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THE CHICAGO TRAGEDY.

Four men were hanged in Chicago on Friday last. There would have been five, but one had escaped the gallows by a most determined suicide. They were hanged upon judicial conviction of the highest crime known to the law - a crime which resulted in the killing of seven people and the wounding of some scores of others. Yet, on the eve of their execution, a long procession, with muffled drums and banners draped with crape, marched through the streets of New York; on the Sunday after the execution their dead bodies were carried to the grave in Chicago with demonstrations of respect and sympathy such as are rarely accorded to unquestioned public benefactors, and in all parts of the country there are indications that a considerable class regard these men not as criminals, but as heroes and martyrs.

In this there is a matter for much serious thought.

One strong element in the sympathy with Chicago anarchists is, of course, due to that disposition which arises from the long interval which our legal procedure permits between the first arraignment for a capital crime and the execution of sentence. Events diminish in impressiveness as they recede in time, just as visible objects dwindle in size as they recede in distance. The imagination concerns itself with the living man under the shadow of the gallows more readily and more powerfully than with the act which brought him there, and pity for the sad plight of the criminal excites sympathy and prompts excuse, while the crime is condoned or forgotten. So strong is this disposition that, no matter how clearly his guilt has been proved,

the most atrocious murderer does not fail to find sympathizers and excusers in the time intervening between trial and execution, and to be set before the public mind as a victim rather than as a criminal. Whatever may be said for capital punishment, it certainly loses its most important effects in the long delays which our criminal procedure permits, and either these delays should be prevented, so that trial and execution should follow closely upon the crime, or capital punishment should be abolished. In criminal, as in civil cases, justice ceases to be justice when it is not prompt.

But beyond this sentimental sympathy which is in greater or less degree excited by every case of capital punishment when execution is long delayed, and which, from the nature of the case and the wide attention called to it, was peculiarly strong in the case of the Chicago anarchists, there has been a widespread impression, even among those who had no sympathy with anarchy, that these men did not have a fair and unprejudiced trial, and that they were convicted rather as anarchists than as participators in the overt act for which they were arraigned.

The sympathizers with anarchy have from the first been actively engaged in propagating the belief that these men were simply victims to the vengence of an excited class feeling; but beyond the effect thus exerted upon the public mind, and giving great help and countenance to it, has been the impression produced by the fragmentary reports, of the trial which reached the general public through the press.

Until the seven judges of the supreme court of Illinois, after

a full examination of the evidence and the record, unanimously sustained the verdict and the sentence, it was certainly my impression - an impression confirmed by the opinions of men whom I knew to be fair-minded - that the seven anarchists, or at least some of them, no matter how much moral connection their teachings and agitation might have had with the throwing of the bomb, had, in the excited state of public feeling in Chicago, been condemned on evidence that did not really amount to legal proof, and were only connected with the bomb throwing by general and vague incitements to acts of the kind. A reading of the summary of the evidence which is embraced in the decision of the supreme court of Illinois showed me that this was not correct, but that enough evidence had been presented to clearly connect the seven men with a specific conspiracy to use dynamite against the police on the evening on which the bomb was thrown, and to render them under the statutes of Illinois, and on the common principles of law, as much guilty as though with their own hands they had thrown the bomb.

Probably the most satisfactory answer to the many letters which I have received from those who, having no sympathy with anarchy in itself, have urged me to join in the demand for the pardon of the Chicago anarchists on the ground that they had been convicted on insufficient evidence, is the letter from Judge James G. Maguire, which is printed on the fifth page of this number of THE STANDARD.

I found, on talking with Judge Maguire, in one of the brief intervals during the canvass in which we had opportunity to meet, that his impression was that I had first entertained, and being extremely desirous of testing my own opinions by that of an old friend for whose

ability and character I have the highest respect - a man in full sympathy with all true reform, and at the same time acquainted with legal procedure and accustomed to the weighing of evidence - I urged him to read the papers in the case, and give me his opinion. At the same time I handed him a long letter from a friend of ours, a lady of intelligence, who, in urging me to do what I could to arouse public opinion against what she deemed would be judicial murder, had gone over the points which have been popularly presented as telling in favor of the innocence of the anarchists, and who had asked me to show the letter to Judge Maguire, whose influence she also invoked.

Judge Maguire did as I requested him. But, not having time before leaving for San Francisco to write for THE STANDARD a review of the case, he gave me permission to get and print the private letter he had while still engaged in the campaign written to our friend.

I do not print it as a full review of the case, for Judge Maguir would have been more elaborate if writing for publication but as showing the conclusion which a judicial and unprejudiced mind had arrived at after examination, and as an appropriate answer to many other letters which during the last few weeks I have received.

In printing his letter I may also say of the judge that while he saw no ground for asking executive clemency as a matter of right and justice, he agreed with me in believing that there were good grounds of public policy for the mitigation of the capital sentences.

But beyond the element of which I have been speaking - the impression, shared in many cases by those who have no sympathy with violence, that the anarchists had not been fairly condemned - there

are other elements of more permanent importance. There is among us a class who justify and applaud such deeds as that for which the Chicago anarchists were executed. There is another class, who without justifying such acts of violence imagine that they will hasten, if, indeed, they are not actually necessary to social reform. And there is still larger number who, without any definite opinions, are disposed to sympathize with any one who falls under the ban of a class whom they regard as the enemies of their own.

Anarchy is a reaction from socialism, and the ranks of the anarchists proper are filled by men, who, having been attracted by the large promises of German or state socialism, have come at length to see its incoherence and impracticability. The theory of anarchism is the antipodes of that of socialism. Instead of the cumbrous and impossible system which would make government the all in all and reduce the individual to the position of an employe and ward of the state, philosophic anarchy would carry to its extreme the proposition that "the best government is that which governs least," by abolishing all government and leaving individuals free to fall as it supposes, into the mutual relations dictated by their own interests and convenience. With the mass of the so-called anarchists, however, anarchy is not a theory but a feeling that workingmen are oppressed by an intolerable cl[illegible]espotism, and that the breaking down of governmental power by acts of violence is the only sure and speedy way of release. Anarchy is the child of despair. It is the impulse of men who, bitterly conscious of injustice, see no way out.

Anarchy is an importation into the United States, It is not an accident that out of the eight men convicted in Chicago only one was of American birth, for the American element among our avowed socialists and anarchists is in hardly greater proportion. But if anarchy did not find congenial soil it would not perpetuate and propagate itself on this side of the Atlantic. The foreigner, imbued with anarchistic principles in a country where great standing armies maintain avowed class goverments, crosses the ocean to a country where government is nominally based upon the will of the people. If he found here that political liberty brought social justice, that there was in the great republic room for all, work for all, and the opportunity to make a fair living for all, his anarchism would soon be forgotten, and the apostle of dynamite would, amid any class of our foreign populations, meet only ridicule and derision. But what great bodies of the foreigners who come here actually do find, is that our political equality is little better than a delusion and a mockery, and that there exists here the same bitter social injustice which presses down the masses of Europe. In a country where there were no tramps; in a country where there were no paupers; in a country where their were no men forced to beg for work or alms; where there were no families crowded together in miserable tenement rooms; and no children compelled to toil when they ought to be at play, anarchy might be imported and imported, but it could not exist, much less take root. But amid conditions that can be found to-day within the American republic, anarchy finds its proper soil and atmosphere.

The strength of anarchy in Chicago is in those squalid quarters where foreigners live, not so much because they are foreigners as because they are miserably poor - quarters in which, not merely do whole families work and live in single rooms, but sometimes two families occupy the same room. Large numbers of these people have been brought to this country by the false promises of land and railroad agents who have deliberately misstated the opportunities for work and the wages that could be obtained. Swindled from the moment they landed at Castle garden, and largely helpless from their ignorance of the language, they have been driven into the fierce competition and bitter degradation of the slums of a great city, a sense of injustice rankling in their breasts.

So it is in New York and in our other large cities. If any one will travel through the foreign quarters on the east side of New York and see how human beings live and work, or even if he will read the reports of the ministers of religion and charity who occasionally explore the dark places of this east side world, he will see how fit are the conditions to propagate and even intensify that blind revolt against government and society which was first developed under European tyranny.

We cannot shut out anarchy by shutting out immigration. The evil thing is already here. Nor can we extripate it by now and then hanging or imprisoning or clubbing. In all our cities we are rearing an increasing number of children under conditions which would make anarchism a thing of spontaneous development, even if it did not already exist.

In all our great cities to-day may be seen those barbarians of

civilization, the fiercer and more destructive Huns and Vandals of whom Macaulay prophesied, and with whom, if they continue to grow and increase, modern civilization must some day fight its death fight. Where the older ones among them were born is a matter of little moment. They are to-day an integral part of our people. And their children are growing up, and other people's children are falling under like conditions.

Of the two, anarchism is much better suited than socialism to the American genius, and I am inclined to think that, as a theory, it has many more adherents among native Americans. But the extension of theoretical anarchism need give us little concern. The really dangerous thing is in our people becoming habituated to ideas of violence, and in the growth of passions that incite to it.

There are many, even among native Americans, who, without expressly justifying violence, yet think and talk as though violence would hasten, if, indeed, it is not the only agency that can bring about anything like large political and social reforms. Conscious of corruption in the political organization and of deep and bitter injustice in the industrial organization, they - even the more intelligent of them - have formed no clear idea of the cause, nor yet of the cure. They have such an abiding faith in the power of combination and of concentrated capital on the one side, and in the ignorance and helplessness of the masses of people on the other, that they are hopeless of any reform until the wealthy and powerful class are startled by menace of violence into conceding to fear what they would refuse to justice. All great advances, they say, must be brought by

the blood sacrifice, and the vis inertia of organized society can only be broken by social earthquake.

All this is erroneous, Good is not begotten by evil; it is good that begets good. If great advances have sometimes been marked by blood sacrifices, so, in greater degree, have periods of decadence. The great agencies that have everywhere enslaved men have been the passions kindled by war and bloodshed. And when civilization has gone down, it has been in the action and reaction of violence. What our modern civilization needs to extricate it from the dangers that under present conditions gather with its advance, are intelligence and conscience. But violence arouses passion. And in the breast of the civilized man still lurk the same passions that belonged to human nature when men chipped flints into spear heads.

All idea that violence may secure or hasten social reform is based upon the vague notion that there is some particular body of men who have the power but lack the will to bring about social reform, and who may be forced or frightened into doing so. This is a notion akin to those so vaguely but widely diffused, that hard times are due to greedy speculators; low wages to grasping employers; and corrupt government to depraved politicans. But all such notions are childish. Social and political evils are due not to particular men or sets of men, but to general conditions in the maintenance of which the whole people are concerned, and to the changing of which the general intelligence and the general conscience must be aroused. Even in Russia it is not the police and the army that maintain autocratic government so much as the superstitious loyalty of the Russian peasant. But of

all countries in the world this is most clearly true of the United States. There is here no privileged aristocracy, no established church, no standing army loyal to a person or a dynasty. Here all power is in the hands of the people - of the working masses, who constitute the great majority of the voters. They can make or unmake politicians; they can give power to this party or to that party; they can rewrite the laws when they will and according to their will. If voters are bought, it is because there are men willing to sell as well as men willing to buy; if legislative bodies are corrupt, it is because voters tolerate a system which brings corrupt men to the front. It is not any set or sets of bad men who are oppressing and misgoverning the American people, but the American people themselves.

And if it is true that there are among workingmen many who are disposed to condone acts of violence when committed by those who assume to be the champions of oppressed labor, is it not true that there is the same blind class feeling among the well-to-do? When Pinkerton detectives shoot down strikers; when superserviceable policeman club socialists, is there any outcry from those who deem themselves conservative?

The bursting of a dynamite bomb in a Chicago street; the hanging of men in the United States for a crime for which, had it been committed in Russia, we would not have extradited them; the fact that the idea of law and the idea of justice are already in the minds of thousands so far divorced that those whom the courts condemn as deserving the highest punishment known to our code, are by considerable bodies of our people thought of as martyrs, are ominous things. There

is no danger, perhaps, that organized anarchism will ever prove formidable in the United States, but there is danger that the minds of men becoming familiarized with ideas of violence, violence will here and there break out. There is danger that the frenzy born of injustice on the one side and the frenzy born of fear on the other, may, by a series of actions and reactions, lead to results the most disastrous.

The anarchists are not our most dangerous class. Back of the men who died on Friday in Chicago with a fortitude worthy of a better cause; back of the men who sympathize with them and their deed, is a deep and widespread sense of injustice. Those who are most responsible for the existence of this are those who, having time and opportunity and power to enlighten the public mind, shut their eyes to justice and use their talents and opportunities to prevent the arousing of thought and conscience and to decry any peaceful remedy that may be proposed.

There is one body of men in the United States who do see the causes and the cure of that social injustice which is arraying men against each other in combinations of capital and combinations of labor, which is bringing forth the millionaire on the one side and the tramp on the other, which is exciting class hatred and class passion. There is a party which does not denounce men, but aims by constitutional and peaceful means to change general conditions, and which appeals to intelligence and to conscience . This party polled 78,000 votes in the state of New York at the last election. But it will poll more. In it, or, rather, in the ideas that it is disseminating, is

the hope of true conservatism. But these ideas have to make their way, not merely against the ignorant poor and the ignorant rich, but against the misrepresentations of a majority of those who by the positions they hold and the influence they wield, are most bound to do their best to enlighten the public mind.

LEHIGH VALLEY COAL STRIKE.

The strike in the Lehigh valley coal region still continues, and Master Workman McGarvey and a committee from the Knights of Labor of that district are in this city making an appeal for funds to sustain the strikers. This strike is one which ought to command sympathy where any strike can. The miners are asking for a pitiful increase of eight per cent upon a scale of wages which just barely enables them to live. Any one who visits the Lehigh valley, even in ordinary times, will see that the highly protected American laborer, in this part of Pennsylvania at least, is hardly, if at all, better off than the poorest class in western Ireland. And now, with fifteen thousand men out of employment, the region is as though swept by the abomination of desolation. The sympathies of the store-keepers in the Lehigh region are with the miners, and they have contributed liberally to the support of the strike, while from the other coal mining fields large contributions have been drawn. But more is needed. The operators are, of course, suffering heavy losses, but in the contest of endurance they are in better position than the men, for , though they lose for the time what they otherwise would make, and their mac-

hinery is idle and rusting, it is yet true, as a Scotch mine owner, puts it, that "land no eats anything," while men must eat or die.

How those passive, industrial wars, called strikes and lock-outs, injure non-combatants, as do the active wars waged with rifle and cannon, is shown by the advance of coal in New York to eight dollars per ton. And the real root of all this strife is indicated by the news that the combined coal companies are about to use their last and stringent means of coercion in the eviction of the striking miners from what they call their homes.

Labor of itself is perfectly helpless in these Pennsylvania coal fields, because the laborer has no legal right whatever to the use of land, the indispensable natural element of human life and human production. There is enough unused coal land in this region to give employment to a far greater number than the men who are now standing idle because they cannot agree on a matter of wages with their employers. But this land, though unused, is all held in private ownership, and although neither the miners themselves nor any one who wanted to employ them in mining coal could get permission to use this land without paying for it a very high price, it is taxed at purely nominal rates - land worth thousands of dollars per acre paying taxes at the rate of seventeen cents per acre. Not satisfied with the ownership of all this mineral land, the operators in this region make a practice of neither selling nor leasing even the right to the surface of as much ground as would enable a miner to put up a house. The mine workers are all compelled to live in what are called company houses, and before they enter one of them are obliged to sign an agree-

ment called a "cut-throat lease," by which their right to legal formalities is waived, and the owner is empowered to put them out on five days' notice. There are many points in this region from which all the earth that the eye can rest upon, even from an elevation, is the property of one man or one corporation. On these lagge estates, all other "free and independent citizens" of the state of Pennsylvania and of the United States of North America, although very many of them have been born upon the spot, are mere tenants at will, who can not only do no work without this earth owner's permission, but can at any time be driven forth at his will and caprice. In this region one may hear just such stories of individual tyranny and oppression as may, or, perhaps rather, could, some years ago, have been heard in western Ireland, with the addition of stories of robbery by the pluck-me store, at which in defiance of the Pennsylvania law designed to prevent this abuse, the miners on some of the coal estates are yet compelled to trade. Under this state of things labor combinations are the only means by which the coal miner can prevent himself from being utterly crowded to the wall, and strikes his only weapon. He has not yet learned to use the ballot, and is only in some cases waking up to the fact that a man without any right to use land is as unnatural a thing as a fish without water.

The work of the coal miner is exceedingly hard and dangerous, and as it is carried on makes men old and broken down long before their time. Yet the average pay in the anthracite coal regions of the much protected state of Pennsylvania, which ought to be a paradise for workingmen if high tariffs could really protect labor, only amount,

according to the report of the Pennsylvania bureau of industrial statistics for 1885, to $6.67 per week. The wages, for an eight per cent increase on which the Lehigh miners have struck, amount to about thirty-nine cents for the mining of a cubic ton of coal, while the royalty paid to the owners of the coal in this district, when mines are worked or leased from the owner, will average nearly, if not quite, fifty cents per market ton. The bulk of the coal increases with breaking, and thus, while the miner who works in danger and darkness under the surface of the earth, get thirty-nine cents for mining a certain quantity of coal, the mere owner - not the operator, who furnishes capital and machinery, but the mere owner, who, as owner, does nothing whatever to aid in the production of coal - gets some sixty-two and a half cents for giving his gracious permission to break that much coal out of the vein in which it was implanted ages before man came upon the earth.

Implanted in the vein for whom?

The laws operative in the Lehigh valley as in all the rest of the coal regions and all over this broad land, say virtually that this coal was implanted in the vein - this gathered sunlight, with all its potency of light and heat and power, was during the long ages of the carboniferous era stored up - for the Lehigh coal and navigation company and Messrs. Pardee, Coxe and others, their heirs and assigns; and that no other human being has any right to take or use it, save with their permission and upon their terms.

But go into any Sunday School and ask the youngest scholar, "Who made the coal?" and he will answer, "God."

Ask him for whom God made the coal, and you shall see if he

will think of any Lehigh coal and navigation company or any Mr. Pardee or Mr. Coxe.

So true is it, as some one has said, that if great wrongs perpetuate themselves from generation to generation, it is only because the man hushes the questionings of the child.

Signed: Henry George,
November 19, 1887.