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Society of the Mutuellistes of Lyon

Protest of the Mutuellistes

1834

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66. Translated by Shawn P. Wilbur.

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The Society of the Mutuellistes of Lyon, placed by the mere fact of their will outside the political circle, thought they should fear not aggression on the part of the men in power, when the law against the associations came to reveal their error to them; that monstrous law, a work of the most savage vandalism, violating the most sacred rights, orders the members of that society to break the links that unite them and separate! The Mutuellistes have had to investigate and deliberate.

“Considering, as a general rule, that association is the natural right of all men, that it is the source of all progress and all civilization, that this right is not the concession of human laws, but the result of the wishes and needs of humanity written in the providential code;

“Considering in particular that the association of laborers is a necessity of our era, that it is for them a condition of existence, that all the laws that would infringe it would have the immediate effect of delivering them, without defenses, to the selfishness and rapacity of those who exploit them:

“Consequently, the Mutuellistes protest against the liberty-killing law on associations, and declare that they will never bow their heads under a stupefying yoke, that their gatherings

will not be suspended, and, relying on the most inviolable of rights, that of living by laboring, they will know how to resist, with all the energy that characterizes free men, all brutal attempts, and will not recoil before any sacrifice for the defense of a right that no human power could rob them of.”

(More than 2,544 signatures follow.)