

THE COMING MAN.

A pair of very chubby legs, Encased in scarlet hose; A pair of little chubby boots, With rather doubtful toes; A little kilt, a little coat— Cut as a mother can— And to be sure stands in state The future's coming man.

ANARCHISTS IN NEW YORK.

BY JNO. GILMER SPEED. "To kill a czar, an emperor, or king is nothing more than murder. That is not the way to emancipate Europe. You kill a king, and his son or brother or nephew is crowned, and rules in his stead, and no progress has been made. That is not the way to do it. The proper way would be to wipe out all of the ruling families—to execute them all to the remotest ends of the lines. This having been done, there would be no one left to take the thrones by divine right, and the people could take charge of their own fates. Killing one or two or three men does no good whatever, and is only murder, but to remove the few thousand royalties by killing them would be revolution, warlike, and that too, of a most humane kind. In some way or another the detronement of the kings has got to take place, and that very soon. I will probably occur during a general European war, in which tens of thousands of men will be killed, and other tens of thousands wounded and disabled for life. This war will be waged to perpetuate the tottering thrones. Now how much more humane it would be to kill all these royalties, and prevent the killing of the fifty times as many people who will be destroyed in such a war! A man is not more sacred than that of a peasant. So my theory as to the best reformatory method of procedure is to kill all the kings and members of royal families, to sacrifice them on the altar of progress, and then see what we shall see."

"Do many other anarchists agree with you in these views?" I asked. "Bless your soul, my dear sir, I am not an anarchist!" said the young man to whom I was talking. "I am not an anarchist, I am a socialist, a socialist of the mildest type. And he looked hurt that he should have been misunderstood. This conversation took place in a little job-printing office down town, and the young man who advocates the killing of kings is the foreman. He is a good-looking young fellow, with clean-cut features, and a mild kindly blue eye. His manners are gentle, and his voice low, and he was clean and fresh-looking, with the exception of his hands which were soiled by lifting wet type. I had been told that he was a leader among the anarchists, and the most intelligent of the lot. So to him I went first in my examination as to the number and the sentiments of the anarchists in New York.

"Your idea seems to be," I continued, "that if the kingdoms of Europe could be converted into republics, that then all social wrongs will be righted?" "Yes," he responded, "provided there be such absolute home-rule that each community shall be permitted to govern itself, and each individual have opportunity to develop on natural lines."

"Why should the socialists of your type, if they be working to convert the European kingdoms into republics, be dissatisfied with the social conditions in the United States?" "Because," said he, "and now his blue eyes kindled and his cheeks paled—"because this is only a republic in name, because there is no home rule, and because the laws are made not only for the poor and the hard-working, but for the rich and the idle. Your American capitalist is just as much of a king and tyrant as any of those who wear crowns in Europe."

"These social reformers, it may be said just here, are divided into various general parties, each general party being subdivided into smaller groups. The general parties are anarchists, nihilists, and socialists. The anarchists are all socialists, but there are so many groups of them that it is impossible to classify them without taking an exhaustive census of them all. If this were done, I fancy that it would show that the average number of each group was about ten. Some of the groups, to be sure, are very much larger than this, but others are much smaller, until we get to the autonomists, where each man flocks by himself, and is a group all alone. All anarchists are followers of Proudhon, and their creed may be found in his famous paradox: "Government of man by man in every form is oppression." The highest perfection of society is found in the union of order and anarchy."

and was applied indiscriminately by them as an opprobrious and discrediting nickname to all persons who were not satisfied with the existing order of things, and who sought by any active method whatever to bring about changes in Russian social and political organization. Nihilists, therefore, as well as I can make out, are also anarchists so far as Russia is concerned; but they do not necessarily wish to apply, or see any necessity for applying, anarchistic methods universally and all over the world. Of those in New York nearly all are Jews, who have been compelled to leave the dominions of the Czar not so much because they are nihilists but because they were Jews. The more radical of the nihilists profess a total disbelief in religion, morality, law, and order, and—as James Freeman Clarke said in his *Ten Great Religions of the World*—to them "God is nothing, man is nothing, life is nothing, eternity is nothing."

Then we have the milder form of reformers, the socialists. Socialists very generally sympathize with the anarchists and the nihilists—more with the latter than the former, but they usually hold that the methods that these two classes advocate and sometimes practice are too radical and also ineffectual. The great majority of the socialists in New York, as in other parts of America, are foreign born, there being among them at least forty-nine foreigners to one native. They are all "communists," and Professor Ely, in his work on *French and German Socialism*, says: "All communists without exception propose that the people as a whole, or some particular division of the people, as a village or commune, should own all the means of production—land, houses, factories, railroads, canals, etc.; that production should be carried on in common; and that officers selected in one way or another should distribute among the inhabitants the fruits of their labor."

When I started out to visit these people they were all very much excited on account of the attempted assassination of Mr. Henry Frick in Pittsburgh by the young Russian Jew Berkman, who belongs to the autonomist group of anarchists in New York, which Joseph Peukert, the editor of *Der Anarchist*, is the leader. The addresses of various places where anarchists publicly courted had been given to me by the socialist of king-killing proclivities. These I visited casually, merely to take a preliminary view of them, and in these first visits my first impression was confirmed, that I could learn nothing of the men and women belonging to the groups, and get only brief glimpses of them, by simply asking them to talk with me. At the office of *Der Freiheit*, of which John Most is the editor and proprietor, I found that the paper for the week had gone to press, and the editor, released from his labors, had retired from public view. It was easy, however, to arrange to meet him later on. What struck me in this first visit was the reverential way in which the men about the office spoke of Most. It was evident that they thought him a great man, and felt only a brief glimpse of pride in him, when he wrote his black and white column that he calls editorials, he kept himself up to the mark by quaffing great draughts of black coffee strengthened by brandy. It did not seem to them that this fact was in some sense a confirmation of the charge made by the anarchists of other groups that Most was a coward, and needed at all times to be supplied with artificial, or what is generally known as "Dutch," courage. There are no evidences of prosperity in the little den that serves as editorial and composing room and counting room as well. Two or three men at the cases looked much as other printers do, though it was evident that they were Germans. From there I went in search of Peukert's office, but this I did not find, for the very good reason that there is no such place, even though there may have been. I had two addresses, one in Division Street and another in Canal, but he was at neither of these places, and I suspect that he carries his office in his hat, and has his printing done at some obscure job office.

But it was easy enough to see Peukert himself, for he spends much of the larger part of his time in a narrow, dark, and dingy bar-room in Fifth Street, just east of the Bowery. This place is known to the police as "Tough Mike's," and the sign in white letters on the window reads "Zum Groben Michel." This is the basement under a tenement house, and there are two rooms. The bar is on one side of the front room. In front of it is a large table, at which men were drinking beer, and on which was a zither and a man thumping out the "Marseillaise."

"See," said a drunken German, as I entered, and speaking to me in his native tongue, "many men have been hanged for singing the 'Marseillaise,' but this man plays it for five cents."

Beyond the table was a reading desk, upon which were files of anarchistic papers, and above them portraits of the anarchists who have been executed for their crimes, among them being those executed in Chicago for throwing dynamite bombs in the Haymarket several years ago. Just beyond the bar, the tables, and the reading-stand was a pool table stretching nearly across the room, and leaving scant space at either hand for the handling of a cue. Several men stood about this table with cues in their hands, but they ceased playing when I entered. One of these was Peukert, and he watched me in a sly and nervous way as long as I remained in the place. Beyond the pool table was a smaller room, and in the centre of this was a table at which half a dozen men sat drinking beer out of those large glasses known as the Bowery, I believe, as schooners. And still beyond, at a small table, and next to a window that looked out into a small dark court-yard, sat a young woman who, had she not seemed so entirely at home, would have appeared out of place with such surroundings. She was reading a book, with a glass of beer by the side of it on the table.

This was Emma Goldman, the anarchist wife of Berkman, who tried to kill Mr. Frick. I mention the things I saw in this bar-room thus minutely because it is the one place in New York where avowed anarchists meet without disguise. It is a loathsome place in itself, and there is one thing very certain, that these rabid reformers who are trying to disturb the serenity of all existing society are not having much fun while they are about it. The men were shabby, and from the appearance of their hands not unacquainted with hard labor. It was early in the afternoon when I made my first visit, so it was only fair to conclude that the men then in "Tough Mike's" were out of employment. Before my presence was noted, they were talking wildly, nearly all at once, after the manner of Germans laboring under excitement; but when I was seen, the hubbub ceased, and only harsh whispering could be heard.

To my requests to talk to some of his guests or to himself, the ill-shapen giant behind the bar had but one reply to make—"It is not necessary." Peukert leaned on his billiard cue and watched, evidently approving of "Tough Mike's" determination not to speak more than four words—"It is not necessary." This was discouraging, so I abandoned the effort to get information there at that time, and went to half a dozen other places said to be the resorts of anarchists. There was a little restaurant in Division Street at which I was told that many of the Jewish anarchists fed. The proprietor met me very politely, and had difficulty in escaping his frank volubility. He said he kept an eating house, and he did not ask a man who wanted to buy a steak or a cup of coffee what his religious or political opinions were, and he did not care so long as the customer had money to pay for his meals. Berkman had been one of his customers like the rest, and had been there once, twice, maybe forty times, but he came there to eat, not to talk anarchism. Sitting around the restaurant were a dozen or more young men who listened intently to what the proprietor was saying. If there to eat, they had either finished some time or not made up their minds what to order, for there was no evidence of either past or prospective meals to be seen on the tables. The exceeding frankness of the proprietor was as baffling as "Tough Mike's" taciturnity.

From Division Street I went to Justus Schwab's beer saloon, east of Second Avenue. This place was deserted of all save the bar-keeper and one rather cheap and flashily dressed Jew. Schwab, I was told, was a lot of mischief and foolish fellows who go to Schwab to drink beer and celebrate liberal ideas, but they are not practical anarchists by any means. They are looked upon with scorn by the more radical customers of "Tough Mike's." Schwab makes it pleasant for his patrons and gives them music in the evening. He is a thrifty saloon-keeper, and would probably be ready to assist in any social or political movement that would send him a more profitable set of customers. As it is, he has done very well, for while advocating the abolition of property was a crime in an individual, he has become a man of substance, and laid by a pretty little fortune.

I had always had an idea that I could get valuable assistance from the detectives of the Police Department. In such place, even though there may have been. I had two addresses, one in Division Street and another in Canal, but he was at neither of these places, and I suspect that he carries his office in his hat, and has his printing done at some obscure job office.

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of the numerous objections was a considerably reduced list, and when we sat down to dinner there were only seven present besides our host and myself. I am sure I may be allowed to say, without any breach of my host's injunction, that his guests were a queer and interesting lot. Two were very much of the same type of men we see selling shoe laces on Broadway; three were heavily bearded Germans, who looked as though they might have come from behind east side bars; one was a fair-haired and spectacled young Russian Jew; and the seventh was the blue-eyed compositor who believed that the regeneration of the world should begin by killing all the kings and royal families in Europe.

At the beginning all were very constrained. They seemed suspicious of one another, and particularly of me. But with the food and drink they warmed up, and before the coffee was served it was a very noisy and animated group. They did not talk anarchy exactly, but they talked against what they thought existing abuses. Nor did they talk of the means by which they proposed to make chaos come again so that these abuses might stop, but each man had a more or less indefinite idea of how order was to be brought from this chaos, so that the dream of Proudhon might be realized, and the highest social perfection be attained by means of "the union of order and anarchy." As I had not the privilege of reporting the talk at the dinner, I made arrangements to meet several of those present next day, and the fair-haired young Russian Jew volunteered to introduce me to Peukert and Emma Goldman. This was what I wished above all things. I had heard both of them speak in public, but they were on parade then, and seemed to be merely talking for effect. The dinner served one good purpose, for I was convinced that these people were entirely sincere and honest. There are among the avowed anarchists in New York a few men like Schwab, who are anarchists for revenue only, and a few, perhaps, like Most, who are anarchists because they have a wholesome fear of the law; but the rank and file, the very great majority, are entirely sincere, and believe that only through the enforcement of their notions can society ever be reformed and mankind regenerated into a universal brotherhood. Upon all ordinary subjects these people talk quietly and rationally. This man is a cabinet-maker, and he will talk to you very quietly and pleasantly of his handicraft; that man is a fresco-painter, and he will discuss house-decoration and the art tendencies of the age with instructed intelligence. But if this one topic of social reform be broached, they are changed men at once. They become angry, and talk incomprehensible nonsense. Any one who has ever visited an insane asylum will know what I mean. In an institution of that kind you may see a quiet, motherly-looking woman placidly sewing. You talk with her about her work, and she seems full of homely intelligence, and he will discuss house-decoration and the art tendencies of the age with instructed intelligence. But if this one topic of social reform be broached, they are changed men at once. They become angry, and talk incomprehensible nonsense. Any one who has ever visited an insane asylum will know what I mean. In an institution of that kind you may see a quiet, motherly-looking woman placidly sewing. You talk with her about her work, and she seems full of homely intelligence, and he will discuss house-decoration and the art tendencies of the age with instructed intelligence. 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