The Melbourne Riots

And How Harry Holdfast and His Friends Emancipated the Workers

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Contents

PREFACE.

The present time is a most hazardous one. Good men and women, of all stations in society, recognize that the existing social conditions are most unjust and likely to suffer a serious crash in the not far distant future. Naturally enough the thinkers of the age, are trying, through the channels of pleasing fiction, to present a solution of the knotty social problem which confronts us; but, in the present writer's opinion, although their efforts have been an inestimable boon to humanity, they have all, with perhaps one exception, fallen short of the desired goal. “Looking Backward” is too impracticable, and too authoritarian to be desirable even if it were practicable; as the clever Writer of “Looking Further Forward” has well shown; “Caesar's Column,” although a masterpiece of destructive reasoning, is unsatisfactory to those who would see society build itself anew; “News from Nowhere” is too exclusively sentimental; while the hosts of minor works are not characterized by any ideas of special value in the solution of the problem. Even “Freeland,” the able work of Dr. Hertzka which towers above all the others in profundity of thought and correct economic insight, is based upon a scheme of such colossal magnitude as to somewhat detract from its immediate utility, and furthermore it relies for its execution upon the means of the wealthy. In the present work the writer endeavors to show how the oppressed classes can work out their own emancipation without reliance upon the uncertain assistance of the wealthy.

The author gladly acknowledges the valuable assistance rendered by Mr. Philip Kleinmann and Mr. David A. Crichton (late Government Agricultural lecturer), who have supplied valuable information used in working out some of the details; and also several other gentlemen and ladies, who have kindly furnished some useful particulars.

If the present work should be the means of stimulating the workers to strive to emancipate themselves by rational methods, the author's labors will not have been in vain.

D.A.A.

Melbourne, *November*, 1892.

I.

"Harry, if you take my advice you'll not go to that meeting."

"But I don't intend to take your advice, John. I know what I'm about. And I know that my presence will have an important effect in deciding the fate of those unfortunate wretches, who are almost driven mad with hunger and oppression. What with those crafty capitalistic wire-pullers aggravating them to deeds of rashness and riot on the one side, and the equally unprincipled tactics and dangerous utterances of those favour-seeking demagogues on the other, they are in the greatest danger that they could possibly be. They might as well be at the mercy of wild beasts in a jungle. I have strong misgivings that some serious calamity will befall them to-night."

"A very good reason why you should stay at home, instead of getting into trouble over other people."

But Harry Holdfast was determined. No argument or appeal could possibly affect him—unless, indeed, to intensify his determination—and without taking any notice of his brother's retort, he immediately left the house, and made his way to town where the "monster indignation labor meeting" was advertised to be held.

Harry was a popular character amongst the working people of Melbourne, because he was not only an eloquent labor agitator, but he had a happy method of putting himself on friendly terms with his hearers by appealing to the better natures of friend and foe alike. Of course, he had his enemies, as every one has had who has tried to make the world better than he found it; but they were not many, and he gave them little opportunity of pointing the finger of slander against him, the worst that they could say of him being that he was an "agitator." But as he was proud of the title, that did not trouble him.

But there were other things that *did* trouble Harry, and troubled him deeply.

There was a terrible state of destitution amongst thousands of the working classes, not only in Melbourne, but throughout the whole colony of Victoria; in fact, the "depression," as it was called, had become common throughout the whole civilized world. Men were out of employment in all directions. Work had ceased to be scarce, and had become totally unobtainable for great numbers of them. The ranks of the unemployed were growing greater and greater from week to week. Charitable societies were organizing in every big centre of population, but they were powerless to effect any material change in the state of affairs; all the wealth they dispensed in six months could not keep those already out of employment supplied with the necessaries of life for a single day. The Government had been compelled to start various relief works, but they only employed, a very few, and only succeeded in swelling the already heavy burden of taxation. Economy was sought by retrenchment in the civil service, hundreds of public servants being dispensed with, but this only helped to throw more men into the growing ranks of the unemployed and left the solution of the difficulty as far off as ever. The labor party who after many years of untiring struggle had got a very numerous representation in the legislature, were powerless to tear down the strong vested interests arrayed against them as they had hoped to do, and were as ignorant of the ultimate causes of the terrible depression which was threatening

to break up society as they were divided in opinion as to the wisest expedients to tide over the present difficulties; as to a radical and permanent cure, they did not dare to entertain the thought of it.

The streets of Melbourne were thronged with men in vain search of employment; there were a few of the genuine *genus* "loafer" amongst them, but the great mass were strong; steady, worthy fellows, anxious and willing to work, but with no work that they might put their hands to. It was estimated that they numbered no less than 50,000 persons. And yet it was pointed out that, by the statistics of Hayter's "Year Book," the Colony was wealthier than it had ever been before; in fact, it had become in proportion to its size, one of the wealthiest countries in the world. But despite this fact, the very employers themselves were beginning to share the fate of the wretched workers; bankruptcies were, increasing daily, shop after shop was closing its shutters, merchants were reducing their imports and farmers ceasing to send their products to market for want of buyers. Some of the largest firms in the city, which had always been felt to be as stable as the Government itself, found themselves compelled to suspend operations, and in many cases to give up their entire estate, thus throwing thousands out to starve.

The climax was reached when, on the day before out story opens, the gigantic firm of Goldschmidt, Beere and Co. had dismissed their entire staff at the shortest notice, and men, women and children were rendered workless, homeless and without prospect of food before them.

II.

It was not long before Harry reached the spot where the Monster Indignation Labor Meeting was being held. There were already a large number present and fresh visitors continued to arrive until the meeting had assumed larger dimensions than any other that had ever been held in Melbourne, and it yet wanted several minutes to the time when the proceedings were to commence. It was with some difficulty that Harry managed to elbow his way through the crowd to the lorry which was in readiness for the speakers of the evening to "orate" from; but at last, amidst loud cheering, he-mounted the "platform" along with the others. The sight was one calculated to cheer the heart of any enthusiast who longed to see the workers strive for a higher social level than the one they now occupied. The lorry stood some fifty yards from the footpath, in the centre of a large block of land where several immense stores had stood only a few months before. On both sides and behind, were thousands of working men, many of whom had their wives and children with them; and away in front, stretching right across Flinders Street, until traffic was well-nigh impeded, the immense ocean of proletaires stretched forth in its rugged grandeur. Harry felt strange sensation pass over him as he beheld this extraordinary sight. Here and there were policemen mixing up in the crowd and preserving "order," while down the street were a few dozen mounted troopers. But these were; such a mere handful, compared with the great mass of working people present, that they attracted little attention. On the lorry were about twenty other men besides Harry, and a remarkable assortment of physiognomies they presented. One big fellow, with firm set limbs, rather dark complexion and heavy frowning brow, was perhaps the most noticeable of all; but alongside him was a remarkable little fellow, fussing about and gesticulating to those about him, and acting as though he fancied himself the host of those present. This strange personage caught one's eye at a glance—his peculiar attire, somewhat resembling that of the French peasantry, his small limbs, his big bullet head out of all proportion to the rest of the body, and his bull-like neck, all showed him to he a man of unusual characteristics, and did not favorably impress a spectator upon first seeing him; but when one looked closer into his face, and saw the cunning, piercing little eyes, the big, sharply-cut and thin-lipped mouth, and the strained effort at a permanent smile, which, like Harte's Heathen Chinee, was "child-like and bland" to a degree, the interest in this little individual became intense, and made one almost forget the presence of the Herculean agitator beside him. On the precise moment that the Post Office clock in Elizabeth Street chimed seven o'clock, the big man arose to his feet to address the meeting. Loud applause and ringing hurras greeted him from thousands of throats. When the deafening noise had subsided he addressed them as follows:—"Comrades, in the war of labor against the tyranny of capital (loud applause), it is with pleasure that I can't express that I open this mighty meeting, a meeting which I hope and believe will never be forgotten in the history of human progress (hear, hear, and bravo), a meeting that is not summoned like its predecessors to talk, and talk, and never do more than talking, but a meeting that is resolved to strike the final blow at the monster of capitalism which is devouring us (vociferous applause). We are here to-night, friends, not to ask our rights—we have done that too long already—we are here to take our stand

as men and women, and to enter into a fight to the death for a world which has been stolen from us and which awaits us under our very feet" (tremendous cheering and hooraying interrupted the speaker, who presently proceeded), We are here, I say, to fight the greatest fight in all history, not to repeat the little petty contest between a few thousand English and Russian warriors, or to lead the hired butchers of Germany to cut the throats of the hired butchers of France; we are not here to massacre Afghans, Egyptians, Zulus, or Maories; we are not here to perpetuate the senseless feuds between nations and nations, between creeds and castes, or between race and color; but we are here to affirm the unity of all humanity, to assert that in the future the world shall only know one race, one people, one country, without creeds or colors to disunite them; and we are here to assert the dominion of the people and the final subjugation of the race of luxurious vampires who have held them in bondage since the dawn of civilization (loud applause). We are here to protest against the fiendish inhumanity of the Goldschmidt Beere and Co's (hisses and groaning), and to avenge ourselves upon their kind the whole world over. Permit me, comrades, to call upon the first speaker, Samuel Sharples."

An intelligent-looking young fellow here arose, and after the applause following the oration of the last speaker had subsided, he spoke, with considerable emotion, as follows:—

"Friends, you have heard what our worthy chairman, Tom Treadway, has said, and I am afraid any words of mine will sound very dull after his fiery eloquence (cries of "No", "no"), but I should be ashamed of myself if I did not do all in my power to help the cause of labor in this awful period of distress and death. Why do we have all these troubles year after year? Have we not a government to protect us, and to look after our welfare? True, they don't do so; but that, I am afraid, is our own fault (cries of "No," and interruption). Well, friends, I think it is so. We put bad men to rule over us, and then wonder why they rob us and compel us to be idle; we should send men to represent us who would know our interests and look after them. We want the land of the people thrown open to the use of the people (hear, hear); we want all the capital and machinery to be in the hands of the State instead of in the hands of private parasites; we want to tax the absentee and the land-grabber instead of taxing the poorly-paid laborer; we want—" Here someone interjected "We're tired of wanting," and a restless chain of interruption made itself gradually felt over the meeting, entirely drowning the voice of the speaker, who was compelled to resume his seat on the lorry.

Treadway then announced that Harry Holdfast would next address the meeting.

Harry was up in a moment. His familiar face was greeted with the most enthusiastic applause. "Friends," said he, "and foes, if any are present, we are met as the chairman has said, to open the greatest war the world has ever seen (hear, hear), but are we to come out victors or vanquished? ("Victors" was echoed from some thousand throats). Let us hope so. The great Shakespeare has said, 'Beware of entrance to a quarrel, but being in't, bear it, that the opposer may beware of thee,' and I feel that we are now in such a quarrel; long have we feared to enter it—for centuries have we and our forefathers groaned beneath injustice and oppression, but we can wait no longer; the blight of capital is fast crushing us out of existence, our wives and children are dying in front of us because we cannot, we *dare not* win the bread with which to sustain their lives. We have not courted the quarrel; we are in the thick of the fight; capital has its knee upon our throat and is fast strangling the breath from our bodies. Shall we longer endure it? (loud cries of "No") No, friends, let us bear our quarrel; and let us bear it like true men and women, that those who oppose may admire our courage and determination, and fear our strength, our numbers, and our undying resolve to be free (enthusiastic applause). But how are we to be free? Shall we wait for

freedom with our arms folded? Shall we follow the advice of friend Sharples and ask our wealthy oppressors to tax themselves instead of us? (cries "No") Shall we ask them to free the land when they all exist by keeping it from us, and making us work upon it for their profit because they call it theirs? No, comrades, we are truly told that 'God helps those who help themselves,' and we need never hope to be free while we wait for others to set us free; *we must free ourselves* (applause). The actions of Goldschmidt, Beere &. Co (loud groans) I was about to say that the action of that firm in dismissing their hands, cruel as it is in its effects; upon us, was inevitable under the conditions in which we all live. They dared not do otherwise. You or I in their place must have done the same (cries of "No, no," and interruption). You disbelieve me friends, but I can assure you it is as I say. Had they not closed yesterday, in a few weeks at most their creditors would have compelled them to close, for their stores are glutted with the goods which we have made, and we, the workers, who should be their principal customers, as we embrace the greater part of the population, have no money to purchase our requirements of them and thus to provide them the revenue with which they pay their own debts (hear, hear). No, friends, we have entered on the labor war, but let us fight to win. Let us get the tools with which we work into the hands of us who use them, instead of letting them bring the revenue to those who work not to create it—I refer to the capitalists. We must learn—and learn immediately—how to co-operate together so as to secure the products of our labor for ourselves, to peacefully acquire possession of the lands which legal robbery has despoiled us of, and to become independent of the speculative individual who under pretext of lending us the requisite machinery with which to work for our own benefit, dips his hand deep into our pockets, depriving us of nearly all we have produced, and makes us the wretched slave of his accursed gold."

The chairman next called upon Felix Slymer, the remarkable little bullet-headed agitator who sat next to him, and whom we have already briefly described. The applause that greeted this intimation was simply astounding. If the other speakers were popular, Slymer was more than popular—he was their very idol.

Gently rising to his feet, he softly stroked together his delicate and flabby little hands, apparent strangers to toil from their appearance, and slowly bowing before before them he delivered himself deliberately and in a markedly simulating manner of the following:—"Mr. Chairman, fellow Proletaires, Ladies and Gentlemen,—It is with the greatest pleasure that I note the unusual warm with which you greet my appearance. I feel it keenly. It gives me confidence. It tells me that you repose in me the confidence I have in you. I trust I shall be worthy of your esteem (Hear, hear, and cries of "You are worthy," &c.). Well friends, I again thank you for your kind opinion of me; and I must now tell you what I think, and what I feel, and what I intend to do in the present desperate crisis. That it is desperate you all know as well as I do. Absolute slavery is not worse than it. This wage-slavery we are suffering under our bourgeoisie system of cut-throat competition is worse than death itself. But what are we to do? I agree with friend Sharples that we want worthy men to represent us (a cry, "We want you there"). Thanks, friend, but I am afraid I am not so worthy: I only wish I were. But when do we get proper representation? Never. All we get is representation of the squatters, the bankers, the swindling syndicates, the Jewish sweaters, the land sharks, and all who represent the vested interests of the time. Our present governments are rotten—rotten to the core; we need hope for nothing from *them*. But can we hope for anything from those co-operative 'castles in the air' that our individualistic friend, Holdfast, is recommending us? No; they're the panacea of the capitalist, a bone that the bourgeoisie throws out of his mansion window to keep the starving dog of labor quiet. If it were not an insult, I would almost think that

Holdfast is in the hands of the capitalists, and is employed by them to draw co-operation as a red herring across our trail to take us off the scent. No, friends, we mustn't be deceived by these bogus remedies. We must strike the tree at its root. We must meet like with like. The present government is in armed force against the people. Soft words and co-operative stores can't resist jails and bullets. We must meet force with force. (Here a group of gruff-voiced followers of Slymer grunted assent, and the great part of the meeting applauded). Yes, we must arm ourselves; we must train our unemployed and drill them as soldiers that they may fight the hired soldiers of the capitalists and defend the homes of the laborers against the deadly fire of the paid murderers in the employ of our bureaucratic government. We must teach them how to make explosives, and *to use them*; (applause, dissent, and serious interruptions now kept increasing and the speaker's voice was only heard at intervals)—we must drive them into——" (rest of sentence lost in the uproar)——"capitalistic hounds must be swept into ——," "dynamite and other——" "capture and hang or burn the ——," these, and a similar lot of detached phrases were heard above the uproar, which had now become terrific; but nothing could be distinctly understood that the speaker was uttering.

Suddenly the police moved forward, and ordered the lorry and its occupants to disperse before further trouble was caused by their inflammatory utterances. A great rush ensued. The din was terrific. Large crowds of soldiers were seen hurriedly marching up St. Kilda Road headed by torches, and mounted police were gathering in immense numbers in all directions. The driver of the lorry, fearing danger, instantly turned his horses heads, and endeavoured to make for the street, which he gained after considerable delay and difficulty. No sooner had he reached Russell Street than he turned up to escape the crowd; but they followed him. The scene now became one of wild confusion, and it was with difficulty that the powerful horses managed to draw their burdens up the steep hill owing to the surging mass pressing and swaying so heavily against it, many being thrown down and trampled to death by one another, and numbers falling under the wheels of the lorry. Upon arriving at the corner of Collins Street further progress became absolutely impossible. The crowd had now increased by thousands, and rumours were all over the city bringing fresh throngs to the scene. No horse, or no body of horses, could possibly force its way through the immense wall of humanity that came surging up from Bourke Street. One would think that all Victoria had come to witness the indescribable scene.

Seeing that they could make no further retreat the occupants of the lorry held council together as to what they should do under the extraordinary circumstances. The general feeling was to quietly leave the wagon, one at a time, and silently disperse to their homes; but Felix Slymer would not hear of such a thing. He charged them with cowardice, and said that those who were so anxious to fight capital were trying to flee at the first sniff of danger. This rebuke was too much, and they decided to remain.

Taking in the state of affairs, and noticing the perplexity of the labor leaders, Slymer instantly brought himself "in evidence" before the crowd. Hastily rising to his legs, he once more addressed the masses of people who thronged the streets, urging them to resist this "unwarranted breach of discipline on the part of the officials" as he called it, and inciting them to deeds of violence to redress this wrong; he called, in the name of justice, upon those who had been "spoliated" by the capitalists to take their revenge and "loot the shops of the Collins Street aristocracy." Instantly a rush was made down the street, shutters were torn down, windows smashed with the broken shutters, and the jewellers' and other shops were burst open. A cry was raised "To the banks!" and large numbers rushed for these time-honored representatives of vested interests, but they

were too firmly constructed to be burst open, and the crowds returned to the shops of the "small-fry" capitalists. The police and the troopers were powerless to stop the furious onslaught of the people, although they mercilessly beat them with their batons and their swords until wounded and dying rioters were lying about in all directions.

While all this was going on, the lorry remained in its old place, and the great mass of the crowd stayed around it, and hopelessly hemmed it in, while Slymer continued his oration calling on the people to resist force with force. Suddenly Slymer disappeared, and it was thought he had been violently kidnapped by an agent of the capitalists. Harry, noticing his disappearance, hastened to fill his place, and stepping forward on the lorry he cried out "Friends, be calm. There is some treachery here. Let us disperse." But he spoke too late.

All at once, the mayor of the city appeared, armed with a sheet of paper which turned out to be the Riot Act, and he appeared to read from it, although no one, not even himself, could hear a word of it, and no sooner had he done than a general rush was made by the police and a number of civilians upon the occupants of the lorry. Men were fighting each other indiscriminately. Women and children were screaming and fainting, and the horses plunging about wildly and trampling many many poor wretches to death. All of a sudden a series of terrific explosions occurred, shaking the earth like an earthquake and causing the steeple of one of the neighbouring churches to fall on the heads of a number of unfortunate victims beneath. Instantly there was a stoppage of the firing and fighting. All seemed to think that the world had come to its long-expected end, and gazed awe-stricken at each other in the sickly glare of the few torches that still continued to be held aloft. Recovering their presence of mind, and taking advantage of the temporary astonishment of the crowd, the police rushed for the occupants of the lorry, and after serious fighting, with the assistance of the soldiery, they captured eleven of them and, with considerable difficulty, marched them off in custody to the watchhouse where they were securely lodged.

The effect was marvellous. All the fighting ceased instantly. The crowd, having lost their leaders, seemed to have lost their hopes. Their frantic fury gave place to anxious fear. Slowly the streets commenced to assume their former appearance, the throng dispersed, the torches ceased to lend their ghastly glare to the ghastly scene; and although thousands continued to hang about the streets during the whole of the night, the greater part wended their way to their homes to brood in silence over the terrible drama they had been the unexpected witnesses of.

"It's late now, and Harry not yet home, I fear my worst suspicions are realized, mother," said John Holdfast that night.

"Oh, don't fear," said the old lady, "Harry is certainly a rash young fellow, and a foolish chap to bother about other people's troubles when he always gets constant work himself, but he's not likely to get into any serious trouble. He's too temperate and cool-headed for that."

But Harry lay in the cell along with his comrades, waiting to he tried on a charge of murder.

III.

It was a beautiful spring morning that followed the events depicted in the last chapter. The sky was clear, the air fresh and bracing, the sun delightfully warm without being oppressive. In fact, everything seemed cheerful and contented, except man. Even he, poor wretched mortal, was more or less influenced by the invigorating weather, and was in a better mood than he might otherwise have been. For the worst man amongst us is not wholly insensible to good surrounding influences, whatever theorists may say to the contrary.

It was on this cheerful morning that a young man might be seen walking, or rather slinking along some of the smaller streets of the city, availing himself of the many little rights-of-way and semi-private thoroughfares, as though to escape observation, until he reached a certain little cottage in the western end of Little Lonsdale Street, where he suddenly halted, and anxiously looked round him, as though fearful of being observed. Evidently seeing no one about, he pulled a little note book from his pocket, looked at the number on the door, as though to make sure that it tallied with the one in the book, and then gently stepped forward and knocked at the door. Presently a somewhat elderly man opened it, and without a word passing between them the visitor entered and the door was instantly closed behind him.

"Well, Slymer," said the host, as soon as his visitor was seated, "did you do as I instructed you?"

"Yes," was the curt reply.

Felix Slymer, without further ceremony, pulled out some papers from his pocket and handed them to his friend, who very carefully perused them, while the little eyes of his visitor were busily employed in taking in a very exhaustive view of the apartment in which he was waiting.

Presently the elderly man folded up the papers, placed them carefully in his pocket, and turning to Slymer, said:

"That will do, Slymer; you have faithfully performed your mission, and here is your reward."

Slymer's eyes glistened, as his flabby hands clutched the ten bright sovereigns that were handed to him; but there was not that expression of glee that one would expect to see exhibited by one of so humble an appearance upon receipt of such a relatively large sum. Having carefully deposited the money in a secret pocket in the inner lining of his vest—he considered it unbecoming or inexpedient for one in his position to be seen using a purse—he was about to withdraw, when the other suddenly called him over to him.

"Felix," said he, "I wish to ask you something before you go."

"What's the matter now, Grindall," was the reply, "I am not going to open my mouth for nothing."

"Oh, don't trouble yourself on that score, my friend, I am not going to ask you for 'professional' information just now. But I am a little uneasy about a paragraph I read in *The Daily Weathercock* this morning, and I thought you might enlighten me a little on the matter. Here, read it for yourself."

Taking up the newspaper as directed, Slymer instantly read the following:—

TERRIFIC RIOT IN THE CITY.

Suspicious Agencies at Work.

In another part of this issue we give full and startling particulars of the extraordinary tumult which occurred in the city last evening. The labor party, intoxicated with recent legislative victories and eager for the plunder which they have so long threatened in dark and mysterious hints, burst out in full fury last night, upon the occasion of a “monster indignation meeting” as they called it, which was held in Flinders Street and subsequently shifted to the corner of Collins Street and Russell Street where the tragic events narrated elsewhere took place. It appears that several of the discontented loafers, who scorn to live except upon “agitation” and charity, convened a meeting of similarly-disposed ne'er-do-wells, presumably to “consider” the present grave depression, which is sorely taxing the minds of our wisest philanthropists and statesmen, though really to carry out the nefarious designs which they had brutally conceived and prearranged at a secret meeting held for the purpose some weeks before. Sharples, Holdfast, and a number of other roughs, who are well known to the police, are mainly instrumental for the disturbances and the terrific loss of life which has accompanied them, but the public will be glad to hear that they are all, or nearly all, in safe custody, and ready to take their quietus at the proper moment. It will not be prudent, at the present moment, to say too much on the subject, as the police have the matter in hand and are diligently working to forge such of chain of evidence as shall rid society of this terrible pest that has so long been allowed to destroy all public confidence, to frighten capital out of the colony, to absolutely stop all commercial enterprize, and to drive tens of thousands of deserving men and women to poverty and destitution. It is sufficient, for the present, to say, that one of the miserable cowardly wretches has shown the white feather already, and has exposed the whole of their nefarious designs, their operations for the past four years, the names and whereabouts of the ringleaders, and several other facts that we dare not mention. We cannot disclose the name of the miserable traitor, as he is still allowed to move among his old *confreres* in order to report their further proceedings, he still being one of the most trusted among them; and were we to name him they would set upon him and ferociously murder him, as they murdered those poor innocent men, women and children last night. We may, however, mention that our old and esteemed fellow-citizen, Gregory Grindall, our late and much-respected mayor of Melbourne, has munificently offered a reward of £50 to anyone who will give such information as will lead to the conviction of the thief or thieves, who during the riot carried off £20,000 worth of jewellery from his magnificent warehouses in Collins Street, and £25 to anyone who will expose the secrets of the labor organizations.

When Slymer had finished reading the paragraph, Grindall looked steadily at him, as though waiting some expression of feeling from him.

“Do you know anything of this matter?” he asked at length.

“Why do you ask?” responded Slymer.

"Do you not see? You know what I mean.”

“Yes, I know; but you underestimate the risk.”

“You think £25 too little. Of course; I understand. What would you have me make it?”

“One thousand.”

“Great heavens! man, you seem to think I am made of money.”

“I dont know what else you're made of.”

"Slymer, you know I can't afford to resist your cruel insinuation, now that I have reposed such confidence in you. But really, the depression is so serious just now that one needs to look at every £5 note to keep out of the Insolvency Court."

"My price is a thousand. If it don't suit you don't bargain. I know very well you won't get anyone else to do your dirty work for fifty times that sum, and you know it too."

"Agreed, then," said Grindall, "but give me time."

"I will wait one month, provided you give me £100 now."

"Right, then. But before you go, one word more. Were you present at this meeting last night?"

"I was. Don't you see my name amongst the speakers?"

"Yes; but how is it you were not incarcerated with the others?" "In the *melee*, I feigned being shot, and was able to crawl under the cart unobserved, where I waited until the disturbances were over, and then escaped unnoticed."

"That will do. Good-bye. I wish you success."

"Yes, but only for the sake of your own banking account, you old miser," muttered Felix to himself as the door closed behind him and he was once again in the street.

IV.

Gregory Grindall was unhappy. Not that that was anything unusual with him because he was never a happy individual at the best of times. He had money certainly—abundance of it, in fact—but what pleasure could he derive from it when he was in constant danger of losing it? He had hosts of friends, too, amongst the higher, as well as the lower classes of society, but what did all their friendship benefit him when he mistrusted everyone of them and believed that most of them mistrusted him? True, he had the press extolling his innumerable virtues (real or imaginary) and the principal daily organ, of which he was part proprietor, lauded him to the skies; but as others in his own position understood the worth of the eulogies lavished upon him by the press, and as the pesky rabble were beginning to mistrust everything and everyone recommended by the "bourgeoisie press," as they termed it, and as moreover the other papers had now and then a mercenary interest in supporting his rivals, what good, after all, would the press be to him in time of adversity, and with all the anxieties it brought upon him did it assist in his happiness? Certainly not. There is no happiness in life, where one is in constant anxiety. Although money rendered miserable all those poor wretches without money, there was no concealing the fact that it didn't succeed very well either in bringing happiness to those who had lots of it. At least, so Grindall thought. He believed himself to be worth considerably over a million pounds, but then his liabilities were something enormous. As to his assets, he could not possibly estimate them, because half his investments appeared to be unsound now that the terrible depression was settling on everything—mines were failing, banks bursting, creditors failing without paying a shilling in the pound; and worse than all, he could not immediately convert his assets into cash as he desired to do, and the banks were so panic-stricken they feared to make advances to anyone except upon the most ruinous terms.

Gregory Grindall had lived a life full of varied business experience. Starting humbly, as many successful men have done before him, he had terrible odds to fight against. Often would he look back at the happy time when as a little errand boy he honestly worked for the few shillings which every week he took home to his anxious parents. Then he showed such intelligence and diligence that he got a situation as a clerk in a position of trust; but owing to the dishonesty of a fellow-worker, he was dismissed in disgrace on a false charge of embezzlement. Then he skipped from one thing to another until he chanced to form the acquaintance of an influential local councillor, who got him a job working for the corporation, and he gradually ingratiated himself into the favours of the councillors by his willing ways and his friendly manner. Then he saw the petty scheming, the selfish intrigues and the unscrupulous overreaching that appear to constitute about three-fourths of the *raison d' etre* of municipal governing bodies; and he was at first disgusted. Then he got so accustomed to seeing privileged intrigue trampling down meritorious effort that he became quite used to it, and he began to look upon it as the right thing after all—"the right of might" as he used to ease his conscience by labelling it. Then he watched his opportunity until he got in a few little swindles himself, "made money" as the saying is; got a little property somehow or other; began to be known publicly; got elected to the council, and

proceeded step by step until he became mayor of the city of Melbourne, proprietor of one of the largest jewellery establishments in the colony, newspaper proprietor, mining share-broker, and a large shareholder in several of the largest banking syndicates in Australia. But still he wasn't happy.

Gregory paced up and down the room like a caged lion, and it was very evident some terrible weight was upon his mind. "I wish the damned thing was all over," he muttered to himself; "what's the good of a fellow worrying and worrying his short life out if its all going to come to this? What's the good of wealth when you can't realize upon it, and honors when only a lot of avaricious hounds respect for them—and even *their* respect is only envy after all. It's all very fine for Parson Wilkins to talk about "the duty of the rich towards the poor"—bah! why doesn't the fat old beast, with his twenty pounds a week rolling in for doing nothing, why doesn't *he* practise those duties to the poor that he talks about? The miserable old wretch, he growled at me the other day because the interest on his shares in the International Chartered Bank had fallen two-and-a-half per cent., and only the month before I had cautioned him against leaving his ten thousand deposit in the Perpetual Prosperity Bank just in time for him to withdraw before it went smash. And that Slymer! the ungrateful little wretch! snivelling about my not being able to get anyone else to do my 'dirty work.' Dirty work, indeed, the insolent wretch! but I'll be even with him yet. If I don't get that thousand pounds back some day, aye, and with interest added, my name's not Grindall, by heavens it isn't!" The prospect of revenge seemed greatly to please the irate old millionaire, and to banish the prospects of his downfall from his mind; for he hastily put on his hat and gloves, and marched out into the street, slamming the door after him, with the air of one who had accomplished a decisive victory.

V.

It was a red-letter day in the history of Victorian labor, when Holdfast and his comrades were arraigned before the magistrates on the charge of murdering their fellow citizens. Never had the walls of the court held a more eager and expectant throng of men and women. The excitement a few years before over the fiendish murderer, Deeming, was nothing in comparison with it. And no wonder, for all seemed to realize that the case before the bench meant nothing less than the first decisive blow in the great struggle for supremacy between the classes and the masses. Eager speculations were indulged in as to the ultimate outcome of the impending trial. Would the authorities be severe with the prisoners, and if so what frightful revenge would the friends of the prisoners take upon their adversaries? Would the poor man have justice for the first time in civilisation's history, or had money already decided the fatal verdict? Such were the questions troubling the brains of the amazed spectators, and forming the topic of conversation amongst the thousands who thronged the streets for miles around. After the usual batch of drunks, larcenies, and petty misdeameanors had been rapidly disposed of, the great case of the Melbourne Rioters came on for hearing. After the usual preliminaries, the Crown Prosecutor stated the case, which was briefly as follows:—For a considerable time past, the police had been diligently watching a secret society, which had its headquarters in Melbourne, and had branches ramifying throughout all the industrial centres of the colonies. This society bore the ominous title of "The Knights of Revenge." For a long time their purpose was unknown, and for a considerable time even their very existence was unsuspected. But thanks to the vigilance of the police and their practised agents the nefarious operations of the villains had all been ascertained and their base designs thwarted. The president of the society was one Thomas Treadway who he was glad to say was in safe custody amongst the accused. This monster had a scheme on hand to destroy every public building in Melbourne, to take the life of every man whose wealth was excessive and who attempted to resist his murderous onslaught. Harry Holdfast, the secretary to the gang, had written letters which were now in possession of the authorities and which he was certain would send every one of them to the gallows. It was the Knights of Revenge who had convened the fatal meeting held on the First day of May, a day celebrated everywhere as the festival of labor, and it was at their instigation, and through their organization, that the atrocious deeds of that day were committed, when six hundred and five men, women and children were cruelly and remorselessly massacred and many thousands seriously wounded, in most cases beyond hopes of recovery. Many wealthy men had been "marked" for destruction by the Society among whom was their most worthy and respected citizen, Gregory Grindall; all the banks were to be plundered; the establishments of certain tradesmen, who had not supported the return of the labor party to parliamentary power, were to be looted; and every special constable, or any other person who endeavoured in any way to oppose their designs was to be "removed." The official prosecutor said he would not occupy the time of the court with full details of the ghastly plots; but would produce witnesses who would furnish the fullest and most reliable particulars.

Jonah Johnson, the first witness called, said he had known the accused for several years past. He had been a member of the Knights of Revenge for four years, having joined it when Treadway was president, a few months after its formation, when a friend of his in a state of semi-intoxication had divulged its existence. Treadway, one of the defendants, had then told witness that he meant to "destroy every wealthy loafer and every loafer's mansion before another five years were over their heads," and he believed the present riot was the first organized attempt to carry the threat into execution. He could show them copies of a newspaper called *Vengeance* [paper produced] in which the plans of destruction were depicted exactly as Treadway had described them to his sanguinary *confreres*.

Ralph Washington, the next witness called, said he knew several of the defendants personally, being himself a member of the Knights of Revenge, having joined when in poverty and despair. He had long since ceased to be an actual member, having been for two years established in business as a hair-pin manufacturer through the charitable assistance of a wealthy gentleman, but he dared not hitherto leave it formally under penalty of death. Now that the miscreants were brought to justice and out of harm's way, he did not fear to proclaim his secession from the secret body, although he had long made known his true position to the police. He had known Treadway very intimately, having come out with him in the Royal Rover, from England, nearly three years ago, when he first broached his wicked plan to organize the society now known as the Knights of Revenge. He had now at his factory in Elizabeth Street, a large quantity of bombs and other explosives, which he had allowed another member of the gang, Sharples, to deposit there immediately upon their being manufactured; the whereabouts of the "plant" being well known to police who had arranged with witness to allow the diabolical fiends to deposit all their dangerous products there without official detection. Besides the bombs, there were a large number of rifles belonging to the members of the gang; but which were fortunately called into requisition by the authorities in suppressing the great riot.

A great number of other witnesses were called, all of whom agreed in denouncing the accused as members of a secret gang of assassins whose machinations had caused the wholesale human slaughters on May Day. They also swore that Holdfast and the others had used inflammatory language inciting the mob to use violence.

Upon the prisoners being asked if they had any witnesses to bring forward or anything they wished to say in their defence, unless they wished to reserve it for their trial,

Tom Treadway boldly asserted his innocence of the crime laid to his charge. He had not taken any life during the so-called riots, for he had come there unarmed and had solely relied on his muscles to help him fight his way out of the dreadful fray. He had even taken his wife with him, so little had he anticipated the sad events. He firmly believed the whole thing was a vile concoction of the police or the capitalists. [Here the witness was sternly reminded that he must confine himself to his own defence instead of casting slurs on reputable citizens if he desired to he heard]. He would say, then, that the charges were a tissue of lies. The Knights of Revenge was a myth, as far as he knew, for he had never heard of such an organization. He had only been in the colony two years, and yet two of the witnesses had perjured themselves, and furthermore perjured each other, one saying that he (Treadway) had been president of the asserted society in Melbourne over four years ago, and another pretended member of the pretended society had stated that witness came out in the same ship with him two years later. The paper called *Vengeance* witness had never seen before its production in court, and he firmly believed some capitalists had printed it to make certain of the legal murder of the defendants. [The magistrates here stopped

the defendant's speech, and threatened that the next one who dared to make such scandalous imputations would be committed for contempt of court and deprived of further opportunity to speak].

Holdfast stoutly denied he had used language inciting to violence, and declared that the language put into his mouth by some of the witnesses for the prosecution had actually been used by one Felix Slymer, who had not been arrested for some reason but had mysteriously disappeared. Although he himself believed that a people suffering wrong at the hands of the authorities were fully justified in resorting to force to resist that wrong, still he did not think those violent measures would produce the desirable results that the labor party anticipated, and therefore he had not advised them. The witnesses were a crowd of unblushing perjurors; and the documents produced in court and said to be written by him were all deliberate forgeries and a very bad imitation of his own handwriting as he would show by some letters he had sent to his friends on several occasions. [Letters produced.]

The other seventeen prisoners asserted their innocence, and supported the statements of Treadway; one of the number, Sharples, almost foaming with rage when he contradicted the assertion that he had manufactured, and secreted bombs and other explosives with Washington, whom he denied ever having seen before any more than he had ever seen a bomb until one had been introduced in court during the examination of witnesses.

After the defendants had finished speaking, the magistrates held consultation together for a few moments, when they ordered the prisoners to be committed for trial. The nineteen miserable wretches were hurried off to their cells, and the court cleared for the day.

VI.

"Ah, yes, that is the question of all questions, after all. Whatever will become of the poor working men and women if things go on as they are doing? I sometimes think I am the most unfortunate being in the world, lying here in this cold, dark cell, with no face to cheer me—not even that of my worst enemy, much less of my friends. And I am remanded for trial, eh? Oh, yes, of course, the same old mockery to be repeated, lying perjurors to concoct falsehoods and predetermined judges to pass unjust judgment upon me. I suppose I'll be hung. But what of that. 'Good men must not obey the laws too well,' said Emerson, which of course means that good men must pay the penalty of their disobedience to those unjust laws. But what's the penalty after all? The worst they can do is take one's life. And what is the life of a proletariat? Only a life of drudgery, anxiety, poverty, and anguish; a life of death, for all life's noblest pleasure are denied us, and what we call our life is but one ceaseless round of toiling bondage to our fellows who whip and starve us to a welcome grave. Hallo! who's this?"

It was the turnkey who entered and announced that a visitor was waiting an interview with the prisoner. Holdfast was removed to the visiting place, a sort of bird-cage, with strong iron bars between the prisoner and the visitor, and wire work all round it to prevent friends from passing anything through to the unfortunate occupants. Looking through the bars, Harry instantly recognised who it was, and a sort of painful joy flitted across his troubled, though sanguine, features. It was a pale young woman, trembling with emotion, and striving hard to thrust back the bitter tears that come to solace woman in despair.

"Hypatia" said Harry, "is it you?"

"Yes, my poor friend, it is. What *can* I do for you?"

"Nothing, Hypatia, nothing."

There was a silence—a painful silence such as one almost fancies one can hear. These two brave spirits, male and female, stood looking in each other's faces. Oh! that the foes of humanity could have seen that look. Oh, that the cold heart of a Shylock might have been there to have withered under the burning intellectual glances.

"Harry, I must do something for you," said Hypatia at last. "I cannot, dare not, stand idly by, and see these human tigers take your life. I cannot part with you. To know and understand each other as you and I have done for these long years is to be united in a bond whose strength no earthly priest or lawyer could conceive. I would not die for you, as lovers do in lackadaisy tales. For one to live without the other would be death to that one that remained. No, Harry rather than die to save your life, I'd kill the fiend who took that life and kill off all his kind."

Here the turnkey rudely interrupted the conversation and said it must be confined to family matters.

"Harry," continued Hypatia, "listen while I tell you something. Since your committal, I have had a proposal of salvation offered out to me. Ugh! how it infuriates me to think of it! That fiend, that human and licentious monster, Grindall, has dared to promise me your perfect freedom if I will sate his lust with holy matrimony. As though Love's passion could he bought and sold! As

though a *woman* could become a prostitute in marriage e'en though it save her lover's life. No, Harry, I resented the insult. I struck him. He called the servants and ordered my arrest. But I was a match for the tyrant, and he well knew it. I told him that if he laid a hand upon me, the injury would cost him his life. I told him, too, that scores, aye hundreds of victims of his past wrong-doing were waiting at his gate to help me should I call upon them. And I reminded him that not one single servant could he depend upon when once I told them his unholy motives. It was enough. It struck the cur, and smote his wretched semblance of a conscience. Dismissing the servants, he ordered my departure before further trouble ensued. But calling me aside, he guaranteed your freedom if I would sojourn with him one brief day. Again I struck him; and he fell. He glared at me just like some wretched quadruped defeated in its carnal lust—a tyrant and a cur! I left, and have not seen him since."

"Hypatia, noble girl, you have suffered more than I. Oh, that we could brave the world together! But no, I must wait my captors' pleasure I cannot help you yet, Hypatia, nor can you help me. But let us wait our time. For years I have waited for a home that I could take you to, there to call you wife and know you worthy to accept that name; for years have I struggled against wrong and injustice to get a little hold upon this poor brigand-captured earth that you and I may dwell together on a spot that even greedy tyrants would not drive us from. But our time has not yet come. We can only wait, and nerve ourselves to endure the blows of our oppressors. Some day *we* may strike the blow."

"And we shall. And now I must be gone; the turnkey objects to our conversation. Good-bye, Harry."

"Good-bye."

VII.

At last the day for the hearing of the eventful trial arrived. Throngs of people were assembled about the junction of Lonsdale and William Streets long before the appointed hour, anxious to be among the fortunate few to get into the courthouse or to learn the latest scraps of information concerning the unfortunate prisoners. Large numbers of troopers and militiamen were stationed amongst the crowd to preserve order and to prevent any serious breach of the peace, for a strong feeling had grown up amongst the people that the prisoners were the victims of a vile persecution and that the almost certain sentence of death would be an unearned martyrdom that should be resisted at all hazards. No one had dared to openly express sympathy with the accused, for the press had already significantly hinted at the fate of any who should be so daring. All labor meetings had been strictly forbidden; red flags were confiscated wherever they could be found; revolutionary literature was being seized in all directions; and open air meetings of any kind absolutely forbidden. In fact, the Legislature had taken special measures to meet the emergency, and a special act of Parliament was passed making it a penal offence for anyone at any meeting whatever to advocate any unlawful course to accomplish a lawful object; and it furthermore decreed that if anyone did so suggest, by speech or print, any unlawful course to accomplish any lawful or unlawful object, that he should be held guilty of conspiracy, and that if any life were lost he should be guilty of murder, even if he had not heard the speech or read the print; and it furthermore decreed that anyone present at such a meeting, or assisting in the compilation, printing, or distributing of such print, should be held equally responsible with the speaker or writer thereof. And this astounding outrage on the boasted liberty of the subject was allowed to become law practically without protest or delay. The workers had waited many scores of years for legislation to ensure them steady employment and the fruits of their labor, and they had witnessed governments go in and out, but the legislative measure that was to bring justice to them had never come. And yet this dastardly measure to gag and destroy them was passed through both houses of the legislature, and had become law in three brief hours! It was rumoured that the labor representatives, and others who would in all probability have opposed the passage of the Bill, were bribed by large grants of land in an estate through which a proposed railway service was to be carried, and for which an enormous sum of money was voted just after the infamous “Seditious Conspiracy Bill” became law, and which promised enormous fortunes to its lucky promoters.

It was during the excitement consequent upon these remarkable legislative measures that the trial of the Melbourne Rioters took place. The evidence at the Criminal Court was alike to that in the lower court, and very little fresh matter was introduced, the witnesses for the prosecution repeating their former evidence and forging a complete network of damnatory evidence around the prisoners, who on their part repeated their innocence, refused to bring witnesses to what they asserted to be hatched up conspiracies that never existed and which could therefore have no witnesses, and asked the jury to honorably acquit them. The whole affair did not take long, for none were anxious to prolong it. And then came the judicial address to the bench. There was

a fearful silence for a few moments. Then the judge solemnly and quietly delivered his charge. After the usual preliminary instructions regarding the nature of the charges, the duties of the jury, and the heavy responsibility that rested upon their shoulders, he proceeded as follows:—

"Gentlemen of the jury—It is now your solemn duty, after considering the evidence and hearing the instructions I have given you, to decide whether the prisoners are guilty or guiltless of the charges laid against them. The charge is the worst that can possibly be laid against any human being, for it is that of violently and maliciously depriving another human being of that, which is dearer than all else to him, his life. Do not be guided by the sentiments that the learned counsel for both sides have conjured before you; for it is not your place to be swayed by fine sentiments, or any appeal to the sympathies; but it is your place to now finally decide, from the evidence placed before you, whether those unfortunate men now standing in the dock are guilty, or not guilty, of the charges laid against them. Their lives hang by a thread, and that thread is in your hands with all its grave responsibilities. If you cut that thread, you take those human lives. Hence you must be discreet, you must be certain, you must be true in your convictions, and courageous in your verdict. Society now reposes its confidence for security in yourselves. If those men are guilty of the ferocious deeds assigned to them, it looks to you to preserve it from the ravages of them and others like them, by deciding the one small word that shall launch them into eternity. Do not be swayed by considerations concerning your own personal security, or the threats of vengeance held out by the friends of the accused, nor do you allow friendships or other ties of sympathy to turn you from the strict execution of justice. But if on the evidence you are satisfied they are deserving of the extreme penalty of the law, find them 'Guilty'. On the other hand, if you do not think the evidence conclusive against them; if there is doubt of guilt in your minds; if you believe from the evidence they have not committed the crimes laid to their charge, but that the guilt rests with others; or if you think they were justified in such actions as they took, according to the laws of the land, then hesitate ere you seal their doom—acquit them. But whatever you decide, do not decide rashly, but let justice and the law sway your deliberations and determine your conclusions. Turning to the evidence, we find it asserted the accused are members of a gang of conspirators, belonging to an organization known as the Knights of Revenge. The prisoners are unanimous in denying this, though unfortunately they do not bring evidence to attempt to disprove it, and they have the sworn evidence against them of different witnesses who assert that such a body does exist and that the accused are members of it. This society; according to the witnesses for the prosecution, publishes, or published, an unlawful and seditious paper called *Vengeance*, wherein the cruel massacre of May 1st was planned and the lives and properties of certain worthy citizens, threatened with destruction. Explosives were secreted by one or more of the prisoners, similar to those used during the riot and produced in court. The accused used violent and seditious language at the meeting in question and called on the populace to resort to the violence that subsequently took place, when six hundred and five men, women and children were massacred, the accused having caused and assisted in that murder, according to the evidence of the prosecution. For the defence, there was unfortunately no sworn evidence forthcoming, the accused doggedly refusing to bring forward witnesses, or to give sworn evidence themselves, declaring the verdict to be a predetermined conspiracy against them. All they had done had been to protest their innocence—a thing nearly all criminal, as well as guiltless persons had done before them; and therefore their protest had no value in the eyes of the law. The manufacture and storage of the explosives had been proven, and although the accused had denied complicity they had failed to bring forward any evidence in support of their denial. The letters from the secretary of the organization had had

their authenticity denied by the reputed writer of them, who had produced other letters asserted to have been written by him and which certainly did not appear to be from the same pen. He had, however, failed to bring the reputed recipients of the letters into the witness box, and it was for the jury to determine whether they were genuine and of any value as evidence. They had also attempted to show that the witnesses had contradicted each other, thus destroying the reliability of the evidence, one of the witnesses having stated that a member of the accused had come out to the colony with him two years after the time that another witness had asserted his presence in Melbourne in complicity with the secret society. . . . . Such is the nature of the evidence before you, Gentlemen of the Jury, and I charge you to consider it well, that you may deal justly with the accused, not convicting them if you think any uncertainty exists concerning the guilt alleged against them, but giving them an impartial and honorable acquittal by a verdict of 'Not Guilty;' and, on the other hand, if the evidence seems to you conclusive proof of their guilt, that you bring in the only verdict possible under the circumstances,—the verdict which shall cause these wretched men to suffer the extreme penalty of the law—the verdict of 'Guilty'!"

The jury retired for a few minutes, and a painful suspense was felt all through the court while the fatal verdict was waited for. After about fifteen minutes the jury reappeared; and the foreman, his voice trembling with emotion, reported their decision as follows:—"We find the prisoners, Thomas Treadway, Harry Holdfast, Samuel Sharples, Thomas Smith, Frederick Thompson, Thomas Harrison, William Spencer, James Grace, Alfred Jackson, Michael O'Halloran, Phillip Williams, Joseph Marks, William Wilson, Adolph Nortier, Henry White, Rupert Blackman, Edwin Christopherson, Patrick Murphy, and Phelim O'Dowd guilty of wilful murder; but we recommend Thomas Treadway and Harry Holdfast to mercy on account of the inconclusive nature of some of the evidence brought against them."

The judge was not long in passing the fatal sentences. With a few well chosen words, warning them of the awful fate that awaited them, he condemned Tom Treadway and Harry Holdfast to imprisonment for life; the others he sentenced to death.

There was a sigh of relief, and all eyes were turned towards the prisoners, some of whom broke down with grief at the awful sentence; though most of them retained their composure and prepared to meet their doom as only martyrs in a glorious cause can do. There was, however, a feeling of dissatisfaction on the brows of Treadway and Holdfast, who begged to be "murdered" along with their comrades rather than rot to death in a prison cell. But their request was unheeded. All the prisoners were hastily removed, and the court cleared. Immediately on the sentence being made known outside the court, loud groans were heard; the faces of the multitude were sullen and angered. It was threatened that if the men's lives were to be forfeited an attempt would he made to liberate them and to destroy the judge and every juryman and witness who had gone against them. And now the terrible hour had arrived. Now the fatal blow was to be struck, and Melbourne was to reek with blood, and a "Cæsar's Column" to be played in grim reality!

VIII.

In the front room of a small brick cottage in Carlton, a number of men and women were gathered together, talking earnestly over the great trial of the Melbourne Rioters, with an earnestness and an intimacy with the facts that showed them to be active participators in the struggle just described. One of the men present had in his hand a copy of the *Evening Echo*, from which he was reading the latest particulars of the trial to his attentive listeners.

"There," said he at length, placing the paper on the table, "now you see what it has come to. I told you these villains would have their blood, as they had already taken the blood of the noble martyrs of Chicago; and if we don't look out, mark my words, they'll have the lives of everyone else of us too."

"That wouldn't much matter, Smythers; life isn't worth much to us when we can't earn a pound a week, and it costs us more than that to pay our rent and purchase our food and clothing," said one of the younger members of the party.

"More fool you to pay your rent, Wilberforce, when the money you earn belongs to your starving family and not to an overfed landlord. If you had all refused to pay your rents and pointed a revolver at the first chap who demanded it, these troubles would never have overtaken us. What are you going to do now? I suppose you are going to sit here like a lot of curs and let those poor devils be murdered, when—"

"It's not that we are curs," interjected another, " we'd as soon put an end to this cursed business as you would yourself, Bill, but we can't do what we like, and no more can you. I only wish I could see some way of frustrating their schemes, and preventing more bloodshed. But what can we do against the power of money? When it comes to this, that hundreds of innocent working men and women can be shot down at the secret instigation of the wealthy, and then hang our leaders who are equally innocent with the other victims, I think it's time we called a halt somewhere and began to talk sense instead of violence."

"That's always you, Walton, showing the white feather just like Holdfast does with his talk about peaceful co-operation," remarked Felix Slymer, who occupied an arm chair in the corner of the room, "you haven't the courage of Bill Smythers, so you want to stop him because he shows some."

"Look here, Slymer," said Hypatia Stephens, who had hitherto kept an attentive silence, "if you don't stop your shameful allusions to Harry Holdfast, I'll make you regret it. Don't dare charge him with cowardice in my presence, for I cannot endure it. I know Harry too well to think him a coward. He is as brave and honorable a fellow as ever breathed. Oh, that there were more like him! Never slander him in my presence, or by the living God, Slymer, you'll incur the wrath of an injured woman; and I think you know what that means."

"I don't think we ought to quarrel now," said Walton, "and I certainly think Slymer's remark uncalled for. We are met to fight the common enemy, not each other."

This remark met with general approval, and the business of the meeting was proceeded with.

"Well, comrades," said Smythers, "to test the feeling of the meeting, I'll propose that we post spies in all directions to watch the movements of our adversaries. Each spy shall carry a bomb to protect his life in case of emergency, but not for purposes of aggression. Near each spy we shall put a group of secret soldiers, each of whom shall be well armed with bombs and other weapons of destruction carefully concealed about their persons; their dress shall also be disguised to make them resemble ordinary working men carrying on their usual occupations, and as messengers of the plutocracy carrying letters and messages; they shall also be sworn in as Special Constables under fictitious names, and shall now and then furnish secret reports of bogus plots to influential public personages. We have full lists of all the jurymen and witnesses who assisted the judge in ordering the murder of our comrades, and have already a number of trustworthy men and women watching their every movement and in many cases in close confidence with them. In fact, since the trial first came on, we have been carefully working up an organization similar to that hoax called the Knights of Revenge, and have met with unexpected support and encouragement. Comrade Slymer can corroborate my words."

"Yes," said Slymer, "Smythers is correct; and although it would not be prudent for me to say much about it here, because 'walls have ears,' I have no hesitation in saying that our success is certain. I gladly support the proposition."

"Am I to understand that these persons of whom you speak, the spies and 'soldiers,' are under any organized direction from some executive body or other recognized authority?" asked one.

"I can only answer Mr. Millar's question by stating that all who have volunteered those duties, and are now performing them, have hitherto done so solely under the supervision of myself and Slymer, and two others who for certain reasons dare not be present. We are mainly met here to consider what to do in the present crisis, and to see if we can appoint such an executive out of the present meeting."

After a considerable amount of talking, the proposed executive was formed and the majority of those present swore in their adherence to the new body; the remainder, among whom were Hypatia Stephens, Harry Walton, and Fred Wilberforce, taking their departure. Then the remainder proceeded to "business." The new organization was named The Band of Justice; but they also adopted another name by which to be known to the outside world—The Excelsior Mutual Improvement Society. The adoption of this latter name would enable them to stave off the curiosity of the public, and to conduct private meetings without raising suspicion, even in the ante-rooms of public halls. Then the necessary arrangements were made to carry out the objects of the Band by appointing each to his particular office, having the necessary pass-words and grips, fixing the dates and places of their future movements, and attending to many other details that were necessary to deal with on the occasion.Special pains were taken to avoid the finding of any documentary evidence of any members of the Band by any of the authorities or spies; and for that reason an easily remembered cypher was adopted to express several important words that would be in frequent use by them, and the secretary, Felix Slymer, was instructed to keep no minutes or accounts of the Band's transactions. Having made all these necessary arrangements, the members dispersed for the night, each entrusted with a part in the fulfilment of their dangerous mission.

IX.

When Hypatia and the others left the conspirators' meeting in the Carlton cottage, they did not go each at once to their several homes; but slowly walking down Lygon Street together, and keeping on the road to avoid listeners as much as possible, they talked quietly together over the meeting they had just left and the general state of public affairs. They did not dare stand together conversing, as it would be sure to excite suspicion, and they did not know but that the first person they met might be some secret detective.

"I am afraid," said Fred Wilberforce, after they had been conversing for some time, "that nothing will come of all our efforts after all. The more I think over it, the more satisfied I am that the present state of affairs is as likely to endure as it was to come. What can you do with the workers when they never trouble about their condition until it is too late? They are certainly very anxious just now, and seem as if they were fully resolved on doing desperate deeds; but they won't do anything. Look at Smythers and those fellows trying to organize a revolutionary conspiracy amongst a lot of fools whose whole thoughts are occupied with such childish absurdities as a football or cricket match, who can tell you the names, weights and pedigrees of the winners of the Melbourne Cup in past years or the probable winning horses of this, and whose chief literary food is the perusal of penny comic papers whose is on an intellectual level with that of a children's nursery; while the preservation of their health or their liberty is a thing they never think about, but only call you a 'crank' if you mention it to them!"

"That is very true," replied Harry, "but it isn't everything. You might have added that when they can't find food for themselves and their families they always manage to poison themselves with alcohol or tobacco. But on the other hand, you must remember that nations in the past have had the same vices and yet have effected mighty changes of one kind or another. The legislative charlatans who now bamboozle the proletaire by granting land for football grounds are only imitating the tyrants of mediæval days who blinded the people with gladiatorial combats while they forged the chains of slavery tighter round their necks. But some day the slave awakes, and the chains are broken; and who knows but what the slaves of modern Melbourne capitalism may not someday do likewise? I shall not be surprised to see them do so in the present struggle, even before the fatal verdict of to-day is carried out; but I am afraid they are not yet ripe for a victorious rebellion."

"Do you think the penalties will be carried out?" asked Hypatia.

"I do not see why they should not," replied Walton. "The machinery of the law is powerful; the execution of its decrees are firmly established by custom, and are not likely to be generally resisted; the people willingly permit their rulers to pass laws to gag them; and even were they resolved on resistance they cannot trust each other, for each does not know but what his dearest friend may prove a traitor. The authorities, on the other hand, have to deal with a people who are proverbially apathetic, stupid, helpless, and loyal. For generations they have submitted to the most outrageously unjust laws, and shamefully proclaimed their allegiance to them by boasting that all their actions were 'constitutional'!"

“You spoke of traitors,” responded Hypatia, “don't you think that Felix Slymer is one?”

“No; I don't, Miss Stephens; and really I think you are wronging a worthy fellow when you suggest that he is. I know there is a sort of jealousy or dislike between Holdfast and him; but I see nothing to warrant it. He is always to the front—”

“No; not always.”

“Well, as often as anyone. He is now working up this new secret organization; he is a courageous and able advocate of revolutionary principles; and he is one of the most popular and influential members the labor party have. Although I cannot always agree with him or work with him, I often wish we had more like him.”

“l quite agree with you, Walton,” remarked Fred. “I think our friend misjudges him. Although I believe him to be rather rash and altogether too sanguine, we couldn't very readily dispense with him.”

“But he would very readily dispense with you,” was Hypatia's sarcastic reply.

The three had now reached Victoria Street, where Hypatia entered a passing tram, and they all separated and sought their respective homes, there to enjoy nature's kindest gift to the troubled brain of man—that delightful state of mental annihilation that he calls “sleep.”

X.

The day at length arrived for the execution of the now famous "Rioters." Ever since the trial, the public had kept very quiet. The dreaded attack on the jurymen and witnesses after the trial not been made, and disappointed curiosity thirsted in vain for sensation. Day after day, angry groups of men were to be seen moving here and there as though eager for the moment to arrive when the blow should be struck; but still that moment did not arrive. Men were seen loitering mysteriously about different parts of the city, and every now and then they would be rudely told to "move on" by the police, which they generally did with alacrity, either thinking discretion "the better part valor" or perhaps patiently waiting for their time to come when they should do the moving on and the authorities of to-day should be their supplicants. Rumor had it that every man "loafing" about the streets was a member of the Knights of Revenge, or some such daring body. A few others said they were only hungry victims of the present grave depression, which, by the way, had almost been forgotten now that affairs had assumed such a militant aspect. But no one seemed very clear about the matter; and but for the their fears they might have tired of speculating about it at all. But when the day arrived for the dread ceremony to be performed, the pent up feelings of the populace could not be subdued any longer. Men began to say what they were thinking, and to say it rather noisily. Women vied with the men in threats of vengeance, and showed by their demeanor that they were in desperate earnest. Even the police seemed to feel as if they had been sitting on a slumbering volcano quite long enough, for they began to be unusually haughty and officious, and were not at all scrupulous about maltreating the citizens who had deputed them to carefully watch over the them. All along the walls of the jail, at every possible point, armed men were stationed. Thousands of police in uniform or plain clothes mixed up with the tens of thousands who waited outside its grim walls. Large bodies of soldiers were stationed in all directions, and others throughout the city, at the request of the Victorian Government many of them having come from the adjoining colonies. The latter were carefully posted in the most dangerous positions, the authorities rightly reasoning that as they were necessarily ill-informed on Melbourne affairs they would be less in sympathy with the people, and therefore more amenable to duty and more likely to fire upon their unfortunate fellow-men when ordered to do so by their commanding officers. All the available mounted troopers had been brought to the scene; and in their case, too, care had been taken to place those accustomed to country duty in the thickest part of the crowds. At last the hour for the execution drew near, and the favored few within the walls prepared to assist in, or witness, the revolting details with a zeal worthy of a cannibal feast. The attendants went about their accustomed work with almost as little unconcern as a cook would show in preparing her meals. And the spectators showed a zeal even more intense. There they waited, like human vultures, thirsting for the blood of the unfortunate victims, waiting to gloat over the sight of a species destroying its kind, waiting to hear the last despairing words of the tortured, or to note the quivering muscles of the unfortunate victims of human brutality. There they were, like so many tigers—no, not like tigers, for tigers and other quadrupeds do not devour their own species: it is only man, brutal man, the boasted "lord of creation" who

stoops to such base deeds as that—there they were, waiting anxiously to feast their brutal eyes on their actions. And at last those victims came. Manfully and did they eye their captors. Nobly did they hold their heads erect, as only *men* can hold them. Then there was a profound silence as the brave fellows prepared to say their parting words to their earthly tormentors. But, alas, this was denied them. Tyranny durst not let its victims speak. The devourer of his kind dare not hear the voice of him he would devour. The martyrs words might echo outside the walls, and perchance that echo might never die, but might herald in the victim's retribution. So the authorities had decided that the victims, like the martyrs of Chicago should be gagged before being murdered. A few stifled cries were all that was heard; and seventeen more human beings had suffered the utmost penalty of man's brutality. The spectators were delighted. Law was triumphant. It's power was vindicated. Its institutions were assured. And its foes were crushed like worms beneath its feet!

Immediately that the news reached outside that the dread penalty had been fulfilled, fearful groans rent the air, bitter curses were heard in all directions, and the indignant millions madly and despairingly rushed against the foes before them. Then followed a scene that baffles all description. Men and women were frantically rushing at each other like starving wild beasts; the armed butchers of the law shooting down all who failed to assist them; truncheons of police breaking every available skull; troopers' horses trampling down anyone, and lances and swords spilling blood like a bursted reservoir; buildings were flaming and consuming their inmates; while in all directions explosives were flying, hurling master and slave together to destruction. The combat was sharp; but it was short. Madmen act with frenzy; but frenzy does not last. Ammunition destroys; but ammunition runs out. And before long this frightful combat was nothing but a few skirmishes here and there; presently the earth slept in murderous silence.

But the conflict between master and servant had not been ended.

The proletaire had not triumphed.

It was a sad day that followed on the events just described. No rioters were prosecuted, for no rioters remained. Blood had been spilt, but freedom had not been found. Comrades, relatives, were all missing. All, or nearly all, of the labor leaders were dead. Though hundreds of the authorities were no more, thousands of others filled their places. Men commenced again to seek for bread, and failed to get it. They sought employers as of yore, but few found employment. Landlords commenced again to send their collectors for the rents, and the starving proletaire again attempted his vain task of paying it. The plutocracy offered their accursed gold, and the poor once more bowed down before it and pawned their lives to Mammon from whom they could never redeem. Crime went on merrily as of yore, and legislative charlatans waxed fat on its creation; while the proletaire and the parasite vied with each other in the practice of vice to drown their cares. Jails continued to be built, and laws made to fill them. Women sold their purity to man for a crust; and men made themselves bestial to win woman's flattery. Children continued to be educated without learning sense. Vanity and pomp flourished as destructively as ever, and self-respect continued to be the rarest virtue.

The Melbourne Riots were over.

The Workers yet awaited their emancipation.

XI.

Fifteen years had passed since the events narrated in the last chapter. The Melbourne Riots had become a matter of past history, and the actors in it were getting fewer as years rolled on. Melbourne, with all its wickedness, had grown, as all other wicked cities grow, and had become a modern wonder. Industrial improvements of all kinds had built it into something scarcely conceivable by those who had existed in the "riot days," as they got to be called. The finest architects of the world had come there to take up their abode, and wealthy men had employed them to build some of the finest edifices in the world. The city was like a magnificent palace, fit dwelling-place almost for a demigod. The decorations of the houses, the dresses of the wealthy citizens, and the wonderful advances made in locomotive, dietetic, and other comforts, were amazing. Such was the appearance that it gave one on first seeing it that the great international traveller, Sir Hercules Crayon, could not help remarking that "If Paradise were to be re-instituted on earth, this is where we would find it." Certainly, that was but one side of the mighty city; and the remarks of a critic were well chosen when he said that "Were Paradise to visit us, unless she stopped her nose and stifled every other sense, she'd soon turn up her toes." As a matter of fact, things had gone on drifting in the one direction. Invention had grown and had brought grand homes to the wealthy. But poverty had grown just as rapidly and so had its accompanying vices. There was no turning back from the order of social evolution; but a constant extension of the old order of things. It may easily be surmised that along with this growth of poverty, alongside of wealth, the organizations of the discontented still continued to find a place. One of the most important of those organizations was that of The Brotherhood of the New Socialism which met weekly in a large room in a house in Latrobe Street.

The meetings of the Brotherhood of the New Socialism were usually not much out of the ordinary run of such gatherings. The workers met there to declaim against the injustices of the existing social order, the perfidy of the politicians, the increasing disparity between rich and poor, and the hopes that the newest schools of socialistic thought held out to the hungry and oppressed. There were generally the usual stock speakers, armed with the usual stock resolutions that signified nothing. Sometimes, however, there was a more or less unexpected change of programme; and at the particular meeting that is just going to be described the proceedings were enlivened by affairs certainly very much out of the common. It was the usual Thursday evening when the Brotherhood were to meet, and various people were making their way up the steps to the room where the proceedings were to be carried on, when a rather elderly man, whom one might take to be close on fifty years of age, but whose manner nevertheless was more like that of a younger man, accosted one of the Brotherhood stationed at the door.

"Is this where the Socialists are meeting, and if so, are strangers permitted to attend?" he asked.

"Certainly," was the reply, "everybody is welcome. Go upstairs after the others there."

The old gentleman followed as directed, and soon found himself in a large comfortable room, capable of seating about two hundred persons, although there were only about fifty present. It was now time to commence, and the chairman called on the pianist to open with a suitable

piece, which he did by playing the “Marseillaise” in first-rate style. Then a few songs were sung, mostly the familiar songs of the day, and one gentleman recited Charles Mackay's stirring poem “Eternal Justice,” which elicited vigorous applause. After which one of the Brotherhood recited the following with some warmth:—

A CALL TO THE WORKERS.

Come lads, rouse yourselves, for the night is grown darker,
The sad cry of anguish is louder than yore,
The victims of labor—of *unwanted* labor—
Are crying at your feet, and their numbers grow more.

'Twas said, in the sweat of his brow, that the toiler
Should eat his bread; but, alas, 'tis too true
That he who toils hardest has least of earth's bounties,
Whilst plenty rewards him who toil scorns to do.

Oh, brothers, is this what our fathers have fought for?
Is this but the outcome of thousands of years
Of thinking, and trying, and doing for their fellows
By lawgivers, scientists, thinkers and seers!

Is man born to live and to die unrewarded?
Are all his best efforts to be spent in vain?
Shall idleness *always* enjoy of the good things?
Is labor doomed always to toil and complain?

'Tis said that the poor we have with us at all times;
Alas for the world, that 'twas so in the past;
But, brothers, because we have long suffered evil,
Dost follow we should suffer evil to last?

Oh, poor fellow-creatures! so long thy injustice—
So long hast thou bent under tyranny's hand—
So long hast thou crouched 'neath the whip of thy master,
Thou durst not look upright, thou fearest to stand.

Oh, brothers, cast off the dead load of oppression
That Cunning has heaped upon Labor's strong form—
So cunningly heaped that the victim who bears it
Scarce knows of its presence, except when the storm

Of righteous rebellion breaks out in its fury,
And Slavery strikes in its blind frenzied might,
And throws at proud Capital, bloated, but helpless,
The force of a True Thought, the bombshell of Right.

Alas, ah my brothers, so long used to serfdom,
So ready to fawn, and to cringe, and to crawl
Before the vile monster thy toil hath created,
The Door of Nothing, the Filcher of all!

Then courage, my brothers, arise in your manhood,
Stand firmly together and dare the whole world—
A world in which thou hast no claim of possession,
The Idler's domain, from which Labor is hurled.

Rise up, and ask not your oppressors for favors,
For loans, or for mercy, or justice, or gain;
To Hell with Monopoly and its defenders:
The world is your own when you dare lay the claim.

The chairman then thanked the comrades for entertaining them, and said William Treadway would introduce the principal business of the evening with his promised address on "Labor's Hopes and Prospects." An intelligent looking young man here arose, and mounted the platform, the applause that greeted him showing that he was a familiar favorite amongst them. Without any ceremony, he commenced his address, the elderly stranger eyeing him with eager attention.

"I shall not trouble you to-night," said he, "with a repetition of the questions we are always discussing as to the sufferings of the working classes. We are already too painfully familiar with them. Nor will I weary you with the conventional platitudes that must be as tiring to you as to myself. But I will endeavor to treat the subject as thoroughly and clearly as I can in order that some real good may come of it. It is now fifteen years since my poor father lost his liberty in striving to do what we are still striving for; and when I look back I ask myself, What has been accomplished in that time? I think, comrades, you will agree with me when I say 'nothing.' Of course, I was but a lad at the time of the famous riots, and have a very imperfect knowledge of the facts connected with it. I lost my dear mother, as many of you may know, in the bloody massacre that took place upon the execution of 'the Noble Seventeen,' and my father was taken from me at the same time, never to see my face again; for as you know, he died three years ago in jail—died, so they say, from an hereditary and incurable disease; though I firmly believe they foully murdered him because they could not break his indomitable spirit. I have no relatives surviving that unhappy day, so I can but glean my information from the historical sources known to you all. I have principally taken my facts from 'McCulloch's History of the Melbourne Riots,' of which a valuable three-volume edition is in the Public Library. What do I find from a carefully study of it? Why, that matters are no better now than they were in the pre-Riot days; that poverty is as keen as then, if not worse; that the apathy of the masses, their ignorance, their scramble after recreation when they required bread, and their treacherous actions towards their truest champions were as common then as now. And I find too that they rested on the same hopes as we do. They vainly waited, as we are waiting, for honest legislators, just laws, a wide diffusion of humanitarian sentiments, mutual sympathies, the disappearance of vicious habits, and all those other elements that we contend are the essential precursors of the glorious social life for which we are striving. But I now see where they erred, and where you, friends, are erring along with them. *They trusted to bad conditions to create good human beings.* They tolerated the

institutions of human slavery, and hoped, poor fools, for the day when the slave should be noble and the slave-master kind. They believed that the human race was wicked, that it gloried in its wickedness, and that all the vices and crimes it committed were but the natural manifestations of its totally depraved nature. They thought the individual character was superior to the conditions environing it—that the human will was free, and therefore responsible for the individual's wicked actions (although inconsistently giving it small credit for his good actions)—that man's nature was bad, bad, irretrievably bad, and therefore that his fellows should treat him with the brutality inherent in their own brutal natures and so richly deserved by the brutal nature of himself. But, friends, I find this is a lie, a fiendish falsehood, a slander on humanity. I find that the man is what his circumstances make him. That great reformer, Robert Owen, was right when he said that 'the character is not made *by* but *for* the individual.' If you put me in bad circumstances, you make me a bad man. If you enslave me, I learn in to rejoice in slavery. If you treat me brutally, you encourage brutality in my nature, and I act brutally to you. If in this land, which naturally belongs to all you who live upon it, you give me a special privilege to the ownership of this land, you make me a tyrant, and I cannot help but act like a tyrant; and you make yourselves my serfs and cowardly cringing curs willing to lick my feet in truly slave-like fashion, that I may graciously afford you permit to toil on the land I have deprived you of. Then you hate me, because I am your master; and I hate you because you are my slave. We pretend to love each other to win each other's favors, but in our hearts we love each one himself and eye the other with suspicion and mistrust. So it is throughout all society. All true morality is forbidden by the very laws under which we are associated. The landlord, despite his higher sentiments of love and justice, must rack the rents from starving toilers lest he become a toiler and wear out his life's blood for others. The remorseless usurer must stifle his conscience, and forge the yoke of Mammon round the neck of the proletaire that he may extort, by interest, the product of their toil, lest he someday perform that endless, fruitless toil himself. The legislator, offered bribes of wealth and power, dare not be true to manhood and refuse those bribes, lest he lose all his power and join the toiling proletaires who waste their wretched lives in others' gain. No, friends, we have fought on wrong lines. We have hoped to achieve fraternity by creating bitter antipathy. Our preachers have called on men to he honorable, while supporting all the institutions which compel us to be dishonorable. Every so-called 'revolution' has been a failure, because all the evil conditions were allowed to remain and new tyrants were created out of old institutions. The cannibal, with his chiefs and warriors, makes war upon his brother cannibal and eats him. The civilized man, with his rulers and their subordinates, makes war also upon his civilized brother, and he too devours him, but he devours him with the law instead of with his teeth. All those men,—cannibal or civilized,—are the creatures of their conditions, the victims of power and plunder. But, fortunately for the human race, there are exceptions to the general rule of mutual theft and destruction. The Doukhoborys, the Masinkers, the Veddahs, and others who lack our civilized customs of law and disorder, have shown us that man is moral when the conditions of his existence are such as necessitate morality. They have shown us that when man lives on his own efforts, instead of on his neighbor, that he daily enjoys the noble virtues of universal friendship, health and contentment that we only dream of; and that they who have no laws over them are 'a law unto themselves,' and that self-instructing law invariably teaches them that as they do unto others so do others unto them; and they have shown us that while dishonesty, lying and poverty are the general lot of those who tolerate our institutions, such evils are utterly unknown to them, and everyone is honest, truthful and as wealthy as he chooses to be by his own efforts. What a world of wasted efforts might

have been spared had humanity but learned these lessons that nature is everywhere teaching him! Generations after generations have passed away, while poets, philosophers, and preachers were calling on the people to live good lives in harmony with each other; but the efforts of all those generations have been spent in vain. Had those noble minds but united their efforts in finding out the social conditions that generate morality, and then worked together to establish those conditions, in a few months or years they could have achieved them; and you and I, friends, might now be enjoying the glorious benefits of their wise actions, and the Melbourne Riots need never have blotted the pages of earth's history. If we tolerate bad conditions, we will preach in vain to make good men and women. If we create good conditions, we would preach in vain to make those men and women bad. For they are ever the creatures of their circumstances—the moral product of their surrounding. In lands where monopolies and legal plunders flourish, there the priesthoods preach morality, but they and their hearers continue immoral. In lands of freedom and unrestricted opportunity, there no preachers are found or needed to teach morality, because all are moral. Our present society, therefore, cannot progress as we wish it; and all our socialistic teaching is but labor thrown away, because the conditions of life are opposed to our teachings, the present order is not a social but an anti-social one, and even we who aspire to lead society are corrupted by it. Socialistic propaganda is like the cry of the shipwrecked mariner in mid-ocean, and meets with no response. If we want to succeed, we must carry our thoughts into practice. The world has learned how to hate: we must teach it how to love. It has learned how to oppress and steal: we must teach it how to render mutual assistance and be honest. Can we do this? If not, then Socialism is a failure, and Goodness is a word that deserves no place in man's vocabulary. But I believe, friends, it *is* possible for us to introduce here the elements of goodness that others have found, and to find, even in barbarous Melbourne, a congenial soil in which to transplant them. But how shall we do it? What determined, united action shall we take? That, friends, I do not pretend to be able yet to answer. I can only say that I have determined to find the way from chaos into freedom, and when I have found it to devote my whole life's efforts into carrying it out for the mutual good of myself and my fellow men."

The applause that followed on young Treadway's speech was marked with real enthusiasm, and the chairman took occasion to remark that he felt it worth more than mere passing comment, and hoped that something really tangible would come out of it. The platform was declared open for other speakers; but no one seemed anxious to come forward after the brilliant speech they had just listened to.

At last the elderly stranger stood up in the hall. "Do you permit a visitor to speak?" he asked.

"Certainly," replied the chairman, "come to the platform."

The elderly gentleman lost no time in doing as requested.

"Friends," said he, "for I feel I must address you thus, although an utter stranger,—I have listened attentively to the able and thoughtful speech of the young man who has just spoken, and I must say he deserves more than credit for it—he fully deserves to have his wish fulfilled (applause). I may tell you that I have gone through the scenes he has spoken of, and although I never before heard of McCulloch's work on the subject, I can assure you the conditions of society in those days, and the hopes and aspirations of the people, were just as he has described them. Although I have been scarcely three weeks roaming in your city, I can see that no change has occurred in the past fifteen years for which you need be grateful. Certainly the buildings have become more stupendous, and the luxury of the few is more like that of an Eastern monarch than what the plutocracy of Melbourne enjoyed before; but the conditions of life are no better—in fact, they are

actually worse than I knew them. I told you I have been roaming through your streets for the past few weeks, but do not think I come from any other city, for I have been all these years an inmate of your jail, having been incarcerated there for complicity in the riots.

"But you are not Holdfast?" asked the chairman.

"Yes, Sir, I used to be well known as Harry Holdfast, although I don't suppose I have 'carried my years' quite so well in confinement as I might have done with proper air and sunshine. The authorities have released me, as my conduct appears to have satisfied them; though I understand they did it as quietly as possible to prevent any demonstration on the part of the public, and that is why I have not found you before. However, here I am, And now I wish to say that all the time I have been confined I have brooded over this awful problem of the struggle between Labor and Monopoly, and while coming to the same conclusions as the brilliant son of my poor old friend, Treadway, I have found what I am sure is the true solution. Therefore, if you will, grant me a little time, I will be very glad to explain it to you, so that I can help you to give the desired application to Treadway's principles, and assist you by devoting my remaining days to the glorious cause of labor's emancipation (applause). You all realize that the great trouble now is that the few are very rich, and the many very poor; and you also know that the wealthy are rich out of the legal robbery of the others whom they thus impoverish. Of course, you know how this comes about. The world is monopolized in the hands of the few, and the governments of the world exist to secure them in that monopoly. All the great masses outside of that monopoly thus become the unwilling slaves to the few favored monopolists. Of course they want to live; but to do so they must work. They can't work in the air so they turn to the land. But instantly the landlord catches them and tells them it is his land, and if they want to use it they must give him a part of their product from that land for the privilege of using it. Of course, they can't do without it; so they give him what he asks. That is the first step in the plunder of the workers, and we call it *rent*. Then when the worker wants to exchange the surplus part of that product, over and above what he consumes and gives to his landlord, for the surplus product of someone else, he has to do so through a legal medium, which we call money. This of course he has to borrow from the privileged monopolists who are 'chartered' by the landlord government to issue it. But they demand that when he pays it back, in a given time, he shall repay more than he borrowed. This extortion is the next burden on the laborer, and they call it *interest*, or usury. Of course, he can't pay more then he borrows, though he agrees to; and so someday the banker, who lent him the money, metaphorically gobbles him up, robs him of all he has got and makes him a pauper, when he will perhaps finish by imprisoning him for vagrancy. Then the officers, who run this landlords' and bankers' government, want paying, as they are not producers themselves, and that makes another big hole in the worker's product, which we call *taxation*. But that is not all. A man can't work on land unless he has tools. So if he is only a worker, with nothing but his arms, he goes to one of the fortunate possessors of the money (which alone buys the monopolized lands and tools), and he asks him to let him use those tools. This the employer agrees to do provided he gives him another large slice out of his product, which of course the worker does, and we call that slice the *profit*. The little slice that now remains to the worker we call his *wages*; it is sometimes so small that it takes a powerful economic microscope to find it (laughter). Now, here is the way such an unjust system operates. You go to work for a man, and in a given time produce an article, say a suit of clothes, which he offers to sell you for £6. But he only gives you £1 for your labor in producing it. So you produce five more suits before you can afford to buy one, which you then do. You have now a suit, and he has five, one of which he uses himself. But you want

to buy something else, so you ask him to let you make more suits, as you want to earn more money. But he tells you he can't till you buy the four that he has got by him. And so you are thrown out of work. He calls that 'overproduction' and you call yourself 'unemployed.' All the workers under our present slave system are in exactly the some position; and although there is a division of labor and a distribution of products it doesn't alter the relations between employer and employee a bit, but leaves them just as I have described them. Now you see that if you got the full £6 for making that suit, you could have bought it at once, and all this trouble would have been avoided; you would have remained at work making another to exchange with someone else; your employer would have had to make his own instead of being idle; and everyone else would be doing the same, and we would never have depressions or riots, excessive wealth or poverty, but would all be happy and prosperous mates like the Masinkers that Treadway told us about. Now, if you will help me, I will show you how we can do it, and thereby earn the gratitude of our fellow-men and better our own condition. If you are agreeable I will fully explain the whole thing to you at another meeting when you have more time, so that you can fully understand it, and be prepared to help me in my efforts to emancipate the workers of Melbourne and the whole civilized world."

Immediately that Harry had done speaking, the meeting burst out in furious applause; all the etiquette of public meetings was forgotten, and nearly all rushed forward to greet the veteran "agitator," with a warmth of handshaking that would have made one think they had been intimate friends of years' standing instead of a few minutes.

It was decided that the next week's meeting should be devoted to Holdfast's lecture.

"One more thing before I go," said Holdfast. "Can you tell me the present address of Miss Hypatia Stephens?" asked Harry.

No one could tell him, but some of them thought she had gone to Benalla in a situation as general servant. She was rather well known, although taking little part in public affairs, and had not been heard of for over twelve months.

Harry went away, thanking them sincerely for their cordial reception and their friendly intentions. But he thought of his poor lost Hypatia; and he felt sad. Where could she be? Why was she not near the jail when he was released; and now that he had been a free (?) man for a fortnight why had he heard nothing from her in the meantime? Perhaps, thought he, she is dead; she would not be silent otherwise. And with this cruel thought racking his brains, he sought the establishment wherein he lodged and tried to forget his dear one in slumber. But sleep had forsaken him; and the poor fellow laid in his bed in a mental agony more severe than any he had experienced during his long imprisonment. He had faced the world's torture all these years, only to find his life's hope gone!

XII.

"I think I have seen your face before!"

"And I think I remember your's!"

The speakers were Harry Holdfast and a gentleman he had met in the street a few days after the evening of Treadway's lecture. The two had looked steadfastly into each other's face while passing, and their eyes met and a mutual glance of recognition had prompted the above remarks.

"Might I ask you your name?"

"Certainly. My name is Holdfast—Harry Holdfast. And yours?"

"Frederick Wilberforce, your old friend and co-worker. Dear me, to think I should meet you again! But how you have changed! It can't be twenty years since I last saw you, and yet you look like an old man. Where are you living?"

"Living? Well, I suppose it's living. I am trying to exist at Fillemup's Restaurant, where I get a shilling a week, besides board and lodging, such as it is, for doing all sorts of odd work and helping in the kitchen."

"Come along with me, then; I'll find something better for you than that."

Harry, after a short conversation on the matter, willingly agreed to go along with his old friend, being careful, however, to deliver the letter with which he had been sent by his employer before going to Wilberforce's. Arrived there, he wrote out a short note to Mr. Fillemup, telling him he would not hold his situation any longer, as he had found one more suitable, and he would forfeit the week's wages due to him.

Wilberforce's place was a really comfortable one for Harry to be in. It was a nice roomy house, with plenty of accommodation for a few visitors, and adjoining it was a large hay and corn store, of which Fred was the sole proprietor, and which was doing a very large business indeed.

"And now, Harry, tell me a little of how you have been getting on all these years. I have often thought of you, and wondered whether I would ever see you again; and now that you are here, I long to know all about you."

"All I can tell you is very little, Fred. A prisoner's life is very much like that of any other prisoner, and the fact of his being a political offender falsely charged with crime does not cause him to he treated otherwise than as an actual criminal. One thing, however, was in my favor, and of course distinguished me from the exact treatment of a criminal: I commanded the respect of the individuals in immediate authority over me, and was as kindly treated by them as they dared let me be. I took every opportunity to explain to them my true position, and I know they were really sorry for me. One of them told me he often felt the falsity of his own position, and realized that while he was there to assist in keeping the criminal elements of society under subjection that he knew many who were detained there were not really as bad as the majority who still enjoyed their freedom, while the greatest villains of all enjoyed their freedom. He could not see how we could do without jails, but he thought we might almost be as well without them when scores of legislators and plutocrats were allowed to rob the struggling masses by fraudulently conducting bogus building societies, banks, and other financing institutions with impunity, and

rarely paid the penalty of their roguery, because they had a mutual understanding to protect each other against legal prosecution when any of them were detected by the public. But, Fred, I can tell you about all this sort of thing any other time. I am longing to know how all my old friends are getting on. Can you tell me anything about them?"

"Well, of course you know about your widowed mother?"

"Yes, I learned that she died of a broken heart shortly after my sentence, and just before my final imprisonment. What became of my brother John?"

"I believe he went to America about twelve years ago. He couldn't make much of a living here, and he gave the place up in disgust, and has settled I believe in San Francisco. He told me just before his departure that he did not think the Melbourne people deserved to have a decent person stopping in their midst: they appeared to like being plundered, and therefore should have what they liked. He wasn't going to waste his life for them as his foolish brother had done."

"Yes, that's just the way he used to rebuke me," responded Harry, "he was always saying I should not meddle with the business of other people, and that I would get into trouble over it. He turned out right in his prophecy, unfortunately, though his stupid idea of non-interference with wrong never improved him or anyone else who held it."

"But surely, after your recent experiences, you agree with the principle of not interfering with another's liberty, don't you?"

"Certainly I do. But can't you see that interfering with another's liberty, and interfering with another's slavery, are two very different things? The *laissez faire* doctrine is a very good thing if rightly understood; it simply means that each individual should be let alone to follow out his own natural desires to satisfy his wants by his own efforts. And I like to see a man exercising that right. But when he won't stop there, but demands that he be let alone when oppressing or exploiting others, it's time we interfered. That man's victim requires to be let alone just as much as the other fellow, and it is to our mutual self-interest to see that he is left alone. *Laissez faire* isn't a one-sided virtue; but to become a living principle, it must be universal in its application. When the authorities imprisoned me they destroyed that principle, because I was not limiting the liberty of others and wrongly lost my own. Had I limited others' liberty, by legal or illegal means (it is immaterial which) I should then have been a destroyer of that principle of non-interference, and society to preserve itself would be justified in removing me out of harm's way."

"But the capitalist and the legislator do not directly interfere with the liberty of the proletaire, who are free to work for an employer or not, as they choose."

"No, Fred, they are not free to do anything of the kind; they are *compelled* by unjust conditions to do so—not by their own free choice. The old Socialist cry of 'Freedom of Contract,' which the plutocrats have tried to appropriate, expresses the true idea of economic freedom. Your own success in business is obscuring your sense of justice, as it does so many others, and in endeavouring to vindicate your well-deserved efforts at success under unjust conditions, you make the common mistake of endeavoring to vindicate those conditions; instead of stopping short after having vindicated your efforts to subsist, and then honestly condemning the conditions through which you successfully struggled. Every landlord, every usurer (or banker, if you prefer the word), and every other parasite on labor is justified in his success under our present exploiting system; just as every proletariat is equally justified with his poverty under that system. But landlordism, usury, and all other forms of exploitation and restriction, are unjustifiable. It is the system that is wrong, not the men who suffer or succeed beneath that system. Society has forbidden you to live in the full enjoyment of your own efforts and has enacted in all its Statute Books a new commandment,

'THOU SHALT ROB OR BE ROBBED,' and you have succeeded in leaving the robbed classes and in joining the robbers. You have done your best, and merit your success. Society has done its worst, and merits the undying hatred of both you and me—the parasite and the proletaire." "I understand your vigorous, if not very polite, language, Harry, and know how to appreciate it. You are quite right in blaming the conditions, instead of the individuals who live under those conditions. And with you, I would like to see better conditions existing, but I have little hopes of them coming in my day, and can only put them aside as out of the range of 'practical politics.'"

"Well, Fred, I hope soon to take you out of this horrible pessimistic mood of yours by showing you an object lesson in justice. But about my old friends and, acquaintances. You haven't told me about them yet."

"Your acquaintances! Of course, you know all about Felix Slymer, your old time enemy?"

"No. Is he still living?"

"Living! I should think so. And likely to live, if he doesn't die prematurely by gorging himself with too much luxury."

"You don't mean to say he is wealthy?"

"Yes. He is the wealthiest man in the colony to-day; although, when you and I first knew him together he was one of the poorest, or at all events, believed to be such. After the Riots that followed on the execution of your comrades the workers were in desperate straits. They had no leaders, and no decided plan of action. Slymer used to continue to address them on revolutionary subjects and succeeded in retaining their favors, until he succeeded in getting them to return him as their representative to Parliament. He got in by an astounding majority, far exceeding that ever polled by any previous candidate for the constituency which he was contesting. Not only did the labor parties support him, but the capitalists gave him their support also in the majority of instances. This was inexplicable at the time, although rumor had it that he was a secret agent of the latter and a spy in the labor camp—a suspicion that was strengthened by his subsequent career. Having entered Parliament, he lost no opportunity to support all the measures introduced in the interests of the wealthy classes. This, of course, brought all sorts of opportunities to his feet, and he became a little god amongst the capitalists and their representatives. But the most astounding part of it was that he continued to retain the good opinions of the labor parties in spite of his persistent support of their foes. And this is how he did it. Whenever he supported a capitalistic measure, he told his laboring constituents (in an undertone, of course) that he was doing so only as a matter of expediency; so that when he someday introduced his own revolutionary measures he would have friends in the House who would support him in them as he had supported them. Thus hoodwinked, the workers let him and his party support the most vile legislative enactments year after year; while of course the long expected socialistic legislation never took place, and Slymer always managed to get them put off by pressure of 'other business,' and never failed to get his dupes to exonerate his actions. After he had been in the Legislature a few years he succeeded, by his excellent business tact and cunning, in forming several large and influential trading Syndicates, mostly amongst the members of the Legislature. This extended his popularity. The other members of the House, having now an interest in common with his own, supported him in any measure he brought forward, no matter how daringly oppressive it might be. Even this did not cause him to lose the confidence of the proletaire, for every time that a depression occurred, as the inevitable results of his financial undertaking, he would organize charitable societies to distribute relief and handsomely contribute to their funds a few thousand pounds out of the hundreds of thousands of pounds which he had robbed from the workers by means of

those undertakings. Honors continued to shower upon him, and he got the title of Sir Felix Slymer which he now holds. That mansion which you saw just round the corner is his city office; but he has far more delightful residences in different parts of the country, each of which is connected with the city by a line of railway, constructed, in most cases, specially for him. His wealth was greatly augmented by your old friend (?) Gregory Grindall, who, on his demise about nine years ago, bequeathed to him nearly all his possessions on account of services performed."

"And is Slymer happy with all this luxury?"

"Well, that's a funny question to ask, and one I really can't answer. I know he has tremendous worry with it all, and is in constant danger from the number of starving tramps who are always threatening to take his life. and have made one or two attempts already. But I think he's happier than he would have been in jail as you have been."

"But not as happy as he might have been living in a state of social justice and freedom."

"Perhaps not."

"But, Fred, you have told me about the others, and yet I have not heard you say anything about Hypatia Stephens. Where is she?"

"Ah, poor fellow, I understand your anxiety. I think I can set your mind at rest on that score."

"I hope she is all right?"

"Yes, I hope so, and have every reason to think she is. As you know, we have always been intimate friends, and although you did unintentionally cross my path in our affections, I have never let that interfere in the relations between us. Hypatia has often been in my company and she generally spoke of you and longed for the day when she should again behold you. Having no parents, or other relations, and being boycotted by strangers owing to her confessed sympathies with the workers, she was unable to get employment here, and I assisted her in going to Sydney. I would have liked her to stop with me and assist me in the business I was working up. But she thought as I was a bachelor and she a spinster it would be better for her to go elsewhere among strangers; not that she feared the scandal of tittle-tattling society, as you know, but she contended that 'human nature was human nature,' and that it would require a too strong resolution on the part of both of us if she were to remain true to the pledge she had given you. I tried to dissuade her from going away at the time; but I think it is as well that she did do so, for I confess that I still cherish the old regard for her, and if our relations had become more intimate it would certainly have caused unpleasant relations between you and me, perhaps between her and yourself, and very likely even between Hypatia and myself. Marriage is not a very satisfactory institution. The evils it often occasions are easier done than undone. Love has no difficulty in uniting us with our eyes shut, but Reason can't always sever us when our eyes get opened. Hypatia, as you know, holds very strict and somewhat unpopular views on the marital relations, which she looks upon as the necessary outcome of our present system of industrial slavery, and totally incompatible with the dignity of a true woman who should never enter into what she calls sexual slavery. So she had her own way, as I have told you, and went to Sydney, where she got a quiet situation as housekeeper. Here is her address. Shall I wire her to return at once?"

"Do, Fred; and tell her to come immediately."

Fred wrote the following message:—"Return immediately. Holdfast waiting here. I pay all expenses. Call Bank of Australasia, Sydney, for money." Fred sent a messenger to the telegraph office, and then went to the bank and got them to telegraph twenty pounds to Sydney.

When Fred returned, he began to initiate Harry into the mysteries of a hay and corn business, and the latter recounted his past experiences while performing the light work set him.

XIII.

Thursday had arrived, and Harry was that evening to propound his scheme of social salvation. But, although the day had far advanced Hypatia had not arrived, nor had any word come from her. He had hoped to see her before the meeting, but there would be no train in till late at night, so he decided to lose no more time but prepared for the meeting.

Fred had agreed to go with him that evening, although he had not been in the habit of frequenting the socialists' meetings for several years past; and after they had taken tea, the two went out together to the rooms of the Brotherhood.

On arriving at the hall, Harry found it yet wanted half an hour to the time when they would commence the proceedings, so he filled in the time looking around the place, and reading the numerous labor newspapers from all parts of the world that were hung round the walls. Taking down a copy of the London *Revolutionist*, his eye caught the following;—"Our comrades in Manchester, finding the co-operative schemes a failure, so far as the improvement of the workers are concerned, are taking important measures to force on a better state of affairs. They are now carrying on a vigorous campaign against the payment of rent, and are calling on all the workers to inaugurate a universal strike, when they will quietly seize all the machinery and product in the factories and mines and start to work it for themselves, offering to let the proprietors join them in the undertaking provided they do their share of the work and accept an equal share of the common product along with the rest. There are already half the tenants of the houses in that town positively refusing to pay their rents, which they have not the means to pay even if they desired to do so; and they are readily joining in the grand campaign. We wish our comrades every success. If the other industrial centres imitate their example we will soon accomplish the Social Revolution."

"What do you think of that?" said Harry, showing the paragraph to Fred.

"I think it disgraceful," replied Fred.

"I don't," said Harry, "I think it foolish."

It was now time to commence, and the chairman called the meeting to order. He said he was glad to see the hall so packed; it showed respect to a worthy veteran (applause), and also showed they appreciated an earnest attempt to end the present social injustice (renewed applause). He had to announce that, at the request of the lecturer, a new departure would be made in the conduct of the meeting: instead of the usual debate at the close, members of the audience would be invited to interject pertinent questions throughout the discourse, so as to clear up the subject and create a thorough understanding of the lecturer's methods. Before introducing the lecturer, he would ask the whole audience to join in singing the "Anthem of Labor."

THE ANTHEM OF LABOR.

|

In the good old days when the Roman power
Held sway o'er the human race,
And the working millions like oxen toiled
In sorrow and disgrace,
The wise men of that day did say
Man should toil thus for ever;
But Slavery's day has since passed away
To return amongst us never.

Chorus.—For Labor shall be free; yes, Labor shall be free;
In spite of Mammon's cruel theft—
In spite of Law's decree—
We'll yet make Labor free—we'll yet make Labor free,
O'er all the world we'll brothers be,
And Labor shall be free!

But, alas, from the ashes of slavery rose
The lords in their Feudal might,
Reducing to serfdom the laboring throngs,
And seizing the land as their right.
But the Feudal barons and their castles strong
Are relics of the past;
And the worker's no longer sold with his land—
He strives to be free at last.

Chorus—For Labor, etc.

But alas for the day that saw Capital reign
With Labor prostrate at its feet;
The indolent few overburdened with wealth,
While labor has nothing to eat.
The worker is ‘free’? yes, free to starve,
Or work at a tyrant's call!
The gold of the idler has bought the whole world:
The worker has nothing at all.

Chorus—For Labor, etc.

Then hail to the day when the worker shall say:
"The world 'neath my feet is mine,
"The wealth in your hands is the fruit of my toil;
"Restore it—it is not thine;
"The coal and the metals I bring from the mine,
"The Engines I make with my brain,
"The homes I have built, and the clothing I weave
"Are all part of Labor's domain!"

Chorus—For Labor, etc.

And here's a health to all who toil
In this and every land;
Whoe'er they be, where'er they roam,
We stretch a friendly hand.
We know no race, nor creed, nor clan:
We fear not Russ or Turk:
The only one whom Labor fears
Are they who will not work.

Chorus—For Labor, etc.

When the audience had finished singing, the chairman reminded them of his previous announcements, and called on Harry Holdfast to give his promised address on the all important question, "How You and I Can Emancipate the Workers."

When the deafening applause, that followed on the chairman's remarks had subsided, Harry proceeded as follows:—

"I intend to-night, friends, to convey to you the thoughts that I have evolved during fifteen years' confinement in your jail. During the whole of that time I have never ceased to think of the unhappy conditions of those outside it, and to work out some method by which I could end those conditions if I ever became liberated. At last I have matured my plans, and to-night I shall lay them before you before I carry them out (applause). Understand, I am going to ask you to help me, and I want every one of you here to lend me a hand; but if you don't—if not one of you assist me, I shall go on carrying it out all the same, and seeking the assistance of more willing co-operators (applause). I will presume that you have realized already that government will do nothing for you, that philanthropy can't afford to do anything for you, and that you need expect no wealth or power outside of your own selves to emancipate you; but that you are resolved on working out your own salvation (hear, hear). I will also presume that you have seen through the fallacious methods of your trades unions, which never alter the false relations existing between employer and employee, but allow them to continue—set the worker to fighting his master instead of dispensing with his master; and which accomplish nothing but futile strikes which always in the end succeed in striking the strikers while the master waits his time and then puts on the screw tighter when defeated labor comes begging for the right to toil. It is you, deprived of all political or other privileged powers—you, with nothing but a precarious starvation wage—who are to create from yourselves both the power and the wealth necessary for your emancipation. Now you know that every time you work under the present system, you give your employer nearly the whole of

your product, simply because he is your employer. That great philosopher, Adam Smith, tells you that the natural wages of labor are the whole product of labor; but then you don't read his famous *Wealth of Nations*, so you haven't been trying to secure those just wages that he shows you are yours, but have always allowed the capitalists to rob you of nearly the whole of them. Your fellow-workers in the United States of America realized from their statistics a few years ago the awful fact that every time they produce eight dollars, they only get one dollar returned them as wages. Now I want them to keep that other seven dollars, and to devote it to building up their own capital and assisting to find wealth and employment for their fellows. And I want you to show them how to do it (applause). I am going to ask you to club together your earnings to buy land and machinery and to employ each other. (A voice: "We never have any earnings.") Yes you do, or you would all be dead long ago. If you got twenty shillings wages Iast week it shows you earned six pounds in that time, although you don't perhaps know where it went. At any rate you got the pound. And it is very apparent you didn't do any good with it, because you never get any better off with all your little earnings ("We get worse off.") Just so and you will continue to do so while you waste your money as you have been doing. Now, how many of you can raise ten shillings to go towards freeing yourselves? You none seem to think you can, and yet you squander that every week over your rent. How many of you could afford to put a pound into the next Melbourne Cup, six months before it is run, if you knew it would win you a thousand pounds? ("Plenty of us.") Certainly you could. You have but to realize the necessity of a thing, and you soon find a way of doing it. Now you all know that many attempts have been made, by communists, co-operators and others, to find a better way of living in society than we are now doing. You have heard of the experiments of Icaria, Brook Farm, Harmony, Bethel, and hundreds of others that have been made in different parts of the world; and you know they have all failed. But why have they failed? Was it because those who took part in them were unhappy under the new conditions? No; we know very well that many of them deplored bitterly the failure of many of those experiments, eagerly sought to take part in subsequent ones very often, and testified to the fact that the happiest days of their lives were those they spent in those communities, notwithstanding the many difficulties they had to contend against. Were they troubled with disputes over the use of their land as we are, and did they find the common use of land worse than our present system of buying, selling, and monopolizing it? No; we know their system of using their land proved far superior to our's, in most, if not in all, cases, and that it taught us a lesson we cannot soon forget. Did they find themselves inconvenienced for the want of money with which to transact the mutual interchanges of commodity with each other? Certainly not; for in many cases that interchange was entirely spontaneous and unregulated, and in others it was successfully directed by a labor-note system that gave results quite the reverse of the pauperizing monetary system that we are suffering under. Then what were the causes of their failure? Let us find them, that we may not fail also, but may take advantage of their example by imitating their successes but avoiding their stumbles. If we study their history, we soon find that their successes were due to the fact that they freed the lands, gave employment to the labor upon it, worked with their own machinery instead of the machinery of others, and rendered themselves dependent upon the product of their own labor instead of upon the money belonging to the usurer. And their failures we find were due to the fact that they frequently made the products of the individual laborers the common property of all, whether they assisted in the creation of those products or not, and utterly regardless of the amount of exertion each individual put forth in their creation; some failed because the land they were throwing open to the free use of all their members was not out of the monopolist's grip

before they commenced to use it, and they had to relinquished it to the cruel mortgagee, with all the improvements they had placed upon it; others failed because although they they had the land properly, but like many a poor struggling farmer they lack sufficient means to 'hang out' until the crops begin to ripen and the harvest comes to reward their patient toil; or they have means too small to tide over famines, droughts, fires, or other calamities; and others yet again failed because they were overburdened with authority, hemmed in by laws, and regulations, and restrictions imposed upon men who knew little of the requirements of hard pioneering life by others who knew still less of those requirements, and who unintentionally only brought about the old order of things that existed in the old exploitative society from which they had just fled. Now, friends, I propose that you assist me to imitate their successes, and avoid their failures, by the following means. Club together a stated sum each, say ten shillings. If there are a hundred of you that means fifty pounds; a thousand of you five hundred pounds; and ten thousand of you five thousand pounds. Now that five thousand pounds employed in securing you what I have suggested would do more good than five hundred thousands of pounds employed in charity or government relief works (hear, hear). After that you can pay a small sum every week, say a shilling, until you have paid up some five or ten pounds each. Now that isn't much to pay to secure your emancipation, is it? You'd think nothing of paying a hundred pounds through a building society for a house and land, and a poor one at that. And yet that small ten pounds will gain you not only a house and land free of all liabilities, but it will find you capital to work it, and sufficient food and clothing for you to carry on with until you become absolutely independent. And here is how you go about it. You have clubbed together say the five thousand pounds. With some of that you buy enough land somewhere in the country, and decide amongst yourselves by ballot who shall first go and live on it. You don't need to all go on it once, as they did in the experiments I have told you of, because you'd soon come back again as they did. You wouldn't have enough means to live on. But suppose you sent a hundred of your number. Let them take plenty of tents, food, seed, live stock, and all the other things they require with them. You can easily do this, because you have plenty of means. Now there is already a hundred of you on your own lands and out of the crowded city—a hundred less proletaires to compete at the capitalist's feet for a starvation wage. Well you continue to supply them with food, week after week, while they are up there; it doesn't cost much to live rent free in the country, and your united capital can easily do it without diminishing much. While you are finding these comrades food, they are doing their share towards sustaining you. They are building little homes away up there, so that they can live in them instead of the tents; and they are also building others for you; they also dig and prepare the ground so that fruit and vegetables may be planted in it to sustain you and them in the near future, and they erect sheds for the cattle and poultry. After a while, they begin to get 'the house' ready, as we would say; and you ballot to select a few more pioneers to go and help them. You might this time send their wives and sweethearts; because you know no community will hold together long if there are no sweethearts there (laughter), the men would soon return to the city with all its sorrows, rather than suffer country bachelordom. Then you gradually send more and more of your numbers up there, according to your means, which are constantly being increased by your own weekly contributions, and buy more and more land as you require it. And now you will begin to see the advantage of securing this surplus product that I was telling you about—the big profit that the capitalist appropriates out of your labors. Some of your crops begin to come up, your poultry begins to supply you with eggs, your cows to give milk, and so on. And your friends in the country send all these things, over and above what they require for

their own food, to you for you to sell in Melbourne. You accordingly dispose of it, and the money realized goes to swell your fund which had been somewhat decreased by the purchases of land and the settlement of your members upon it. As time goes on this surplus product gets more and more in proportion; your few dozen head of poultry will have increased to hundreds, and then to thousands; your few shillings' worth of seeds will have grown to loads of grain and vegetables, and will also have furnished you with thousands of times as many seeds as you started with; your cattle will have multiplied from dozens to hundreds; and your exports will be increasing every year. This prolific increase of nature, which used to be the principle agency by which you were impoverished because it did not belong to you, becomes the means by which you all get wealthy now that it does belong to you. You soon have realized so much by the sale of your growing surplus product that you can easily buy more land than you need; you can send your remaining members in larger batches to colonize, and can buy them costlier and more efficient machinery. And you can keep on doing this until one after another, member after member has gone up to assist in the pioneering work, until at last the whole of you have been absorbed in it, and not one of you remains in Melbourne to struggle with each other for a bare crust of bread."

"I would like to ask the lecturer what chance there is of a body of men succeeding as he has so graphically described when we know very well that individual farmers, with far greater means, are always coming to grief. If these pioneers got fairly started, there is no doubt they might succeed as he says. But the thing is for them to start. Many a farmer might make a successful start; but when the crops fail him, or a drought comes, or his goods do not realise sufficient in the market to pay him, he is compelled to mortgage his little farm to raise sufficient money to tide over his difficulties with. But even then, he generally loses it. What would these people in your scheme do under such circumstances?"

"In the first place," respond Harry, "there wouldn't be such circumstances. It would be impossible. The individual farmer, who has to struggle along unaided is in a very different position to the co-operative pioneers I have been describing. If the farmer comes to grief when his crop fails, it is because he is dependent on those crops to pay his rent or the interest on his loans, or to purchase the food he cannot produce; but these pioneers have no rent to pay at all, no interest to meet, and no food to buy, because those remaining behind are sending them a sufficient supply from the city every week to keep them going. It doesn't matter to them if not one of their crops came up for six months, or not one cow gave milk, or not one hen laid a single egg; because their supplies are guaranteed and forwarded to them regularly; and while the farmer is starving because a drought has set in, and he cannot afford to employ labor to irrigate his lands, or the markets are not realizing a price sufficient to pay him properly, the pioneers are irrigating their own lands, instead of racking their brains to find out how to get others to do it, and the prices their commodities are fetching in the market concerns them very little, because they don't depend upon it for their living, and the smallest fraction it brings them in is a fraction more towards the accumulation of the mutual capital which is to free them from the dependence on the capital belonging to the outside capitalist and to ultimately employ every one of their members in the same manner. Now I have shown you briefly how the collected money of the members will act in finding them employment, in providing them with capital in the form of machinery, seed, live stock &c., in providing them with houses, and in drawing them out of the city of exploitation and into a newer city or village of freedom. You see they have no swindling building society to gobble them up, no rent collector to worry them, no grinding lease to pay, because they have paid for their lands in full already. But they have now to guard against the evils of the present property

system cropping up again in their midst, and they do so by not permitting anyone to monopolize land to another's detriment, nor to charge another for the use of any lands they may be using or desirous of using, but according to the constitution adopted by them all, and incorporated in the registered deeds of their association, they are legally and morally bound to recognize no other title but the *usufruct*. That is to say, every individual has the right to certain land only because he is using it; he is only entitled to the exact area that he is using; and he has only a claim upon it while he is using it. The instant he ceases to use any part of it, he ceases to have any right to posses that part. That is the only just system of holding and working land. It is the natural land law that existed before the world was ever cursed with statute law; and it is the law which will live and be recognised in society when all our statute laws are forgotten."

"But won't some greedy fellows take more land than others, while the rest will not have enough?" asked someone. "You can't expect to have people taken out of the city, and possessing all the greedy vices of city life—you can't expect to have these people acting justly towards each other, and only taking a fair share of the land. Now if everyone had a certain allotment given entirely to him by the society, or leased to him by the society, or even gratuitously allotted to him, it would prevent all the land scrambling that would be bound to exist if all the place were a sort of 'no-man's land.' If you didn't want to have the members always going to the law courts to redress their grievances, and all the old troubles would be repeated."

"Not so fast," replied Harry, "not so fast my friend. Do not conjure up thoughts of legal warfare amongst the members, because it would be one of the last things they would be likely to seek. Nobody seeks anything thing unless he sees, or fancies he sees, some advantage in it; and no sensible person appeals to the law when he thinks he can settle a thing without it. Lord Bacon wisely advised that 'everyone should know enough of the law to keep out of it,' and most people soon learn from experience that Bacon's advice is best. But still, under present conditions, it is sometimes wise to have recourse to the law, because we are living in a world ruled by robbers, and law is the only weapon which these robber rulers will permit us to use to fight our battles. But with these pioneers the case is entirely different. Their circumstances are just the reverse to our's. The questioner and myself, for instance, are not likely to quarrel over the use of the air in this hall which we both require for the purpose of respiration. He doesn't say, 'Holdfast you're breathing too much air, there won't be enough for me if you persist in breathing so hard and consuming some of my share of oxygen' (laughter). You laugh, friends, but the illustration I have made is no more grotesque than the one of my questioner has put to me. Why don't you object to my consuming so much of the air, which is equally essential to all of you as is the land? ("Because there is plenty for all.") Not at all; there is plenty of land for all, and apparently more than enough for all the inhabitants that the world is ever likely to contain (hear, hear). So you see there is some other reason why you don't growl at the quantity of air I use. I'll tell you what it is. It's because the air isn't monopolized as the earth is. The capitalists haven't yet found out how to bottle it up and charge us for the use of it; they don't know how to secure it, or they'd have sold it to us at the rate of so much per cubic acre, and leased it to us according to law, while those who had no money would have to die for want of breath, just as they now do for want of land. The unfortunate occupants of the Black Hole of Calcutta would have given all their worldly possessions to have had good pure air to breathe there, so that their lives could have been spared; and it would be just so with us, were the air monopolized; we would willingly pay the monopolists' own price for the use of the air, just as we now pay his price for the use of the land. But with our pioneers it is very different. The land with them is as free as the air with us. It costs

nothing to use it, so no one has any incentive to monopolize it from another who also requires to use it, because he could get nothing from that other for the loan of it even if he wanted to. It is only because the land has become monopolized and transformed into a marketable commodity, that we try to secure more of it than we need. When it ceases to have that market value, and becomes valueless in a financial sense, we take good care not to have more than we can just use ourselves. The Bethel community, who owned their land in common, but used it individually, never had any dispute about the area each one should occupy. Each member, or his family, had their own little house, and there wasn't even a fence round it. You couldn't tell where one man's ground ended, and another man's commenced. If you did see a little enclosure here and there, you found it was one to keep the fowls in so that they wouldn't destroy the crops; or it was one to protect certain vegetable growths from different animals who roamed about and might destroy them; or for some similar reason. But there wasn't any fence to say which was my land and which was your's. If ever we see a fence round some land, we know it is a sort of public notice to say 'This land's mine'; but you see the land of our pioneers, like the land of the Bethel people, is nobody's, so they don't want any fence round it to say whose it is. And they would not quarrel over it, any more than they would need to fence it from each other. The Bethel people were happy, contented and prosperous; and although they had not the perfect social organization that might be desired, their system of using the land gave every satisfaction that could be desired, and showed to all who want to live a noble life, where there are no such things as landed proprietors and rack-rented tenants, that that life can only be attained when the land is as free as the air, and no one has the right to own any of it, but each one has the right to use just as much as he requires. Now that is the grand lesson that Communism has taught us—that the natural resources of nature should be absolutely free to all. That is the lesson to be learned from its successes. But we know that all experiments in communism have sooner or later failed; and we have to learn the reason of its failure. Communism did good when it secured the common use of natural wealth *not* produced by the efforts of human labor; but it did harm when it secured the common use of artificial wealth produced *by* the efforts of human labor. That is the rock on which communism has always foundered and which its unfortunate wrecked crews have forsaken, preferring to struggle in the maelstrom of capitalism. Many a good has been spoilt owing to this one serious defect, many a brilliant enthusiast has been turned into a disheartened pessimist through witnessing the failure that inevitably follows such a rash denial of the right of the worker—the right to the product of his own work. If Labor is to rejoice in its labor, it must reap the full rewards of its labor. It must have the whole of what it produces—nothing more, nothing less. It must not share with the with the capitalist, as in capitalism; it must not share with the community, as in communism. Because in every community there are apt to be some idlers; and the only way to create idlers is by making it possible for an idler to live—a thing he can only do at the expense of the worker. Thus it is that in the communist experiments, the hard-worker has had to see the non-worker enjoying the fruits of others' toil because he did not toil himself; and so it has invariably come to pass that the most vigorous, the most intelligent, and the most industrious members have one after another forsaken these communities, and only the few enthusiasts along with the laziest and most unprincipled have been left in possession, until they eventually came to grief. Now it is very easy to secure this private possession of product, simultaneously with the free access to nature that necessarily precedes it. And the doing of this is what is rightly called 'co-operation.' Of course, we know that what is often called co-operation is only so in name, but is in reality stock-jobbing, dividend hunting, or respectable usury. True co-operation precludes dividends,

profits, or interest. True co-operation is that form of laboring where each works with the other for mutual benefit, but not for mutual plunder; where each gets the full equivalent of what he produces; and where each sells his surplus product for its real worth—that to say, that he sells it for just what it costs him in labor, receiving in exchange the equivalent in what it cost another in labor for his commodity. That is the true individualism—it is that individualism which exalts the individuality of the laborer to the highest possible point, by making him a truly independent man, one living entirely by his own labors and not living in any degree on the labors of others; it is that individualism which makes him a real sovereign over his own individuality, and a worthy being to associate with others, equally elevated to the same social, economical, and moral level. It is not the 'individualism' that the capitalist talks and boasts about—the individualism of the few only that rejoices in and lives upon the suppression of the individualism of the many; that isn't individualism at all—it's only domination. The present system isn't individualistic; it's exploitative. We live on each other instead of each one living on himself; and it's only those who succeed in living on plenty of others who ever get wealthy; no man ever got enormously wealthy out of his own efforts, but only by enslaving others and living upon them. But these pioneers couldn't possibly do this. Each one can only get what he makes by his own exertions, so he can't become a millionaire or a pauper; but he would earn about twelve pounds a week, when his city brethren would be earning only two pounds for doing the same thing and the 'sweating' capitalist who employs them would be getting two or three hundred pounds a week out of his fifty or a hundred hands. And there's another thing these pioneers can do when they get fairly started—they can commence making their own money. I don't mean lending gold out to others and robbing the borrowers of more than they borrowed; that's called making money, but it isn't anything of the kind: it's only a polite way of legally thieving money. I mean they can commence making labor money, not plutocrats' money—money that represents product created by labor, not money that represents the mines that the usurpers have stolen from the laborers by their wicked schemes of law and disorder. I mean the money that Robert Owen used to issue, that Josia Warren used to issue, and that Proudhon and all the other great champions of the working classes have tried to introduce as the laborers substitute for the plutocrats' gold. These pioneers can easily make a paper money to give to any member who raises a certain product and deposits it with them for sale. It's a sort of I.O.U., that the receiver gives to the producer to record his indebtedness to the producer. This Labor I.O.U., or Labor-note as it is called, can pass from one to another just as the plutocrat's money does to-day; and, so far as the pioneers are concerned, it can take its place. It's just the thing that Labor wants; it helps us to exchange our product with each other, by giving equal value for equal value; it dosn't cost anything to make, beyond the trifling cost of paper, ink, and labor, of which it takes but very little to produce; it can't rob us as gold does, because it doesn't bear interest. 'Bearing' interest, you know, is the polite name for filching interest; because money hasn't the power to reproduce its species, as animals and plants do, but it only gains for some that which others have lost. Now I think I have shown you the nature of the undertaking that I had resolved upon when I got released from your jail; and I think I have said enough to show you that it is the readiest, if not the only way, to secure justice, not alone for ourselves, but for all our fellow-men, women and children. Before concluding, I shall give you a number of facts and figures to show how I have worked it all out; and to let you see that the scheme is not at all utopian; but that, with your present means, it will enable you to amass, step by step, all the wealth and advantages that I have described to you, and a great deal more than I could tell you in a single lecture."

Harry then went on to lay his facts and figures before them, showing them every possible and likely transaction that the pioneers could engage in, and showing them, week by week, and month by month, how their little share capital would be spent and what returns it would give. He vouched for the accuracy of the figures, which everyone could test for themselves. He had consulted the various technical and industrial works in the Melbourne Public Library, besides gleaming valuable information from the current newspapers and many practical men both in business and private capacities; and therefore he could speak with authority on the matter.

When Harry had ceased speaking, he was greeted with round upon round of applause, nearly everyone present taking part in it, although the audience was a very mixed one, and there were many present, tempted thither by curiosity, who felt anything but comfortable at the cutting thrusts they received every now and then from Harry's remarks, especially when he trod too severely on their corns of conscience and charged them with being thieves. But somehow they seemed to recognize that his censures, though severe, were well deserved; that his objections were against a system and not against the individuals who were born into that system and had hitherto been unable to change it; and they could not help admiring his candor, his consistency, and his evident earnestness to better the condition of every man, no matter what his present position in society might be.

Then the chairman got up. He said he felt that the Brotherhood had not been disappointed when they expected something really good from the lecturer; but for himself, he found it so new a departure, so wide in its possibilities, and so daringly radical, that he scarcely felt himself competent to give it the minute criticism that it undoubtedly deserved; and he thought most of the others would be likely to receive it in the same way (hear, hear). It was now too late to ask any criticisms upon the subject from anyone present; but if they desired it, controversy could be carried on at the next meeting. He would now, as promised, invite any present to assist Holdfast in his laudable endeavor, and should formally declare the meeting closed, any who desired to co-operate being invited to remain behind.

Harry thanked the chairman and the rest of the society for their kindness, and immediately stepped into the body of the hall where most of the audience continued to loiter, and he was soon in the midst of an earnest group of men, some congratulating him, others arguing with him, and a few execrating him and telling him it was a pity the authorities ever released him.

“I do not blame you,” said Harry, smilingly, to the latter; “you abuse me now because you are the creatures of the existing conditions of society which will not let you do otherwise. Soon I will create new conditions when you will regret what you are now saying and will do all you can to help me.”

XIV.

"Well, Harry, how are you getting on with your social salvation scheme?" asked Wilberforce one day as the two were weighing out some corn for an order that had just come in.

"Very well! all things considered," replied Harry, "I don't expect to accomplish things all at once. I only got two members, as you know, out of that enthusiastic meeting of the Brotherhood that I addressed four weeks ago, but have now got ten members besides yourself, and I am quite satisfied the others will follow."

"Yes, Harry, but if they come at that rate it'll take another eight hundred years before you get the ten thousand members you anticipate. I think you'll be rather too old by that time; and as for me and the other members, we'll all be dead. I'm afraid you are too sanguine."

"Not at all, Fred, I look at the past, and see how ideas developed, and learn how they will develop in the future. When that great social reformer Charles Fourier, brought out his new theories of social reconstruction, his books were thought little of and scarcely ever read, and he waited five years before he got a single convert! And even that convert was one he wasn't at all proud of. And yet, forty years after, hundreds of the leading minds of America were enthusiastic converts to his ideas, thousands of dollars were gladly clubbed together to give those ideas a practical test, and experiment after experiment was conducted to carry out Fourier's ideas as best they could; and now Fourier's writings have influenced all sociological thought, and their author has become one of the great classic writers of Socialism. Surely if Fourier had reason for hope when he had only one convert in five years, I have every good reason to be sanguine when I have ten times that many converts in one month!"

"You certainly deserve to succeed, Harry."

"And I mean to, if it is only in my dying breath."

"That's the same old Harry."

Both speakers looked up to see who had interjected the last remark.

"Hypatia!" exclaimed Harry after a moment's hesitation.

"I wonder you recognise me, Harry. Don't you think I have changed—for the better of course?"

"You have changed, certainly; and at first I could scarcely believe it was you. You look so very ill. Whatever is the matter with you?"

"Oh nothing serious. Pardon me, Mr. Wilberforce, for my discourtesy in not noticing you before. I am so much interested in my fellow sufferer here that I almost forgot anyone else was present. I know with your large heartedness you will make full allowances for circumstances; but really I feel I am doing a gross injustice in even temporarily forgetting the presence of one who, in spite of my past coldness, has magnanimously acted as my greatest benefactor in the hour of need."

"It's all right, Hypatia, no self-respecting person omits to assist a suffering friend when he can do so without injury to himself. It is the least I can do. But who is that young woman I see waiting outside? Isn't she waiting for you?"

“Yes, that is my fellow traveller, Rose Wilson, who was working at the same place as I was in Sydney. She is waiting till I go out, when I have promised to go with her to a friend's place where she intends stopping.”

“Why not invite her in? There is no need for her to wait out there.”

Hypatia instantly did as requested; and after the usual introductions the whole party adjourned into the adjoining drawing room.

“Well,” said Fred, when they were seated, “I think Miss Stephens ought to tell us where she has been all this time, as there has been more than one anxious to hear after her welfare, and now that she's here we want our curiosity satisfied.”

“I have not much to tell you, Mr. Wilberforce, unless I wish to weary you with the dry details of a housekeeper's life. If you have no objection, I would like to speak privately with Mr. Holdfast for a few minutes in the next room. Perhaps Miss Wilson will give you the information you seek and Harry can learn it some other time.”

“Certainly,” said Fred, “don't let me, or empty ceremony, stand in the way of your conversation. If Miss Wilson can enlighten me I shall be as pleased to hear it from her as anyone else.”

The, young lady cheerfully proceeded to impart to Fred the desired information; and the re-united lovers withdrew.

XV.

It was a very cold wet day in June when Harry Holdfast sat in a little office in Melbourne, busily writing and arranging an affair of unusual importance. He was sitting at a simple deal table, with a host of letters piled up in front of him and a few files of papers hanging up here and there on the walls. Opposite him sat Hypatia. And at a table a little further down the room were two elderly gentlemen and a lady in busy conversation.

"There now, I think that is all," said Harry, looking up at last, "it is now six o'clock, and the men start at seven o'clock sharp. Have you nearly finished?"

"Yes," replied Hypatia, "I have just completed the amounts. After deducting all the preliminary expenses, and reserving sufficient to pay all the office rent, advertising expenses, and wages for the ensuing three months, I find the balance left from the collective payments on application and allotment leave a clear balance of over two thousand pounds. The total cost of the three hundred and twenty acres of land, and the total expense incurred in sending the hundred men with a full supply of food utensils, implements, and their transit, all of which have been paid, leaves a balance of £1040 in hand."

"That is correct. I make it come the same. And now I think we had better close up the office and go down to the station. Are you ready, Mr. Martin?"

"Yes, we're all waiting."

The whole party quickly took their departure for Spencer Street, and Harry locked the door behind him.

When they reached Spencer Street Station, they found all the members of the Social Pioneers who had been balloted for waiting to take their departure. The day was not one to cheer the hearts of any enthusiasts bent on seeking a happier life; for the elements seemed to be striving to make them as uncomfortable as possible. It was now raining hard, and the cold wind that was blowing made one feel miserable and loth almost to quit the wicked city with all its sins, but with its habitations so firmly secured against the gale. However, once in the train, our pioneers seemed to partially forget the wars of man or the elements, for most of them were busily occupied in speculating on their prospects, and wondering whether the Lake Boga settlement was likely to be the success they all hoped. Besides the private possessions that the pioneers were taking with them, in the shape of clocks, clothing and many other little domestic comforts, the directors of the Social Pioneers had sent up fifty new tents, material to build houses, thousands of pounds of provisions which would keep them well fed for a month, three good colonial ovens, plenty of kitchen and other utensils, a good supply of axes, spades and other implements, a careful assortment of garden seed that could he planted as soon as the ground was prepared, ten healthy-looking cows, and a few dogs. Such a collection was itself enough to make the plucky band feel some confidence in the undertaking, and the cheerful faces of the many earnest women and men who had come to see them off was just the best thing to increase that confidence.

It was night by the time the party reached their destination; and if their departure was cheerless, their arrival was still more so. But men used to 'roughing it', do not get appalled at trifles;

and they thought little of the inconvenience of stopping at the station for the night, where they managed to keep off the cold by the assistance of the tents they had with them, for although the weather was bitterly sharp there had been no rain there, and they did not find it so very uncomfortable as they might have done. At daybreak, Mr. Martin conducted them to one of the adjacent farms, where they found drays waiting in readiness for them to take their luggage to their own farm.

The men were not long in reaching their destination; and as the morning was a fine one they had a good opportunity to look around them and inspect their future home. The place they had chosen was very nicely situated only a short distance from the shore of the lake, and the position was one admirably adapted for the object they had in view. Certainly the place was not seen in its prettiest aspects; the recent oppressive summer had made the place wear a very desolate look, and there were not many evidences of vegetable life about. There were a few farms here and there, looking a little brighter than the great waste around them; but even they did not seem to receive the careful attention they might have had bestowed upon them, for they were not particularly well cultivated, but had evidently suffered their share of the parching dryness of an Australian summer, and looked even then as if they could advantageously do with a goodly supply of the clear water that lay at such a little distance from them. There was not even a decent forest to relieve the dead monotony of the scene, but only here and there a little timber struggling to survive the destructive attacks of man and nature's hot blasts. Now and then an aboriginal or two could be observed, the last remnants of a dying race, fast hastening to obliteration together with the crumbling civilization that had strangled it and was now strangling itself. Hares and rabbits were there in abundance, as many a farmer knew to his sorrow; and the wood ducks were so plentiful that the settlers found them a constant source of destruction to their crops. Wild fowl were there in immense numbers forming easy sport for the settlers' rifles; and the black ducks, teals and wild geese sported themselves over the quiet scene in crowds quite astounding to city eyes. And every now and then the settlers would catch sight of some of the bronze-winged pigeons which are so plentiful in the district. But it was the soil itself, the sandy chocolate soil beneath their feet, that appealed strongest to the new visitors. It was the first little spot of land that they—the rescued, expropriated proletaire—had ever been able to own. No, not to own; but to use. Ah, how that thought did delight them! How these novices did talk over the merits of this wondrous soil, as though they had been agricultural experts since their mothers weaned them. How fondly their eyes looked at the good kind earth that was to bring forth fruit for the starving wives and babies they had left behind them; and all without paying perpetual tribute to another. Then they would lift their eyes and turn them over towards the adjacent farms, and think of the woes and troubles of the poor farmer yonder who had nothing before him but the black prospect of striving against adversity to pay his hard-earned rents for ever and ever, until kind death came to relieve him of the cruel burden!

After enjoying a hearty meal from the simple but plentiful stores of food that the directors had despatched along with them, the pioneers set to work in real earnest to rig up the tents. Mr. Martin was an old hand at this sort of thing, having in his young days been mixed in every socialistic experiment that he ever could possibly wriggle into; and he gave the little band some valuable suggestions concerning the best sites to pitch their tents, and other details of information that were very useful to them. They were not long in unanimously and spontaneously recognizing him as their leader; for men who work together will all find a leader, and those they select of their own accord and mutual experience always give more satisfaction and better results than the

inexperienced busybodies that external authority imposes upon men when it usurps the right to meddle over them. The society had wisely arranged to leave the men to co-operate as suited them best, giving them only clear particulars of the performances it expected from them in equitable return for the assistance it gave them. After their canvas habitations were completed they busied themselves storing away the different commodities they had brought with them. All the food stuffs were carefully placed together, so as to be easily guarded against the attacks of the various quadrupeds and insects who would only have too readily appropriated it had the opportunity occurred. Then each tent had a share allotted of the little tin plates, pannikins, knives and forks, cooking utensils, and other useful articles that had been sent up; the colonial ovens were fitted up ready for the mid-day meal; and all the tools and garden implements were carefully deposited in a secure and dry place, except those they wanted for immediate use. One of the party was deputed to watch after the cows which were permitted to graze where they chose.

By the time night set in the little band were fairly tired out with the excitement and toil of the day; and although some of them lit their candles and tried to amuse themselves with reading and conversation, the majority soon sought their slumbers.

Old Martin did not retire early with the others. He had too long been accustomed to the foolish habit of tobacco smoking to wish to break it off at his age, and so he stole into one of the tents where two or three others were enjoying themselves conversing on the only topic, of course, that was occupying all minds—that of the new village settlement scheme upon which they had all embarked.

"Well, Thompson," said he, addressing one of the men, "how do you like your first day's experience?"

"Oh, it'll be time to talk about that when we have been here a little longer. We haven't really started yet."

"Very true; it is rather soon to ask you. But I suppose you already begin to feel as if you are breathing a very different air and enjoying far pleasanter associations than you can find in the hum and worry of city life?"

"Yes, I think anything is preferable to city life, even city death is better that it. But talking about the city, do you know how our comrades we have just left behind have been getting on lately?"

"We were just talking about Holdfast raising the necessary funds. Is it true that Sir Felix Slymer has expressed an interest in the undertaking, and thus caused the public to support it?"

"Yes, it is well known that Slymer did speak approvingly before the Bankers' Institute; and although his statements were not reported in the papers it got out somehow, and that seems to have given it a bit of a lift. For a long while Holdfast got very little encouragement, but when he had got several hundreds to join it, it got to be looked upon with more favour by the public; and although the papers tried to boycott it as much as possible, just as they are doing now, he wasn't long getting the whole of the five thousand shares taken up. Several other influential persons besides Slymer, are believed to be interested in the matter, although they are all keeping very quiet."

"Waiting to see which way the cat jumps, I suppose," remarked one.

"No," replied Martin, "I don't think it is exactly that in all cases. Holdfast thinks that Slymer is quietly encouraging it to keep the discontented a bit quiet and to make it appear to the working classes that he sympathizes with their efforts; and I think he is not far out. I believe many others give it an occasional word of half-hearted praise for a similar reason. Of course, there are certain to be many standing out from a thing until they see it has become a success."

"Has Holdfast had any definite communication from Slymer?"

"Don't ask me too much. You will hear something to surprise you shortly; but it would be a breach of confidence for me to tell you everything. I suppose you know that Holdfast wrote to a number of influential functionaries when he first tried to float his scheme, but got little encouragement from them. One noble Supreme Court judge, to whom he wrote, replied respectfully that he could not have anything to do with it, because he couldn't see how it could be successful as it didn't award dividends to the shareholders, and if a man wanted to get any good out of it he would have to work in it; another brilliant genius, with an 'M.A.' after his name, said it couldn't succeed unless the whole capital were subscribed by one or more wealthy philanthropists and bestowed on the society in the form of a charity; then another gentleman, a clergyman, was so busy thinking of going to England that he hadn't time to consider it, but would simply say he approved of it if it was a good thing; several others wrote in somewhat similar strains. But there was one reply, however, that Harry treasured above all the others, and it came from a clergyman who was well known as a hard worker in many philanthropic schemes. As you might like to hear it, I will read it to you from the copy I have with me:—

Mr, Harry Holdfast,

Dear Sir,—I have received your interesting prospectus, and beg to thank you for it, and for the honor which you do me in asking me to become a promoter. I feel, however, that I cannot accede to your request. The calls on my time and strength are about as many as I can answer, and an important scheme such as that which you are launching, should have, at its initiation, men who have the time and the ability to go into it thoroughly and watch over it day and night.

Wishing you every success in your effort to pioneer us out of chaos,

Yours faithfully,

Charles Oakes.

That was the only favorable reply that Harry received, out of a community that pretended it wanted to assist in getting out of the existing injustices. But fortunately he wasn't disheartened, with the good result that we are here to-night as witnesses of the first success of his determined endeavors."

"I hope we will help him to achieve that success. We might as well die at once as go back to Melbourne."

"Oh, don't talk about going back already," said another, we are hardly here yet."

The party were now pretty well enveloped in the clouds of tobacco smoke, and commenced to wander into dream-land, having little to say after this. It is one of the peculiar privileges of this habit to dull a man's mental activity. Your smoker will often sit for hours in a state of silence that would drive a non-smoker almost mad with impatient mental agony. It was not until their pipes had exhausted their supply of tobacco that Martin and the others lay down to sleep.

XVI.

Early the next morning, some of the Pioneers went down to the lake for a bathe, while others took down the lines they had brought with them and tried to catch some fish for their breakfast. In this they were not unsuccessful. The Lake Boga is an overflow from the Murray, and the party had their labors well rewarded by capturing some splendid Murray cod, besides a few bream and cat-fish and several other fresh water fishes. These they took home with them and shared them amongst the other members who desired them. After breakfast the whole party turned to their day's labors. They had managed to erect all the tents the day before, but they had yet to erect the houses for their permanent dwellings as the lady folks would be coming up in four weeks, and there was no time to lose; besides that, the wintry weather was just upon them, and if they did not hasten on with their work the rains might seriously hinder their operations.

It was soon evident that the society had made a good selection in the first 100 Pioneers they had sent up, they being well adapted for their particular work. Although they had been selected by ballot from all members of the society who had chosen to submit their names for the purpose, the sound advice of the directors for only practical men to apply at this stage was so well respected that the names submitted were those of men in nearly every case thoroughly fitted for the task. They were not long setting about building the houses after completing all the necessary preparations. These cottages were constructed of Egyptian bricks, made of sun-dried clay; the roofs were of corrugated iron which they had brought with them in the train along with the windows, the doors, and the floorings. These habitations were excellent ones for the settlers to live in and cost scarcely anything for construction. If properly constructed they could stand for twenty years and then be as good as ever. And yet their whole cost in hard cash was no more than it would cost to rent a small cottage in the city for only six months; for the material of each only cost them fifteen pounds; and as they had nearly all their time to devote to the purpose they could give all the necessary labor to their construction without making any sacrifice.

The other members of the party devoted their time to sundry other occupations, such as apportioning parts of the ground for different industries, digging the ground and preparing it for the garden seed they had with them, preparing the victuals, doing a little fencing here and there, collecting fuel, and many other little jobs that came to their hand.

Day after day the men proceeded with their work with a will that did them credit, and they soon had the pleasure of seeing the results of their toil in the altered appearance of the place. The ground already began to look more cheerful than when they had first seen it; and the cottages were fast approaching completion. It was well they had hastened on with their building, for they had not been at it more than a week before the weather began to get showery and frequently hindered their work, and towards the close of the month it became very stormy, and it was with great difficulty that the work was carried on. However by the beginning of July they had finished forty of these humble structures, and were ready to receive their families into their new made homes.

Exactly a month after their arrival at the Lake Boga railway station the settlers were back again at the same spot, not waiting this time to penetrate a strange land but to welcome visitors to that now familiar land. They were at the station long before the needful hour—anxious people generally manage to get too early in their efforts to appease their anxiety—and they had a full two hours to wait. The two hours seemed like ten hours; and when the train at last sped into the station one would almost think it was the first sight of civilization they had had for years, so eager were they to greet its occupants. The the train stopped, and there was the usual meeting that need not be described. It is hardly necessary to say that there was no bowing and scraping, stiff introductions, and affected smiles that makes one feel as if he is in an ice-bath. The manners of the 'upper crust' have fortunately not been adopted by the more solid human pie beneath; and working men and women are more human and emotional than the starched and painted consumptive marionettes that society sticks up in high places for common people to laugh at.

When the women had all got fairly out of the station, they lost no time in assisting to pack their different treasures into the six drays which had been sent up with them, while the men harnessed the horses, and put all the crockery and utensils that they could into the drays. There were about thirty children, all of whom they managed to carefully stow away on the drays along with a few of the women, most of whom preferred, however, to walk along in conversation with their male relatives and friends, as the distance they had to traverse was not very great. Forty more cows had been sent up with them, and they helped form part of the procession.

On arriving at the houses, all the men who could be spared instantly set to work to put the different things into them. They had managed to bring a few bedsteads and bedding with them from the station, and these were soon made ready, and the children, who were worn out with fatigue after so long travelling, were very soon soundly sleeping in them. As soon as the drays were emptied, they returned to the station to bring up the remainder of the beds, which were soon got in readiness for the women who were all sleeping soundly in them before the night was much advanced, every separate family occupying one house, while the single women slept together in groups of six to each house, and the unmarried men occupied the remaining houses and the tents.

Next day the men went down to the station and brought up the household furniture, the forty colonial ovens, a single-furrow plough, two harrows, two scarifiers, a steam plough, and the balance of the live stock consisting of five hundred fowls, and forty hives of bees. The steam plough had been purchased by the society at a cost of £700 to save labor on the part of the pioneers, a deposit having been paid on it, with the understanding that it became their's if the balance with current interest were paid within two years.

There were now two hundred men and women, besides the children, on the land, and already the place commenced to wear a busy aspect. They were not long setting to work. The men started sowing sixty acres with wheat; another sixty acres they planted with vines, peaches, apricots, figs, and other fruits, besides planting various kinds of vegetables in between the fruit trees so as to utilize the ground while waiting for the fruit to arrive at maturity; they also planted twenty acres with tomatoes. The women attended to the household duties, besides cultivating flower gardens around the cottages, attending the poultry and the cattle and looking after the bees, the men giving them occasional assistance. Although the weather continued to be very boisterous and heavy rains were falling most of the time, they managed to get on very well with their work. Next month the directors sent them up a first-class incubator, capable of hatching 200 eggs, and twenty-five superior bee-hives; besides another month's provisions, which were

regularly forwarded to them so that they should not need to depend on the product of their own land for some considerable time to come. They, in their turn, managed to send a number of eggs to Melbourne, where the directors disposed of them through their own office, getting a fair price for them and yet selling them considerably under current rates, as there were no middlemen to come between them and the public, and thus increase the prices to the consumers. A number of the remaining eggs, beyond what they required for their own consumption, they reserved for setting or incubation. By the beginning of October the society had a good sum of money still in hand. The directors then sent up an excellent cream separator and a large churn capable of being worked by steam; they also sent up a number of pigs and material to build twenty more houses similar to the ones they had already constructed. The settlers were now enabled to send their butter to market as well as their usual supply of eggs and the sixty acres of vegetable crop. The society then bought another 320 acres of land, adjoining the previous allotment, it having been arranged with the vendors on purchasing the first allotment that any time within the next five years they could purchase any part of the adjoining 10,000 acres at the price already paid for the first lot, namely £3 per acre. The men immediately set about shifting their tents into the new tract of land, and erecting the twenty houses upon it for the accommodation of the next batch of settlers. As soon as they were ready, the directors sent up a hundred men and women, fully provided as the others had been; and they also sent up a harvester with them, as the grain was now ripe for preparing for market. The weather was now delightful, and the Pioneers worked with a will, some gathering in the harvest, others cutting channels for the irrigation of their lands, a large area of which they intended to devote to intense culture, and others attending to the area they had reserved for grazing. Then the much detested rate collector called round, demanding the shire rates and water rates, but that didn't trouble them much. City slaves can't pay their rates without great difficulty; but to free workers on a fruitful soil it becomes a matter of little concern. The society paid the rates, which amounted to some nine or ten pounds, out of the capital, and debited it to all of the members, but as that averaged less than a half-penny each for the six months nobody minded it.

With the New Year, the directors bought another 320 acres of land and sent a hundred more persons, for whom cottages had already been constructed, and who took up the usual supply of provisions, &c. By March the channels had been completed, and the directors sent up a pumping plant for the irrigation works at a cost of £500. They also constructed a large reservoir in one of the main irrigation channels; this was used as a public bath as the waters of the lake were used for drinking purposes and could not be polluted. In the meantime the productivity from the various seeds and live stocks had enormously increased. The young chickens that had first come to bless the attentive care of the settlers were now full grown fowls, and were sent to market in large numbers, realizing a handsome sum; and the Pioneers could reserve as many as ever they wanted for their own use without the directors requiring to purchase any more for future batches of settlers. In the same way the bees and other live stock, the grain, and even the flowers, vied with each other in accumulating their numbers for the settlers' benefit, as though they were intent on disproving the old capitalistic Malthusian fiction that man's offspring tended to increase faster than man's food; and they proved, to the satisfaction of the pioneers, that man's food tended to outstrip man in reproducing its species, and not only tended to do so, but actually did so.

On the first day of June, exactly twelve months since the first 100 men had set foot on Lake Boga, there was great glee at the settlement. They had just completed their public hall, which

had cost them £500 for building material alone. It was a large roomy structure, built partly of wood and partly of the sun-dried bricks like those employed in constructing the cottages. The main entrance was into a wide-passage, on the walls of which were hung a number of choice oleographs and some pictures the settlers had brought with them in the shape of water and oil color paintings. This passage was known as the picture gallery. The first door on the right led into a large room fitted up with shelves all round the walls and on the two uprights in the centre of the room. There were a few large tables here and there and a number of chairs. On the shelves were a variety of cheap books on all subjects, mostly however those of an industrial or economic nature; these, too, were partly lent by the settlers, but the majority were supplied by the society. Immediately behind the public library, as this room was called, there was a room set apart for a printing office, where it was intended to erect an extensive printing plant and to issue a newspaper for the benefit of the settlers, as well as to educate the outside public in the methods and progress of the society. On the opposite side of the passage, the first door led into a convenient office, which was known as the mutual bank. It was here that the members were to receive their labor notes in exchange for their commodities, when the members became independent of the society's assistance and were able to produce entirely for themselves; and it was here that all the financial affairs of the society were regulated and the money stored, because several of them had a little money with them which was now of no use, but they wished to save it as it might be of service to them at some future time in their dealings with the unfortunate outside world. Behind the bank was a very large room, which was specially fitted up for use as a general store, and was known as the co-operative store; it was here that members could deposit their product for the society to forward to Melbourne or elsewhere for disposal. At the very extreme end of the passage was a large double door, which led into the lecture hall. This lecture hall was the largest room in the whole building, extending the whole length from side to side and being fairly wide in proportion; there were doors at each end and side to afford facility for egress in case of fire; and it was well fitted up with forms, and a stage at one end where theatricals could if necessary be carried on. This room was intended chiefly as a meeting place where the members of the community could meet together to discuss and arrange their affairs; on Sundays it was set apart for those who desired to hold religious services; on Wednesdays, for socialistic or free thought lectures and debates; and on other days it was open to any members who desired to hold meetings on any subject of interest to the community. The inaugural ceremony was a very simple one and soon performed. It was decided to name the little settlement, which up to the present had done without one, by a word which all treasured perhaps above any other—'Freedom'; and the hall was named The Hall of Freedom.

There were now six hundred persons on the sixteen hundred acres of land, with two hundred and twenty cottages and animal and vegetable life in abundance, all of which had been fully paid for except the steam plough upon which the balance of their payment was not yet due. Even many of their foes admitted that was good work to be accomplished in one year by people who had started together comparatively penniless. But their brightest days were yet in store.

XVII.

Another year had passed over the settlers heads. During that time their little community had enormously increased. Two thousand of them were already settled on the land, of which they had over 4,000 acres, which was more than two acres to each individual, being more than double the area that the people of Japan possess, where 34 million people are supported in comparative comfort on 33 million acres; the directors considered that over two acres per individual would be ample, as every acre was being used, and none held in idleness for speculative purposes. They had erected 500 cottages; their live stock amounted to 500 head of cattle, 60 draught horses, a number of saddle horses that some of the selectors had brought up on their private account, 30,000 fowls, a quantity of turkeys, besides a few dogs, goats, and other domestic animals, and a large number of bees. Their productivity was already becoming somewhat important. They were exporting monthly £600 worth of eggs, £350 worth of butter, and vegetable products of all kinds to the extent of over £2,000. And now the directors purchased 640 acres on the banks of the Murray River, about nine miles from the former site. This they settled in the same way as they had done at the Freedom community. The new settlement, which was called Equity, was opened with a batch of two hundred settlers, for whom fifty cottages had been built, and who took with them the usual stock of implements, utensils, seed, live stock, and provisions. This month they paid the balance of £690 due on the steam plough and erected a large steam factory at Freedom, at a cost of £1,000. In this factory was a large churn capable of making 410lbs. of butter in about five minutes, the various requirements for canning and preserving fruits, besides different machinery that supplied power for many industries of the settlers and saved their labor.

The directors continued to extend and develop both of the settlements by constantly purchasing fresh land, and sending more members upon it, until at last the number of Pioneers remaining in Melbourne was very small indeed, and the day was fast approaching when that unfortunate city would see them no more. It was now thirty-five months since the first pioneers had arrived at Lake Boga, leaving 4,900 comrades behind them. The directors had started the month with £2,000 in hand, and the settlers had sent down their usual monthly supply of 250,000 fowls, 30,000lbs. of butter, 1,000 tons of vegetables and fruits, besides a large supply of preserves and sundry products from the two settlements. These, after deducting all expenses, had realized £13,000; and the monthly call from the 500 Pioneers had amounted to a modest £62, making a grand total of £15,062 in the hands of the directors. With this they sent up the remaining members, on the first day of the following month of June at a total cost of £12,000. Thus the Social Pioneers had, in exactly three years, settled the whole of their 5,000 members on 10,600 acres of land, upon which they had erected 1,250 cottages besides their public hall and factories; they had cultivated and irrigated those lands by means of the best labor saving machinery; and, besides their 1,200 head of cattle, they had their pretty little colonies literally packed with live stock and vegetation capable of sustaining in comfort every one of them and thousands more besides. And yet the total capital paid up by all the members was only £17,746!

Now that all the members were settled, the society held a general meeting of its members at the Hall of Freedom, when the whole wealth of the community was calculated and the members were formally freed of their dependance upon its direction, and their accumulated wealth individualized. This was very simple. The 10,600 acres of land, which under the property system of other towns, would have been estimated at about £4,000,000 was utterly valueless in a mercantile sense, owing to the society's Constitution making it not a saleable commodity; so it was left entirely out of account in their calculations. All the cottages, factories, machinery, irrigating works, agricultural implements, live stock, fruit trees, vegetable products, besides the steam plough, public hall, &c., were carefully valued—everything movable, in fact, except the personal belongings that the settlers had brought with them, with the result that the aggregate wealth was estimated at £500,000. This equalled £100 to each individual; and the society accordingly issued labor notes to the full amount, giving each individual £100 worth of them, with which he could then, or at any other time, purchase from the directors the equivalent from any of the wealth in the possession of the society.

These notes were very simply arranged so as to fit in with the prevailing outside system, and be easy of adoption by the Pioneers. The £1 labor note was made the standard so as to fit in with the £1 in outside sterling currency which it equalled in purchasing power, although it was not professedly redeemable in coin, but could readily he exchanged for it when anyone desired it. On the basis of this £1 the decimal system was adopted. The lowest denomination was a cent (equal to about 1/4d), 10 cents made a *mark* (equal to about 21/2d.), 10 marks made an *hour* (which was the average hourly value of labor or product in the communities, and which equalled 2s.), and ten hours made a *pound*. Each one selected what he desired to purchase with his money, some retaining the balance in their own possession and a number depositing it in the mutual bank.

The subsequent proceedings were very brief. Most of the pioneers formed themselves into a co-operative body, appointing several of the original directors to some of the principle offices in it. Others formed themselves into a communist group or two and "pooled" their little possessions into one common fund. And a few chose to "paddle their own canoe" alone, settling down to a private life without enduring the worries and cares of any organization whatever.

"And now," said old Martin, when these matters were all definitely arranged, "I want to keep my faith with you, and tell you something about Felix Slymer. He promised our friend Holdfast before these communities were started, or the society fully formed, that when he got the whole five thousand members settled on the land he would give them a free grant of 10,000 acres of his magnificent estate at Healesville."

This announcement was received with uproarious applause.

"That is what I promised to tell you," continued Martin, "but now I have something better still to reveal. It is a letter that Sir Felix has just sent to our veteran, and of which he has sent a copy for me to read to you at this meeting:—

Dear Holdfast,

I have long been a critic of your actions, and I am sorry to say an opponent to them. But, although I hesitate to confess it, I now proclaim myself one of your earnest disciples. I cannot help feeling ashamed of myself when I think how I have injured you and yours; but I know you are so large-hearted you will forgive me, especially as I shall try to make amends. When I offered you the 10,000 acres of land at Healesville, I did not anticipate giving it, because I did not think it possible for you to succeed in carrying out your enterprise. Since then, I have seen you do so; and I have now lived as a resident member for over twelve months at your pretty village of Freedom,

which I would not leave, with its smiling farms and cheerful inhabitants, for all the wealth in the world. I intend to stop here. You have made a changed man of me, and I hasten to confess that change in a practical manner. I therefore enclose deeds of all my valuable estates throughout the colony, transferring them gratuitously to the Social Pioneers, to use for the benefit of humanity in accordance with their system that has worked here with such admirable results. And I only reserve to myself £100,000 in cash, with which I shall erect a comfortable house at Freedom and try to live in comfort for the remainder of my days. I shall give you the balance of my possessions, except my title, which I shall retain to please my ambition and also on the grounds of expediency, and sign myself,

Your earnest well wisher,

Sir Felix Slymer.

When Martin had finished reading the letter, the whole meeting gave Sir Felix Slymer three hearty cheers, and after a little pleasant speechifying, the liberal donor, who was present in person, suitably responded, and the happy people then returned to their homes.

XVIII.

The director's, on receiving Slymer's donation, instantly started to operate with it. They erected factories of all kinds on the various allotments, sent immense herds of sheep to some of the new settlements, dispatched to the settlements all the people they could induce to join, and soon made the colony of Victoria a real hive of industry.

The effect of the new system on the settlers was beginning to be observed in their healthy color, erect forms, and genial natures. Their sympathy for each other was equally remarkable: when one of the Pioneers had his little home burned down, hundreds of the neighbors instantly assisted to gratuitously erect and furnish a new one for him and his family. They scarcely ever drank spirits; and one enterprising genius, who joined the society and opened a hotel in Equity, was glad to turn it into a temperance boarding house to make it pay. Their profusion of fruit, grain, nuts, and vegetables, so weaned them from the eating of meat, that their health got better and better; and a large number of them became strict vegetarians, and soon enjoyed the superiority in body and mind which that simple diet always bestows upon the fortunate individuals who intelligently embrace it.

XIX.

The Social Pioneers now increased their share capital indefinitely, and hundreds of thousands joined them to enjoy their many advantages. Mortgaged estates were bought up everywhere, thus benefiting both the mortgagor and the Society. They bought tracts of land in all parts of the colony—in country, suburb, and city—and immediately employed their members upon it. Branches were opened in the adjoining colonies, and the lands there treated in a similar manner. The movement soon spread to England, Europe, America, Africa, and even Asia; and the workers of all countries soon began to forget they had ever been divided into nations, for they were all becoming Social Pioneers, and realized they were all common brothers in humanity. In Melbourne and Sydney, the Chinese, and other unfortunate "sweated" foreigners, found it necessary to join the new organization, against whose cheap production they were unable to compete; and the Kanakas in Queensland gladly joined hands with their white brethren, whom the cruel capitalists had imported them to injure.

The effect on the outside community was now marvellous. The unemployed disappeared from the city, as they became absorbed in the new enterprize. Wages rose everywhere, because labor was everyday becoming scarcer, and employers had increased difficulty in getting men to work for them. Those who did get work demanded better pay than hitherto, and it was readily granted; they worked with renewed vigor, and pleased both the employers and themselves. The increasing demand for labor saving machinery, by the different groups of Social Pioneers, became so enormous, that the prices went down considerably owing to the increased sales, and the purchasing power of the workers' larger earnings were thus considerably increased. The universal desire to remove the restrictive tariffs on imports was met by a ready response, and such excellent labor saving machinery was imported so cheaply that the Victorian people soon began to almost monopolize the leading markets of the world by the cheapening of their commodities, for which, too, the highest wages on earth were paid. Employer after employer joined the new organization as he realized the advantages afforded him in abolished rents, decreased cost of production, an exit from financial embarrassments, and a steady market for his goods. Rents fell wherever the Social Pioneers bought up lands, because everywhere the adjoining tenants joined the Society and shifted on to the freed land alongside, and the vacated dwellings could find no new tenants. Empty houses became so common, and so few people wanted to buy them that the Society got them for a trifling sum, even in the heart of the city. Rents were getting equalized in city and country, and were fast tending towards zero. The increasing reduction of rents and cheapening of commodities so increased the purchasing power of the laborers' wages that they commenced beautifying their homes and enjoying the best of luxuries; while hotel-keeper after hotel keeper had to close up his business, because the people were no longer miserable and poverty-stricken enough to drown their sorrows in beastly intoxicants; and even the tobacconists found a deal of their income now seeking other channels. Everywhere the free competition of the equitably dealing Social Pioneers was fast driving out the plundering system of capitalism; and all classes of the community were hastening to participate in the new movement.

XX.

Harry Holdfast had intended to go to Freedom along with the last batch of the first five thousand settlers, but his health had not permitted him. The terrible strain, which the carrying out of his scheme had been upon his strength, was more than he could endure; and at last he broke down. During his fifteen year's confinement in prison he had contracted a serious malady, which was now assuming such alarming symptoms that his best friends were losing hopes of his recovery. His affectionate lover was always by his side, cheering him with her kind and intellectual remarks; but she, too, was losing all hopes of seeing him restored to health and friends.

"I am afraid my last day is nigh," said he one day, as he moaned in agony on his bed and only brought out each word with difficulty and considerable pain and exhaustion.

At his bedside were Wilberforce, Miss Wilson, and Hypatia, with sorrowful looks that too well betrayed their fears for the sufferer.

"I hope not," Harry, said Hypatia; "it seems sad that you should be lost to the world just when you have accomplished your grand work, and have not even seen with your own eyes the mighty results of your endeavors. But I am afraid, Harry, you are right. I would not deceive you by giving you false hopes."

"I know you would not, Hypatia. Honest men and women never deceive each other."

The doctors who had been in attendance on the poor fellow had told Hypatia that they did not think he could live many more hours, as he had allowed the disease to get such a firm hold of him that it had got totally beyond their power to cure. They had telegraphed for a young Baunscheidtist healer, who was an intimate friend of Harry's, but he had not arrived.

Presently the patient opened his wearied eyes and attempted to speak again.

"Dear friends," said he, speaking with the greatest difficulty, and pausing every now and then to regain his breath, "if I die, take a last message from me to the poor emancipated proletaire of Freedom and Equity. Tell them I hoped to see them and shake hands with them. Aye, tell them if I could only see those happy lands of their's, I would willingly meet my death afterwards. But, oh I would like to see them first! Tell them, my pleasure at their happiness is more than my weak brain can stand. The cruel tortures of my persecutors did not affect me; but the thought of these poor starving men and women being made happy fills me with emotions that nearly choke me. I am afraid——." Here the poor fellow completely broke down, sobbing like a child.

After a little time, he regained his composure.

"Tell them all," he continued, "that if I die, I die with the conviction that my life has not been useless; and that its end was all happiness. Tell those who have maligned and injured me, that I forgive them and love them; for I know they were poor fellow mortals like myself and could not help what they did. Tell Slymer I thank him for his kind donation, and I rejoice to see that one of his intelligence has been rescued from the ferocious system that had made him traitor to his fellow-men; and tell him I am proud to think that through my small efforts he is now helping the Pioneers in their glorious crusade against injustice. And, Hypatia, come nearer a minute. Hypatia are you there?"

"Yes, Fred, I am here," she answered softly, "what do you want to tell me?"

The lips of the sick man were moving, as though he wanted to speak; but he made no sound. They both strained their ears and leaned over him to catch the last words of love to his devoted girl. But still they heard nothing. Presently his lips ceased to move, and a happy smile stole over his face.

Harry Holdfast was dead.

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A train reached Lake Boga station carrying a body of mourners and a coffin. In that coffin was the corpse of Harry Holdfast, whose friends had brought him to Freedom that the remains of the veteran emancipator might be humbly interred in the spot he had consecrated by his noble efforts. Amongst the mourners was Hypatia Stephens. She got out with the others, and entered one of the vehicles in the sad procession. But she did not seem to see anything. When she reached Freedom, she was like a simple child, and her friends had to lead her from the conveyance. She seemed suddenly to have lost her reason. Then she asked if she could retire into private communion with herself for a few moments. The request of the afflicted woman was readily complied with; and the funeral proceedings were suspended while she was escorted into one of the cottages near by and her re-appearance waited for. Half-an-hour elapsed, but still she did not appear. At last, two of the women went into the room to see if any harm had befallen her. She was not there; but a newly written letter was upon the table beside the inkstand. They took it up and read it. It was addressed to "Miss Wilson, care of F. Wilberforce, Melbourne," and ran as follows:—

Dear Alice,

I have no one to console with, no one to confide in. You are not here. My best friend, Harry, is gone. I find myself in a strange land amongst strange people. I cannot bear it any longer. I know they are good people and would love me and be kind to me, but the one I want is not amongst them. Poor sister, how often I have thought of you, and recalled the troubles you had when we worked together in Sydney trying to earn a crust of bread. And how often I have thought of your struggle trying to earn that crust, and the misery and suffering it caused you. I know society maligned you. I know how, when it had degraded you and nearly maddened you, it turned round and spat upon you and called you its prostitute. But, Alice, I think you no prostitute. I think you a martyr. Oh, how I wish every woman were as noble and independent as you, poor girl! I often wonder how it is that I did not sell my pleasures to lascivious hypocrites as you have had to do, my poor sister. Was it because I had not the courage? Or was it that I loved Harry too well to let the pangs of hunger banish my virtuous regard for him? Perhaps it was both causes combined. However, he is dead now. My life's hope is no more. The cruel world is black and cheerless. It has at last broken my poor weak heart; and I feel the time has come when I must bid you all good-bye. Remember me to your good friend and future husband, Fred Wilberforce, and tell him I once again thank him for his many kindnesses to Harry and me. Give my love to every Social Pioneer and all who are working for the truer humanity. And tell them my last hopes are with them and with their glorious cause. And take the last farewell wishes from

Your loving sister in misfortune,

Hypatia.

When the women had read the letter, they hastened into the next room. There they saw the poor broken-hearted girl lying on the rough couch. They leaned over her, and felt her to make sure she still lived. But they felt the cold clay,

Hypatia was dead!

Just as the gardener plucks the choicest flowers and leaves the others to bloom without them, so Nature takes from us Her choicest flowers and leaves us to mourn their loss. Our brightest hopes leave us just as success seems sure. Our friends forsake us just as we learn to love them. Our martyrs sacrifice their lives unto us; and then, when it is too late, we regret them, and build our prosperity on their misery.

Harry Holdfast and his friends had sacrificed themselves for humanity.

They had consecrated their lives to the martyr's cause of Freedom.

The Workers were at last emancipated!

David Andrew Andrade
The Melbourne Riots
And How Harry Holdfast and His Friends Emancipated the Workers
1892

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