

The Struggle for Freedom [Nov, 1886]

Freedom Press

November, 1886

Contents

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| GREAT BRITAIN | 3 |
| AMERICA | 4 |

GREAT BRITAIN

The main interest of the struggle for freedom still centers in the content for FREE LAND which is being waged throughout the Keltic provinces of Great Britain. Their inhabitants deserve the gratitude of all of the world for their spirited vindication of the social claims of human beings, in face of the oppression, scorn and violence of the ruling classes. The heroic resistance of the Irish to the exactions of landlords is making visible impression on the enemy. Everywhere proprietors wise in their generation, are reducing their demands, and authorities are declining to give even moral support to the foolish. English papers talk openly on the need of getting rid of Irish landlords, whilst Sir R. Buller is refusing to enforce "unfair" evictions, and an Irish magistrate has decided water on the police is passive resistance, not a breach fails to chronicle the numerous examples of the brave spirit of revolt among the people. One Clanakiltie farmer held the police, armed with guns and bayonets, at bay for twenty-four hours. He cut away the staircase, and drove the evictors out of his house again and again with boiling water, showers of iron bolts, etc., flung from the upper story. Unfortunately the next day he was arrested, whilst, with the aid of five neighbors, he was bringing some timber and a packet of dynamite to further fortify his domain.

Last spring Lord Clanricarde, who gets £20,000 a-year from an estate in Galway he never visits or improves, evicted four tenants, with the aid of 100 policemen and 200 soldiers, and at a cost to the taxpayers of £800. Fifty-six men are now lying in Galway jail for resisting this man's violence, and the rest of his tenants have refused to pay any rent until the evicted farmers are reinstated.

In spite of the man-of-war sent by the English Government, and the severe sentences on their comrades, the crofters are still in revolt against the attempts of Highland proprietors to force them to give up their ancient rights and accept the system of private property in land. Landlords like Lord Lovat can buy the subtleness of lawyers to evade in their leases even such half-hearted measures of protection as were supposed to be afforded to the crofters by the Agricultural Holdings Act, and the Land Commission is a mere farce. The people see and feel that they must act resolutely if they do not mean to be driven from their native soil.

And they are acting. The attempts of the combined forces of the police, the sheriff's officers, and the marines of H.M.S. "Seahorse" to serve writs in Skye have been ignominiously unsuccessful. At Bornas Ritag the women, armed with pads of water, resolutely planted themselves before the cottage doors and gave the gallant assailants so cold a welcome that they were glad to beat a hasty retreat. In revenge the police arrested six men and dragged them off to jail at Portree.

Pity the Irish and Highlanders alike do not carry their demands a little further and refuse once and for all to pay blackmail to land monopolists or recognize their authority under any circumstances whatever. They could make the larger point as easily as the smaller.

The London Society of Compositors have adopted Mr. Maddison's suggestion and instituted the boycotting of employers who pay starvation wages. By requesting the School Board to refuse printing tenders from "unfair houses," they recognized the common cause of workers of all grades. The more fortunate and able must fight the battle for the less fortunate, or all are doomed to a common degradation.

Not that boycotting can transform our economic system and set free its slaves; but its introduction marks the rising of the tide of social revolt.

AMERICA

The seven Anarchists, who did NOT throw a bomb at the Chicago police, are to be publicly murdered next month.

The Richmond General Assembly of the Knights of Labor have appealed for the pardon of our comrades. Nevertheless these worthy trades'-unionists wish it to be understood that they "believe peaceful measures the best for securing reform." Yes; if only the monopolists of the means of existence would allow us to gain our freedom peacefully, But one would imagine that American workers had had enough experience for one year of the sort of peaceful acquiescence they have to expect from their masters, even when they merely demand a little shorter hours or a little higher wages.

The Manufacturers' Aid Association has lately ordained that when a trade dispute occurs, all mills in the same district are to be stopped until it is settled. The Association pays the owners' losses. Three thousand cotton operatives were locked out at Frankford, Pa., last month in consequence, and workers will know what it means to tire men and women and their children. Is this war or peace? And what peace can we desire with oppression and wrong?

The German Communist-Anarchists in London are about to issue a new paper in their own language, "Die Autonomie" will appear fortnightly. The first number is announced for November 4th, price 1d.; or 10d. a quarter, postage included. All communications to be addressed to R. Gunderson, 96 Wardor Street, Soho, W. We wish our comrades success.

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