THE PROBLEM OF THE UNEMPLOYED.

Let us set up a sort of working model of the unemployed problem.

A few years ago a large number of men were out of work in a Welsh valley. The cause was, in form, a strike. In essence it was the denial by Lord Penrhyn to a large number of workers, skilled and unskilled, of the right of access to land—to the slate quarry of which he claimed to be the owner, and in which these men had been wont to exercise their industry. The number and character of the men affected and the striking personality of Lord Penrhyn made an extraordinary impression on the public mind and concentrated a painful attention on Bethesda. But not many people realised that the crowd of men, able and willing to work, and yet starving for want of work, in that mountain village formed only a part of the evil for which the dispute was responsible. The idleness of the quarrymen meant the unemployment of railwaymen on the line which exists mainly to carry slates from Bethesda to Port Penrhyn; of clerks at the port, who should have been invoicing the slates; of sailors on the laid-up ships, which should have had the slates for their cargoes.

The quarrymen, shut out by Lord Penrhyn, from their labour on the mountain side, were reduced to a state of starvation, tempered by the generosity of trade unionists and newspaper readers. As a consequence, the Bethesda shopkeepers, who looked to live by supplying the quarrymen's needs, were "out of work"; they had no customers. Their orders to wholesale houses fell off; the wholesalers lessened their demands on manufacturers and importers of goods. Here and there, often in places far remote from Bethesda, clerks and warehousemen, bootmakers and weavers, and so on—here a man and there a man or two, in all sorts of businesses, productive and distributive—were dispensed with owing to a "falling off of trade." Probably very few of the victims understood that the "falling off" was due to the fact that some 3,000 workers were idle at Bethesda. It is obviously impossible to work out all the consequences of the closing of the quarry. I have myself heard of a Welsh clerk seeking work in London, and of twelve London painters losing a good job in North Wales, for no other reason than that the quarrymen were prevented from exercising their industry.

Now, let us, in imagination, collect all these out-of-works into one place. We have a large, typical, and perfectly genuine unemployed demonstration—men of all sorts: quarrymen, clerks, railway workers, warehousemen, sailors, factory hands, shopmen, porters, dock labourers, &c., &c., skilled and unskilled. Of course, "something must be done." The kind-hearted, coming on the crowd, as it were, suddenly, and realising the misery it represents, suggest charity. Lord Rosebery hands the whole crowd over to the Salvation Army, and retires to his own tent. Mr. Balfour passes it on to a statutory Distress Committee, which is to find or invent work, after it has finished wrangling about its officials' salaries. Yet we, who have seen the crowd grow, know that there is no real necessity for soup kitchens, or "grants of public money for the unemployed," or for farm colonies, or for distress committees—that none of these things touch the root of the matter. The one simple thing that is wanted is that the quarry which Lord Penrhyn closed should be opened again. Open the land to labour, and the unemployed will set each other to work.

—From "The Government and the Unemployed"
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"Trade does not require force. Free trade consists simply on letting people buy and sell as they want to buy and sell. It is protection that requires force, for it consists in preventing people from doing what they want to do."
—Henry George.

TOLSTOY'S VIEWS ON THE RUSSIAN SOCIAL PROBLEM.

Being extracts from a letter written by Herman Bernstein from St. Petersburg, July 20th, 1908, and published in "The New York Times" of August 9th, 1908.

"At about 9.30 o'clock in the morning I found myself at the door of the little white house where lives and works the most remarkable man in the world to-day—Leo Tolstoy. I was met by Nicholas Gusev, Tolstoy's secretary, an amiable young gentleman, who took me into his room.

"Presently he entered. . . .

"He asked me about my impressions of Russia, and particularly about the popularity of Henry George's works in America. 'Nearly 50 years ago,' he went on slowly, 'the great question that occupied all minds in Russia was the emancipation of the serfs. The burning question now is the ownership of land. The peasants never recognised the private ownership of land. They say that the land belongs to God. I am afraid that people will regard what I say as stupid, but I must say it: The leaders of the revolutionary movement, as well as the Government officials, are not doing the only thing that would pacify the people at once. And the only thing that would pacify the people now is the introduction of the system of Henry George.

"As I have pointed out in my introductory note to the Russian version of 'Social Problems,' Henry George's great idea, outlined so clearly and so thoroughly more than 30 years ago, remains to this day entirely unknown to the great majority of the people. This is quite natural. Henry George's idea, which changes the entire system in the life of nations in favour of the oppressed, voiceless majority, and to the detriment of the ruling minority, is so undeniably convincing, and, above all, so simple, that it is impossible not to understand it, and understanding it, it is impossible not to make an effort to introduce it into practice, and therefore the only means against this idea is to pervert it and to pass it in silence. And this has been true of the Henry George theory for more than 30 years. It has been both perverted and passed in silence, so that it has become difficult to induce people to read his work attentively and to think about it. Society does with ideas that disturb its peace—and Henry George is one of these—exactly what the bee does with the worms which it considers dangerous but which it is powerless to destroy. It covers their nests with paste, so that the worms, even though not destroyed, cannot multiply and do more harm. Just so the European nations act with regard to ideas that are dangerous to their order of things, or, rather, to the disorder to which they have grown accustomed. Among these are also the ideas of Henry George. 'But light shines even in the darkness, and the darkness cannot cover it.' A truthful, fruitful idea cannot be destroyed. However you may try to smother it, it will still live, it will be more alive than all the vague, empty, pedantic ideas and words with which people are trying to smother it, and sooner or later the truth will burn through the veil that is covering it and it will shine forth before the whole world. Thus it will be also with Henry George's idea.

"And it seems to me that just now is the proper time to introduce this idea—now, and in Russia. This is just the proper time for it, because in Russia a revolution is going on, the serious basis of which is the rejection by the whole people, by the real people, of the ownership of land. In Russia, where nine-tenths of the population are tillers of the soil, and where this theory is merely a conscious expression of that which has always been regarded as right by the entire Russian people—in Russia, I say, especially during this period of reconstruction of social conditions, this idea should now find its application, and thus the revolution, so wrongly and criminally directed, would be crowned by a great act of righteousness. This is my answer to your question about the future of Russia. Unless this idea is introduced into the life of our people, Russia's future can never be bright."