

VARIOUS

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**"TO THE GENERATION
KNOCKING AT THE DOOR."**

By John Davidson

*Break—break it open; let the knocker rust;
Consider no "shalt not," nor no man's "must";
And, being entered, promptly take the lead,
Setting aside tradition, custom, creed;
Nor watch the balance of the huckster's beam;
Declare your hardest thought, your proudest dream;
Await no summons; laugh at all rebuff;
High hearts and you are destiny enough.*

*The mystery and the power enshrined in you
Are old as time and as the moment new;
And none but you can tell what part you play,
Nor can you tell until you make assay,
For this alone, this always, will succeed,
The miracle and magic of the deed.*

OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS

Whoever severs himself from Mother Earth and her flowing sources of life goes into exile. A vast part of civilization has ceased to feel the deep relation with our mother. How they hasten and fall over one another, the many thousands of the great cities; how they swallow their food, everlastingly counting the minutes with cold hard faces; how they dwell packed together, close to one another, above and beneath, in dark gloomy stuffed holes, with dull hearts and insensitive heads, from the lack of space and air! Economic necessity causes such hateful pressure. Economic necessity? Why not economic stupidity? This seems a more appropriate name for it. Were it not for lack of understanding and knowledge, the necessity of escaping from the agony of an endless search for profit would make itself felt more keenly.

Must the Earth forever be arranged like an ocean steamer, with large, luxurious rooms and luxurious food for a select few, and underneath in the steerage, where the great mass can barely breathe from dirt and the poisonous air? Neither unconquerable external nor internal necessity forces the human race to such life; that which keeps it in such condition are ignorance and indifference.

Since Turgenieff wrote his "Fathers and Sons" and the "New Generation," the appearance of the Revolutionary army in Russia has changed features. At that time only the intellectuals and college youths, a small coterie of idealists, who knew no distinction between class and caste, took part in the tremendous work of reconstruction. The revolutionist of those days had delicate white hands, lots of learning, æstheticism and a good portion of nervousness. He attempted to go among the people, but the people understood him not, for he did not speak the people's tongue. It was a great effort for most of those brave ones to overcome their disgust at the dirt and dense ignorance they met among the peasants, who absolutely lacked comprehension of new ideas; therefore, there could be no understanding between the intellectuals, who wanted to help, and the sufferers, who needed help. These two elements were brought in closer touch through industrialism. The Russian peasant, robbed of the means to remain on his soil, was driven into the large industrial centres, and there he learned to know those brave and heroic men and women who gave up their comfort and career in their efforts for the liberation of their people.

These ideas that have undergone such great changes in Russia within the last decade should serve as good material for study for those who claim the Russian Revolution is dead.

Nicholas Tchaykovsky, one of Russia's foremost workers in the revolutionary movement, and one who, through beauty of

character, simplicity of soul and great strategical ability, has been the idol of the Russian revolutionary youth for many years, is here as the delegate of the Russian Revolutionary Socialist party, to raise funds for a new uprising. He was right when he said, at the meeting in Grand Central Palace, "The Russian Revolution will live until the decayed and cowardly regime of tyranny in Russia is rooted out of existence."



The French have a new President. Loubet was succeeded by Fallières. The father of the new one was a great gormandizer of Pantagruelian dimensions. He died of overloading his stomach. The son made his career like a cautious upstart. He is well enough acquainted with himself to know that he is not a Machiavelli. Therefore, he does not boast of his sagacity, but rather of his integrity. A politician is irresistible to a crowd when he cries out to them: "My opponents express the suspicion that I am a numskull. I do not care to argue the point with them, but this I will say by the way of explanation, fellow citizens, that I am a thoroughly honest man to the very roots of my hair." By this method one can attain the presidency of a republic.

As Secretary of the Interior, Fallières caused the arrest of the Socialist poet, Clovis Hugues. At another time he declared: "As long as I am in office, I will not tolerate the red flag on the open street."

The French bourgeois have found in Fallières their fitting man of straw for seven years.



The only genuine Democrat of these times is Death. He does not admit of any class distinctions. He mows down a proletarian and a Marshall Field with the same scythe. How imperfectly the world is arranged. It should be possible to shift the bearing of children and the dying from the rich to the poor—for good pay, of course.



Whosoever believes that the law is infallible and can bring about order in the chaotic social conditions, knows the curative effect of law to the minutest detail. The question how things might be improved is met with this reply: "All criminals should be caught in a net like fish and put away for safe keeping, so that society remains in the care of the righteous." Hallelujah!

People with a capacity to judge for themselves think differently. Mr. Charlton T. Lewis, President of the National Prison Association, maintains:

"Our county jails everywhere are the schools and colleges of crime. In the light of social science it were better for the world if every one of them were destroyed than that this

work should be continued. Experience shows that the system of imprisonment of minor offenders for short terms is but a gigantic measure for the manufacture of criminals. Freedom, not confinement, is the natural state of man, and the only condition under which influences for reformation can have their full efficiency.... Prison life is unnatural at best. Man is a social creature. Confinement tends to lower his consciousness of dignity and responsibility, to weaken the motives which govern his relations to his race, to impair the foundations of character and unfit him for independent life. To consign a man to prison is commonly to enrol him in the criminal class.... With all the solemnity and emphasis of which I am capable, I utter the profound conviction, after twenty years of constant study of our prison population, that more than nine-tenths of them ought never to have been confined."

Government and authority are responsible for the conditions in the western mining districts.

Is not the existence of government considered as a necessity on the grounds that it is here to maintain peace, law and order? This is an oft-repeated song.

Let us see how the government of Colorado has lived up to its calling within the last few years. It has permitted that the labor protective laws that have passed the legislature should be broken and trampled upon by the mine owners.

The money powers care little for the eight-hour law, and when the mine workers insisted upon keeping that law, the

authorities of Colorado immediately went to the rescue of the exploiters. Not only were police and soldiers let loose upon the Western Federation of Miners; but the government of Colorado permitted the mine owners to recruit an army to fight the labor organizations. Hirelings were formed into a so-called citizens' committee, that inaugurated a reign of terror. These legal lawbreakers invaded peaceful homes during the day and night, and those that were in the least suspected of belonging to or sympathizing with the Western Federation of Miners were torn out of bed, arrested and dragged off to the bull pen, or transported into the desert, without food or shelter, many miles from other living beings. Some of these victims were crippled for life and died as a result thereof.

When it became known that the W. F. M. continued to stand erect, regardless of brutal attacks, it was decided to strike the last violent blow against it.

Orchard, the man of honor, confessed, and the lawbreakers appealed to the law against Haywood, Moyer and Pettibone.

This time the government did not hesitate. The eight-hour and protective labor law was too insignificant to enforce, but to bring the officers of the W. F. M. to account, that, of course, is the duty and the function of the State.

There is not the slightest hope that the authorities who, for a number of years, have permitted the violation of the law, will be put on trial, but the crime they have perpetrated is a weighty argument in favor of those who maintain that the State is not an

independent institution, but a tool of the possessing class.

❖ ❖

Many radicals entertain the queer notion that they cannot arrange their own lives, according to their own ideas, but that they have to adapt themselves to the conditions they hate, and which they fight in theory with fire and sword.

Anything rather than arouse too much public condemnation! The lives they lead are dependent upon the opinion of the Philistines. They are revolutionists in theory, reactionists in practice.

❖ ❖

The words of Louis XIV, "I am the State," have been taken up as a motto by the American policeman. One of the New York papers contains the following account:

"In discharging some seventy prisoners in the Jefferson Market Police Court yesterday morning, the Magistrate said to the police in charge of the cases: 'I am amazed that you men should bring these prisoners before me without a shred of evidence on which they can be held.'"

Such is the blessing of this republic. We are not confronted by one czar of the size of an elephant, but by a hundred thousand czars, as small as mosquitoes, but equally disagreeable and

annoying.

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Friends of Mother Earth in various Western cities have proposed a lecture tour in behalf of the magazine. So far I have heard from Cleveland, Detroit, St. Louis and Chicago. Those of other cities who wish to have me lecture there, will please communicate with me as to dates at once. The tour is to begin May 12th and last for a month or six weeks.

Emma Goldman,
Box 217, Madison Square Station.

THE CHILD AND ITS ENEMIES

By **Emma Goldman**

Is the child to be considered as an individuality, or as an object to be moulded according to the whims and fancies of those about it? This seems to me to be the most important question to be answered by parents and educators. And whether the child is to grow from within, whether all that craves expression will be permitted to come forth toward the light of day; or whether it is to be kneaded like dough through external forces, depends upon the proper answer to this vital question.

The longing of the best and noblest of our times makes for the strongest individualities. Every sensitive being abhors the idea of being treated as a mere machine or as a mere parrot of conventionality and respectability, the human being craves recognition of his kind.

It must be borne in mind that it is through the channel of the child that the development of the mature man must go, and that the present ideas of the educating or training of the latter in the school and the family—even the family of the liberal or radical—are such as to stifle the natural growth of the child.

Every institution of our day, the family, the State, our

moral codes, sees in every strong, beautiful, uncompromising personality a deadly enemy; therefore every effort is being made to cramp human emotion and originality of thought in the individual into a straight-jacket from its earliest infancy; or to shape every human being according to one pattern; not into a well-rounded individuality, but into a patient work slave, professional automaton, tax-paying citizen, or righteous moralist. If one, nevertheless, meets with real spontaneity (which, by the way, is a rare treat,) it is not due to our method of rearing or educating the child: the personality often asserts itself, regardless of official and family barriers. Such a discovery should be celebrated as an unusual event, since the obstacles placed in the way of growth and development of character are so numerous that it must be considered a miracle if it retains its strength and beauty and survives the various attempts at crippling that which is most essential to it.

Indeed, he who has freed himself from the fetters of the thoughtlessness and stupidity of the commonplace; he who can stand without moral crutches, without the approval of public opinion—private laziness, Friedrich Nietzsche called it—may well intone a high and voluminous song of independence and freedom; he has gained the right to it through fierce and fiery battles. These battles already begin at the most delicate age.

The child shows its individual tendencies in its plays, in its questions, in its association with people and things. But it has to struggle with everlasting external interference in its world

of thought and emotion. It must not express itself in harmony with its nature, with its growing personality. It must become a thing, an object. Its questions are met with narrow, conventional, ridiculous replies, mostly based on falsehoods; and, when, with large, wondering, innocent eyes, it wishes to behold the wonders of the world, those about it quickly lock the windows and doors, and keep the delicate human plant in a hothouse atmosphere, where it can neither breathe nor grow freely.

Zola, in his novel "Fecundity," maintains that large sections of people have declared death to the child, have conspired against the birth of the child,—a very horrible picture indeed, yet the conspiracy entered into by civilization against the growth and making of character seems to me far more terrible and disastrous, because of the slow and gradual destruction of its latent qualities and traits and the stupefying and crippling effect thereof upon its social well-being.

Since every effort in our educational life seems to be directed toward making of the child a being foreign to itself, it must of necessity produce individuals foreign to one another, and in everlasting antagonism with each other.

The ideal of the average pedagogist is not a complete, well-rounded, original being; rather does he seek that the result of his art of pedagogy shall be automatons of flesh and blood, to best fit into the treadmill of society and the emptiness and dulness of our lives. Every home, school, college and university stands for dry, cold utilitarianism, overflowing the brain of the

pupil with a tremendous amount of ideas, handed down from generations past. "Facts and data," as they are called, constitute a lot of information, well enough perhaps to maintain every form of authority and to create much awe for the importance of possession, but only a great handicap to a true understanding of the human soul and its place in the world.

Truths dead and forgotten long ago, conceptions of the world and its people, covered with mould, even during the times of our grandmothers, are being hammered into the heads of our young generation. Eternal change, thousandfold variations, continual innovation are the essence of life. Professional pedagogy knows nothing of it, the systems of education are being arranged into files, classified and numbered. They lack the strong fertile seed which, falling on rich soil, enables them to grow to great heights, they are worn and incapable of awakening spontaneity of character. Instructors and teachers, with dead souls, operate with dead values. Quantity is forced to take the place of quality. The consequences thereof are inevitable.

In whatever direction one turns, eagerly searching for human beings who do not measure ideas and emotions with the yardstick of expediency, one is confronted with the products, the herdlike drilling instead of the result of spontaneous and innate characteristics working themselves out in freedom.

"No traces now I see
Whatever of a spirit's agency.

"Tis drilling, nothing more."

These words of Faust fit our methods of pedagogy perfectly. Take, for instance, the way history is being taught in our schools. See how the events of the world become like a cheap puppet show, where a few wire-pullers are supposed to have directed the course of development of the entire human race.

And the history of *our own* nation! Was it not chosen by Providence to become the leading nation on earth? And does it not tower mountain high over other nations? Is it not the gem of the ocean? Is it not incomparably virtuous, ideal and brave? The result of such ridiculous teaching is a dull, shallow patriotism, blind to its own limitations, with bull-like stubbornness, utterly incapable of judging of the capacities of other nations. This is the way the spirit of youth is emasculated, deadened through an over-estimation of one's own value. No wonder public opinion can be so easily manufactured.

"Predigested food" should be inscribed over every hall of learning as a warning to all who do not wish to lose their own personalities and their original sense of judgment, who, instead, would be content with a large amount of empty and shallow shells. This may suffice as a recognition of the manifold hindrances placed in the way of an independent mental development of the child.

Equally numerous, and not less important, are the difficulties that confront the emotional life of the young. Must not one

suppose that parents should be united to children by the most tender and delicate chords? One should suppose it; yet, sad as it may be, it is, nevertheless, true, that parents are the first to destroy the inner riches of their children.

The Scriptures tell us that God created Man in His own image, which has by no means proven a success. Parents follow the bad example of their heavenly master; they use every effort to shape and mould the child according to their image. They tenaciously cling to the idea that the child is merely part of themselves—an idea as false as it is injurious, and which only increases the misunderstanding of the soul of the child, of the necessary consequences of enslavement and subordination thereof.

As soon as the first rays of consciousness illuminate the mind and heart of the child, it instinctively begins to compare its own personality with the personality of those about it. How many hard and cold stone cliffs meet its large wondering gaze? Soon enough it is confronted with the painful reality that it is here only to serve as inanimate matter for parents and guardians, whose authority alone gives it shape and form.

The terrible struggle of the thinking man and woman against political, social and moral conventions owes its origin to the family, where the child is ever compelled to battle against the internal and external use of force. The categorical imperatives: You shall! you must! this is right! that is wrong! this is true! that is false! shower like a violent rain upon the unsophisticated head of the young being and impress upon its sensibilities that

it has to bow before the long established and hard notions of thoughts and emotions. Yet the latent qualities and instincts seek to assert their own peculiar methods of seeking the foundation of things, of distinguishing between what is commonly called wrong, true or false. It is bent upon going its own way, since it is composed of the same nerves, muscles and blood, even as those who assume to direct its destiny. I fail to understand how parents hope that their children will ever grow up into independent, self-reliant spirits, when they strain every effort to abridge and curtail the various activities of their children, the plus in quality and character, which differentiates their offspring from themselves, and by the virtue of which they are eminently equipped carriers of new, invigorating ideas. A young delicate tree, that is being clipped and cut by the gardener in order to give it an artificial form, will never reach the majestic height and the beauty as when allowed to grow in nature and freedom.

When the child reaches adolescence, it meets, added to the home and school restrictions, with a vast amount of hard traditions of social morality. The cravings of love and sex are met with absolute ignorance by the majority of parents, who consider it as something indecent and improper, something disgraceful, almost criminal, to be suppressed and fought like some terrible disease. The love and tender feelings in the young plant are turned into vulgarity and coarseness through the stupidity of those surrounding it, so that everything fine and beautiful is either crushed altogether or hidden in the innermost depths, as a

great sin, that dares not face the light.

What is more astonishing is the fact that parents will strip themselves of everything, will sacrifice everything for the physical well-being of their child, will wake nights and stand in fear and agony before some physical ailment of their beloved one; but will remain cold and indifferent, without the slightest understanding before the soul cravings and the yearnings of their child, neither hearing nor wishing to hear the loud knocking of the young spirit that demands recognition. On the contrary, they will stifle the beautiful voice of spring, of a new life of beauty and splendor of love; they will put the long lean finger of authority upon the tender throat and not allow vent to the silvery song of the individual growth, of the beauty of character, of the strength of love and human relation, which alone make life worth living.

And yet these parents imagine that they mean best for the child, and for aught I know, some really do; but their best means absolute death and decay to the bud in the making. After all, they are but imitating their own masters in State, commercial, social and moral affairs, by forcibly suppressing every independent attempt to analyze the ills of society and every sincere effort toward the abolition of these ills; never able to grasp the eternal truth that every method they employ serves as the greatest impetus to bring forth a greater longing for freedom and a deeper zeal to fight for it.

That compulsion is bound to awaken resistance, every parent and teacher ought to know. Great surprise is being expressed

over the fact that the majority of children of radical parents are either altogether opposed to the ideas of the latter, many of them moving along the old antiquated paths, or that they are indifferent to the new thoughts and teachings of social regeneration. And yet there is nothing unusual in that. Radical parents, though emancipated from the belief of ownership in the human soul, still cling tenaciously to the notion that they own the child, and that they have the right to exercise their authority over it. So they set out to mould and form the child according to their own conception of what is right and wrong, forcing their ideas upon it with the same vehemence that the average Catholic parent uses. And, with the latter, they hold out the necessity before the young "to do as I tell you and not as I do." But the impressionable mind of the child realizes early enough that the lives of their parents are in contradiction to the ideas they represent; that, like the good Christian who fervently prays on Sunday, yet continues to break the Lord's commands the rest of the week, the radical parent arraigns God, priesthood, church, government, domestic authority, yet continues to adjust himself to the condition he abhors. Just so, the Freethought parent can proudly boast that his son of four will recognize the picture of Thomas Paine or Ingersoll, or that he knows that the idea of God is stupid. Or that the Social Democratic father can point to his little girl of six and say, "Who wrote the Capital, dearie?" "Karl Marx, pa!" Or that the Anarchistic mother can make it known that her daughter's name is Louise Michel, Sophia Perovskaya, or that she can recite

the revolutionary poems of Herwegh, Freiligrath, or Shelley, and that she will point out the faces of Spencer, Bakunin or Moses Harmon almost anywhere.

These are by no means exaggerations; they are sad facts that I have met with in my experience with radical parents. What are the results of such methods of biasing the mind? The following is the consequence, and not very infrequent, either. The child, being fed on one-sided, set and fixed ideas, soon grows weary of re-hashing the beliefs of its parents, and it sets out in quest of new sensations, no matter how inferior and shallow the new experience may be, the human mind cannot endure sameness and monotony. So it happens that that boy or girl, over-fed on Thomas Paine, will land in the arms of the Church, or they will vote for imperialism only to escape the drag of economic determinism and scientific socialism, or that they open a shirt-waist factory and cling to their right of accumulating property, only to find relief from the old-fashioned communism of their father. Or that the girl will marry the next best man, provided he can make a living, only to run away from the everlasting talk on variety.

Such a condition of affairs may be very painful to the parents who wish their children to follow in their path, yet I look upon them as very refreshing and encouraging psychological forces. They are the greatest guarantee that the independent mind, at least, will always resist every external and foreign force exercised over the human heart and head.

Some will ask, what about weak natures, must they not be protected? Yes, but to be able to do that, it will be necessary to realize that education of children is not synonymous with herdlike drilling and training. If education should really mean anything at all, it must insist upon the free growth and development of the innate forces and tendencies of the child. In this way alone can we hope for the free individual and eventually also for a free community, which shall make interference and coercion of human growth impossible.

HOPE AND FEAR.¹

(Translated from the Jewish of L. I. Peretz.)

....My heart is with you.

My eye does not get weary looking at your flaming banner;
my ear does not get tired listening to your powerful song....

My heart is with you; man's hunger must be appeased, and he
must have light; he must be free, and he must be his own master,
master over himself and his work.

And when you snap at the fist which is trying to strangle you,
your voice, and your ardent protest, preventing you from being
heard—I rejoice, praying that your teeth may be sharpened. And
when you are marching against Sodom and Gomorrah, to tear
down the old, my soul is with you, and the certainty that you
must triumph fills and warms my heart and intoxicates me like
old wine....

And yet....

And yet you frighten me.

I am afraid of the bridled who conquer, for they are apt to
become the oppressors, and every oppressor transgresses against
the human soul....

¹ This sketch the writer had addressed to Jewish Social Democrats.

Do you not talk among yourselves of how humanity is to march, like an army in line, and you are going to sound for it the march on the road?

And yet humanity is not an army.

The strong are going forward, the magnanimous feel more deeply, the proud rise higher, and yet will you not lay down the cedar in order that it may not outgrow the grass?

Or will you not spread your wings over mediocrity, or will you not shield indifference, and protect the gray and uniformly fleeced herd?

* * *

You frighten me.

As conquerors you might become the bureaucracy: to dole out to everybody his morsel, as is the usage in the poor-house; to arrange work for everybody as it is done in the galleys. And you will thus crush the creator of new worlds—the free human will, and fill up with earth the purest spring of human happiness—human initiative, the power which braves one against thousands, against peoples, and against generations? And you will systematize life and bid it to remain on the level of the crowd.

And will you not be occupied with regulations: registrating, recording, estimating—or will you not prescribe how fast and how often the human pulse must beat, how far the human eye may look ahead, how much the ear may perceive, and what kinds

of dreams the languishing heart may entertain?

* * *

With joy in my heart I look at you when you tear down the gates of Sodom, but my heart trembles at the same time, fearing that you might erect on its ruins new ones—more chilling and darker ones.

There will be no houses without windows; but fog will envelop the souls....

There will be no empty stomachs, but souls will starve. No ear will hear cries of woe, but the eagle—the human intellect—will stand at the trough with clipped wings together with the cow and the ox.

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