the privilege of sex is utterly destroyed, because this is the root of all the others. And now, whatever may be the varieties of opinion and of faith, religious and social, among women consecrated to the accomplishment of their sublime mission, let all be convinced that in this era of transition, the only practicable mode of fulfilling their high duty is the reclaiming of woman's rights to citizenship.

Let women then, who comprehend the grandeur of their religious and social mission, unite and pledge to each other their devoted aid, in introducing by every means of action, consistent with the dignity of their sex, and peaceful sentiments, the Reign of God upon earth—the realization of the three great principles, which hold in germ the happy societies of future ages.

Let us demand in the name of Fraternity, that the sacred law of Solidarity, which unites in one living body, all members of the human family, should be no longer misconceived and disobeyed; and that all

shall be admitted to partake of the blessings which God bestows on all; that society as a whole shall become responsible for the well-being of each of its members; and that no one shall consider himself exempt from the duty of using every faculty for the common good.

Let us demand in the name of Equality, a total abolition of the privileges of *sex*, race, birth, caste, fortune;

For Women, for Children, for the Laboring classes we would secure the first of all rights, the *right to live*, and a full development of every power, physical, intellectual, moral:

Education, free and equal;

Professional and scientific culture, according to aptitudes;

The right to labor;

Admissions to social functions in proportion to power of usefulness, without distinction of sex;

Means of enjoyment and social relaxation, so requisite for those oppressed by anxiety and toil;

For the sick and infirm, affectionate care; for the aged, generous hospitality and honorable repose; due recompense and respect for all.

Let us demand in the name of Liberty, honor for the rights of every human being; liberty of conscience; liberty of speech; liberty of the press; liberty of association; freedom for all without distinction of sex to participate in making laws, and distributing the profits of labor.

If our words of peace and conciliation are heard, there will be an end to bloody conflicts and inhuman tricks of policy. *Misery and Ignorance, the last of the peoples tyrants*, will disappear forever: because fraternity, equality, liberty, will thenceforth be verified in deeds.

Jeanne Deroin

Translation from THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE, 1850.

COMMUNISM and PROPERTY

ANDRÉ LÉO

(1868)

The question that so deeply divides the minds of our epoch is posed anew, reviving the anxieties and hatreds that it has always excited. Will property remain the privilege of the few? Or will it become the right of all? Affirmation and negation collide with violence on this point. Here, fierce interests stir; there, a rather bitter faith. Is it liberty which must prevail, or equality? The antagonism appears between two principles which, as things now stand, divide the democracy and create discord in its assemblies, although on the same grounds they make up its motto, and though their agreement alone could give the world justice.

In the eyes of the partisans of liberty, equality threatens tyranny. In the eyes of the egalitarians, liberty without equality is nothing but a lie. The first dread communism, and the others oppose exploitation. The enemies of democracy triumph from these struggles and are easily able to stir up public opinion, still too accustomed to existing dogmas not to contemplate with intolerance the painful birth of new ones.

Despite anathemas old and new, however, the question is always there. Opposed, contemned, crushed, socialism persists. There is then, perhaps, something to it. What does it demand?—Justice.—Does justice exist?—No. To affirm the contrary would be to deny the evidence, and nobody would dare do it; the facts speak for themselves. Even the most satisfied admit that there is much to be done. For in the end, misery and poverty reign over the greatest number, and the night of ignorance covers three quarters of what is called the “civilized world.”

As things are now constituted, could that change? Based on the annual sum of our progress, that would be a long—and doubtful—process. Can we find prompter and truer means?—Why not? Moreover, the riddle, whatever one does, is posed and threatens to devour whoever cannot resolve it. It is the multitude that rules, the ignorant and miserable multitude. Still dazzled, uncertain, it would like sooner or later,—tomorrow perhaps,—to apply a remedy to its wrongs, and that remedy, taken at random, could be fatal. Thanks to universal suffrage, solidarity can no longer be denied; the solution of the problem is important to everyone. Thus, it is useful to seek it, and the prudent, instead of condemning that search, should encourage it.

But how to seek fruitfully, if it is not with a complete sincerity, and without fear of the unknown which must appear?

To make qualifications in advance, to forbid certain subjects is not serious. The human mind is assured of its belief only by considering them anew, and to not dare to sound them shows little confidence in them.— It is even peculiar that this lack of respect is the act of all the devout.

APPEAL TO WOMEN

When the whole of the people are roused in the name of Liberty, and that the labouring class demand their freedom, shall we women remain passive and inert spectators of this great movement of social emancipation, which takes place tinder our eyes?

Is our condition as women so happy that there is nothing left for us to desire or to demand? Up to the present hour, have not women through all past ages been degraded, oppressed, and made the property of men? This property in women, and the consequent tyranny it engenders, ought now to cease. We are born as free as men – their infancy it as helpless as ours, and ours as theirs. Without our tenderness, our sympathy and care, they could never grow up to be our oppressors, and, but through the roost blind and barbarous injustice, one half the human race cannot be made the Servants of the other. Let us then understand our rights – let us also understand our powers – and let us learn how to employ usefully the intelligence and the attractions that nature has bestowed upon us. Let us reject as a husband any man who is not sufficiently generous to consent to share with us all the rights, he himself enjoys. We will no longer accept this form of marriage, “Wives submit yourselves to your husbands.” We demand equal marriage laws – preferring infinitely a state of celibacy to one of slavery. We feel and know that nature has made us the equals of men, and that an ignorantly contrived social system, vicious in principle and practice, has cunningly restricted the development of our intellectual, moral, and physical faculties, in order to deprive us of our social rights. A great, a good, a just man has proclaimed us the equal of man, and many have followed his wise example.

Honour to those generous men – a halo of glory awaits them in the new world! Let us unite our voice with theirs and demand our rights as citizens – our place in the new temple, which recognises the equality of both sexes. Universal association has already commenced; from henceforth all nations shall be united by ties of brotherly love, by industry, science, and morals. The future will be eminently pacific – no more war, no more national antipathies; love, and sympathy, and kindness will be the all-pervading sentiment. The reign of harmony and peace will establish itself throughout the earth, and the time is arrived when woman shall find her place, her acknowledged, her useful, and dignified place upon it. Liberty and equality, that is to say, the free and equal chance of developing all our faculties.

This is the glorious conquest we have to make, and this we cannot effect, but on condition of forming ourselves into one solid union. Let us no longer form two camps—that of the women of the people, and that of the women of the privileged class. Let our common interest unite us to obtain this great end. Let all jealousy disappear from amongst us. Let us honour worth, and give place to superior talent and capacity, at whatever side it may appear.

Women of the privileged class—those amongst you who are young, beautiful, and rich, and who think yourselves happy, when in your splendid salons you breathe the incense of flattery, which all around are interested lavishly to bestow upon you—you fancy yourselves queens, but your reign is of short duration; it ends with the ball! When you return home you are slaves, you find there a master who makes you feel his power, and you soon forget all the evanescent pleasures of the feast. Women of every class, you have a noble part to perform—you are called upon to spread the principles of order and harmony everywhere. Then turn to the advantage of society at large the fascination of your talents and the influence of your beauty—the sweetness of your words will carry conviction with them, and induce men themselves to follow you in the attainment of your glorious object.

Come and inspire the people with a holy enthusiasm for the great work which is in preparation—come and regulate and calm the warlike ardour of our young men. The elements of grandeur and true glory are in their hearts, but they have a false notion of their principles, they conceive glory and honour to consist in having a helmet on their head, and a sword in their hand. It is for us to tell them that the distinctive system must terminate, that the social edifice must be re-built, and that everything must become new. The Roman ladies awarded crowns of laurel to their warriors; we will weave wreaths of flowers to bind the brows of those moral and pacific men who shall lead on humanity in its social progress, and who shall enrich our globe by science and industry.

JEANNE VICTOIRE. [Jeanne Deroin]

Translation from THE CRISIS, 1833.



Grégoire Champseix and Léodile Bera Champseix (aka André Léo), with their sons, André and Léo.