

MUTUAL AID AMONGST MODERN MEN

THE mutual-aid tendency in man has so remote an origin, and is so deeply interwoven with all the past evolution of the human race, that it has been maintained by mankind up to the present time, notwithstanding all vicissitudes of history. It was chiefly evolved during periods of peace and prosperity; but when even the greatest calamities befell men—when whole countries were laid waste by wars, and whole populations were decimated by misery, or groaned under the yoke of tyranny—the same tendency continued to live in the villages and among the poorer classes in the towns; it still kept them together, and in the long run it reacted even upon those ruling, fighting, and devastating minorities which dismissed it as sentimental nonsense. And whenever mankind had to work out a new social organisation, adapted to a new phasis of development, its constructive genius always drew the elements and the inspiration for the new departure from that same ever-living tendency. New economical and social institutions, in so far as they were a creation of the masses, new ethical systems, and new religions, all have originated from the same source, and the ethical progress of our race, viewed in its broad lines, appears as a gradual extension of the mutual-aid principles from the tribe to always larger and larger agglomerations, so as to finally embrace one day the whole of mankind, without respect to its divers creeds, languages, and races. These were the ideas developed in a series of preceding essays.¹

After having passed through the savage tribe, and next through the village community, the Europeans came to work out in mediæval times a new form of organisation, which had the advantage of allowing great latitude for individual initiative, while it largely responded at the same time to man's need of mutual support. A federation of village communities, covered by a network of guilds and fraternities, was called into existence in the mediæval cities. The immense results achieved under this new form of union—in well-being for all, in industries, art, science, and commerce—were discussed at some length in a preceding essay,² and an attempt was also made to show why,

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, September and November 1890, April and December 1891.

² *Ibid.* July and August 1894.

towards the end of the fifteenth century, the mediæval republics—surrounded by domains of hostile feudal lords, unable to free the peasants from servitude, and gradually corrupted by ideas of Roman Cæsarism—were doomed to become a prey to the growing military States.

However, before submitting, for three centuries to come, to the all-absorbing authority of the State, the masses of the people made a formidable attempt at reconstructing society on the old basis of mutual aid and support. It is well known by this time that the great movement of the reform was not a mere revolt against the abuses of the Catholic Church. It had its constructive ideal as well, and that ideal was life in free, brotherly communities. Those of the early writings and sermons of the period which found most response with the masses were imbued with ideas of the economical and social brotherhood of mankind. The 'Twelve Articles' and similar professions of faith, which were circulated among the German and Swiss peasants and artisans, maintained not only every one's right to interpret the Bible according to his own understanding, but also included the demand of communal lands being restored to the village communities and feudal servitudes being abolished, and they always alluded to the 'true' faith—a faith of brotherhood. At the same time scores of thousands of men and women joined the communist fraternities of Moravia, giving them all their fortune and living in numerous and prosperous settlements constructed upon the principles of communism.³ Only wholesale massacres by the thousand could put a stop to this widely spread popular movement, and it was by the sword, the fire, and the rack that the young States secured their first and decisive victory over the masses of the people.⁴

For the next three centuries the States, both on the Continent and in these islands, systematically weeded out all institutions in which the mutual aid tendency had formerly found its expression. The village communities were bereft of their folk-motes, their courts and independent administration; their lands were confiscated. The guilds were spoliated of their possessions and liberties, and placed

³ A bulky literature, dealing with this formerly much-neglected subject, is now growing in Germany. Keller's works, *Ein Apostel der Wiedertäufer* and *Geschichte der Wiedertäufer*, Cornelius's *Geschichte des münsterischen Aufruhrs*, and Janssen's *Geschichte des deutschen Volkes* may be named as the leading sources. The first attempt at familiarising English readers with the results of the wide researches made in Germany in this direction has been made this year in an excellent little work by Richard Heath—'Anabaptism from its Rise at Zwickau to its Fall at Münster, 1521–1536,' London, 1895 (*Baptist Manuals*, vol. i.)—where the leading features of the movement, are well indicated, and full bibliographical information is given.

⁴ Few of our contemporaries realise both the extent of this movement and the means by which it was suppressed. But those who wrote immediately after the great peasant war estimated at from 100,000 to 150,000 men the number of peasants slaughtered after their defeat in Germany. See Zimmermann's *Allgemeine Geschichte des grossen Bauernkrieges*. For the measures taken to suppress the movement in the Netherlands see Richard Heath's *Anabaptism*.

under the control, the fact that the cities were divested of their inner life—the folk-motes, the sovereign parish, the State's functionary to whom the State was an organic whole. The rich cities became insignificant, and knowledge fell into disrepute. The rich cities were rendered subservient to the State, and the Universities, in which men formerly used to be taught, could not be tolerated in their own right. The State alone could represent the people, and federalism and 'particularism' were the only things the State was the only thing that could do. By the end of the last century the Parliament in these isles, although they were at war with each other, no separate unions between them, that hard labour and degrading work, workers who dared to enter the State!' The State alone could represent the people, matters of general interest, aggregations of individuals, to appeal to the Government. Up to the middle of this century Europe. Even commercial suspicion. As to the work almost within our own hands, twenty years on the Continent education was such that a notable portion of society, the concession of such rights five hundred years ago in the city.

The absorption of all the favoured the development of mutual aid. In proportion as the numbers the citizens were towards each other. In the watch in turns a brotherly now to give one's neighbour. In barbarian society, to

under the control, the fancy, and the bribery of the State's official. The cities were divested of their sovereignty, and the very springs of their inner life—the folk-mote, the elected justices and administration, the sovereign parish and the sovereign guild—were annihilated; the State's functionary took possession of every link of what formerly was an organic whole. Under that fatal policy and the wars it engendered, whole regions, once populous and wealthy, were laid bare; rich cities became insignificant boroughs; the very roads which connected them with other cities became impracticable. Industry, art, and knowledge fell into decay. Political education, science, and law were rendered subservient to the idea of State centralisation. It was taught in the Universities and from the pulpit that the institutions in which men formerly used to embody their needs of mutual support could not be tolerated in a properly organised State; that the State alone could represent the bonds of union between its subjects; that federalism and 'particularism' were the enemies of progress, and the State was the only proper initiator of further development. By the end of the last century the kings on the Continent, the Parliament in these isles, and the revolutionary Convention in France, although they were at war with each other, agreed in asserting that no separate unions between citizens must exist within the State; that hard labour and death were the only suitable punishments to workers who dared to enter into 'coalitions.' 'No State within the State!' The State alone, and the State's Church, must take care of matters of general interest, while the subjects must represent loose aggregations of individuals, connected by no particular bonds, bound to appeal to the Government each time that they feel a common need. Up to the middle of this century this was the theory and practice in Europe. Even commercial and industrial societies were looked at with suspicion. As to the workers, their unions were treated as unlawful almost within our own lifetime in this country and within the last twenty years on the Continent. The whole system of our State education was such that up to the present time, even in this country, a notable portion of society would treat as a revolutionary measure the concession of such rights as every one, freeman or serf, exercised five hundred years ago in the village folk-mote, the guild, the parish, and the city.

The absorption of all social functions by the State necessarily favoured the development of an unbridled, narrow-minded individualism. In proportion as the obligations towards the State grew in numbers the citizens were evidently relieved from their obligations towards each other. In the guild—and in mediæval times every man belonged to some guild or fraternity—two 'brothers' were bound to watch in turns a brother who had fallen ill; it would be sufficient now to give one's neighbour the address of the next paupers' hospital. In barbarian society, to assist at a fight between two men, arisen

from a quarrel, and not to prevent it from taking a fatal issue, meant to be oneself treated as a murderer; but under the theory of the all-protecting State the bystander need not intrude: it is the policeman's business to interfere, or not. And while in a savage land, among the Hottentots, it would be scandalous to eat without having loudly called out thrice whether there is not somebody wanting to share the food, all that a respectable citizen has to do now is to pay the poor tax and to let the starving starve. The result is, that the theory which maintains that men can, and must, seek their own happiness in a disregard of other people's wants is now triumphant all round—in law, in science, in religion. It is the religion of the day, and to doubt of its efficacy means to be a dangerous Utopian. Science loudly proclaims that the struggle of each against all is the leading principle of nature, and of human societies as well. To that struggle Biology ascribes the progressive evolution of the animal world. History takes the same line of argument; and political economists, in their naïve ignorance, trace all progress of modern industry and machinery to the 'wonderful' effects of the same principle. The very religion of the pulpit is a religion of individualism, slightly mitigated by more or less charitable relations to one's neighbours, chiefly on Sundays. 'Practical' men and theorists, men of science and religious preachers, lawyers and politicians, all agree upon one thing—that individualism may be more or less softened in its harshest effects by charity, but that it is the only secure basis for the maintenance of society and its ulterior progress.

It seems, therefore, hopeless to look for mutual-aid institutions and practices in modern society. What could remain of them? And yet, as soon as we try to ascertain how the millions of human beings live, and begin to study their everyday relations, we are struck with the immense part which the mutual-aid and mutual-support principles play even nowadays in human life. Although the destruction of mutual-aid institutions has been going on, in practice and theory, for full three or four hundred years, hundreds of millions of men continue to live under such institutions; they piously maintain them and endeavour to reconstitute them where they have ceased to exist. In our mutual relations every one of us has his moments of revolt against the fashionable individualistic creed of the day, and actions in which men are guided by their mutual-aid inclinations constitute so great a part of our daily intercourse that if a stop to such actions could be put all further ethical progress would be stopped at once. Human society itself could not be maintained for even so much as the lifetime of one single generation. These facts, mostly neglected by sociologists and yet of the first importance for the life and further elevation of mankind, we are now going to analyse, beginning with the standing institutions of mutual support, and passing next

to those acts of mutual social sympathies.

When we cast a brief glance at European society we are struck by so much that has been done in the form of union continued from the past and that many attempts have taken some shape or another. The current theory as regards Europe it has died out. The possession of the soil was the requirement of agriculture in the village community disappeared. In the contrary, it took the form of communal lands, but not always successful. In the communal lands. In the communities began to be destroyed. The lands began to be parcelled out. In the century. However, it was the peasants was brought under subjection and misery. In that the plundering of the communal lands was of scandalous proportions. 'The powers . . . Imaginary powers upon their lands;' so in the Fourteenth in 1667.⁵ In the was to render the communes to plunder them themselves. In the of the communes was the appropriation of communal lands. In the next century the noble lords of immense tracts of land were to certain estimates—the peasants still maintained. In the year 1787 the village communes to come together in the and re-allot what they had and to elect their executives.

⁵ Chacun s'en est accoutumé pour dépouiller les communes. Fourteenth, of 1667, quoted by Taine. Communes had been taken up.

⁶ 'On a great landlord's find the land uncultivated' of culture'; 'for the last half the formerly flourishing Saugé, quoted by Taine in (

to those acts of mutual aid which have their origin in personal or social sympathies.

When we cast a broad glance on the present constitution of European society we are struck at once with the fact that, although so much has been done to get rid of the village community, this form of union continues to exist to the extent we shall presently see, and that many attempts are now made either to reconstitute it in some shape or another or to find some substitute for it. The current theory as regards the village community is, that in Western Europe it has died out by a natural death, because the communal possession of the soil was found inconsistent with the modern requirements of agriculture. But the truth is that nowhere did the village community disappear of its own accord; everywhere, on the contrary, it took the ruling classes several centuries of persistent but not always successful efforts to abolish it and to confiscate the communal lands. In France, for instance, the village communities began to be deprived of their independence, and their lands began to be plundered, as early as the sixteenth century. However, it was only in the next century, when the mass of the peasants was brought, by exactions and wars, to the state of subjection and misery which is vividly depicted by all historians, that the plundering of their lands became easy and attained scandalous proportions. 'Everyone has taken of them according to his powers . . . Imaginary debts have been claimed, in order to seize upon their lands;' so we read in an edict promulgated by Louis the Fourteenth in 1667.⁵ Of course the State's remedy for such evils was to render the communes still more subservient to the State, and to plunder them itself. In fact, two years later all money revenue of the communes was confiscated by the King. As to the appropriation of communal lands, it grew worse and worse, and in the next century the nobles and the clergy had already taken possession of immense tracts of land—one-half of the cultivated area, according to certain estimates—mostly to let it go out of culture.⁶ But the peasants still maintained their communal institutions, and until the year 1787 the village folk-motes, composed of all householders, used to come together in the shadow of the bell-tower or a tree, to allot and re-allot what they had retained of their fields, to assess the taxes, and to elect their executive, just as the Russian *mir* does at the

⁵ Chacun s'en est accommodé selon sa bienséance . . . on les a partagés . . . pour dépouiller les communes, on s'est servi de dettes simulées' (Edict of Louis the Fourteenth, of 1667, quoted by several authors. Eight years before that date the communes had been taken under State management).

⁶ 'On a great landlord's estate, even if he has millions of revenue, you are sure to find the land uncultivated' (Arthur Young). 'One-fourth part of the soil went out of culture'; 'for the last hundred years the land has returned to a savage state'; 'the formerly flourishing Sologne is now a big marsh;' and so on (Théron de Moncaugé, quoted by Taine in *Origines de la France Cont emporaine*, tome i. p. 441).

present time. This is what Babeau's researches have proved to demonstration.⁷

Turgot found, however, the folknotes 'too noisy,' too disobedient, and in 1787 elected councils, composed of a mayor and three to six syndics, chosen from among the wealthier peasants, were introduced instead. Two years later the Revolutionary Assemblée Constituante, which was on this point at one with the old *régime*, fully confirmed Turgot's law (on the 14th of December, 1789), and the *bourgeois du village* had now their turn for the plunder of communal lands, which continued all through the Revolutionary period. Only on the 16th of August, 1792, the Convention, under the pressure of the peasants' insurrections, decided to return the enclosed lands to the communes;⁸ but it ordered at the same time that they should be divided in equal parts among the wealthier peasants only—a measure which provoked new insurrections and was abrogated next year, in 1793, when the order came to divide the communal lands among all commoners, rich and poor alike, 'active' and 'inactive.'

These two laws, however, ran so much against the conceptions of the peasants that they were not obeyed, and wherever the peasants had retaken possession of part of their lands they kept them undivided. But then came the long years of wars, and the communal lands were simply confiscated by the State (in 1794) as a mortgage for State loans, put up for sale, and plundered as such; then returned again to the communes and confiscated again (in 1813); and only in 1816 what remained of them, i.e. about 15,000,000 acres of the least productive land, was restored to the village communities.⁹ Still this was not yet the end of the troubles of the communes. Every new *régime* saw in the communal lands a means for gratifying its supporters, and three laws (the first in 1837 and the last under Napoleon the Third) were passed to induce the village communities

⁷ A. Babeau, *Le Village sous l'Ancien Régime*, 3^e édition. Paris, 1892.

⁸ In Eastern France the law only confirmed what the peasants had already done themselves; in other parts of France it usually remained a dead letter.

⁹ After the triumph of the middle-class reaction the communal lands were declared (August 24, 1794) the State's domains, and, together with the lands confiscated from the nobility, were put up for sale, and pilfered by the *bandes noires* of the small *bourgeoisie*. True that a stop to this pilfering was put next year (law of 2 Prairial, An V), and the preceding law was abrogated; but then the village communities were simply abolished, and cantonal councils were introduced instead. Only seven years later (9 Prairial, An XII), i.e. in 1801, the village communities were reintroduced, but not until after having been deprived of all their rights, the mayor and syndics being nominated by the Government in the 36,000 communes of France! This system was maintained till after the revolution of 1830, when elected communal councils were reintroduced under the law of Turgot. As to the communal lands, they were again seized upon by the State in 1813, plundered as such, and only partly restored to the communes in 1816. See the classical collection of French laws, by Dalloz, *Répertoire de Jurisprudence*; also the works of Doniol, Dareste, Bonnemère, Babeau, and many others.

to divide their estates in consequence of the something was snapped the pretext of encour large estates out of th

As to the auton retained of it after s were simply looked u chinery. Even now, u in a village communit *préfet* and the ministr and yet it is true, th pay in money his shar himself breaking the m different functionaries aggregate of *fifty-two* exchanged between t that money to the co same character.¹⁰

What took place i and Middle Europe. the peasant lands are is that the spoliation by general sweeping m than in France. The also began in the fif insurrection of 1380—statute of Henry the under the heading of to the common wele. the Eighth, was begu enclosure of communa been done.¹² The com the peasants were driv the middle of the last became part of a syste communal ownership, a but that it could be ma

¹⁰ This procedure is so a two different acts were not *Journal des Economistes* (18 given by the same author.

¹¹ Dr. Ochenkowski, *En Mittelalters* (Jena, 1879), p knowledge of the texts.

¹² Nasse, *Ueber die mittel Jahrbücherts in England* (Oxford, 1892).

to divide their estates. Three times these laws had to be repealed, in consequence of the opposition they met with in the villages; but something was snapped up each time, and Napoleon the Third, under the pretext of encouraging perfected methods of agriculture, granted large estates out of the communal lands to some of his favourites.

As to the autonomy of the village communities, what could be retained of it after so many blows? The mayor and the syndics were simply looked upon as unpaid functionaries of the State machinery. Even now, under the Third Republic, very little can be done in a village community without the huge State machinery, up to the *préfet* and the ministries, being set in motion. It is hardly credible, and yet it is true, that when, for instance, a peasant intends to pay in money his share in the repair of a communal road, instead of himself breaking the necessary amount of stones, no fewer than twelve different functionaries of the State must give their approval, and an aggregate of *fifty-two* different acts must be performed by them, and exchanged between them, before the peasant is permitted to pay that money to the communal council. All the remainder bears the same character.¹⁰

What took place in France took place everywhere in Western and Middle Europe. Even the chief dates of the great assaults upon the peasant lands are the same. For this country the only difference is that the spoliation was accomplished by separate acts rather than by general sweeping measures—with less haste but more thoroughly than in France. The seizure of the communal lands by the lords also began in the fifteenth century, after the defeat of the peasant insurrection of 1380—as seen from Rossus's *Historia* and from a statute of Henry the Seventh, in which these seizures are spoken of under the heading of 'enormitees and myschefes as be hurtfull . . . to the common wele.'¹¹ Later on the Great Inquest, under Henry the Eighth, was begun, as is known, in order to put a stop to the enclosure of communal lands, but it ended in a sanction of what had been done.¹² The communal lands continued to be preyed upon, and the peasants were driven from the land. But it was especially since the middle of the last century that, in England as everywhere else, it became part of a systematic policy to simply weed out all traces of communal ownership, and the wonder is not that it has disappeared, but that it could be maintained, even in England, so as to be 'gene-

¹⁰ This procedure is so absurd that one would not believe it possible if the fifty-two different acts were not enumerated in full by a quite authoritative writer in the *Journal des Economistes* (1893, April, p. 94), and several similar examples were not given by the same author.

¹¹ Dr. Ochenkowski, *Englands wirtschaftliche Entwicklung im Ausgange des Mittelalters* (Jena, 1879), p. 35 sq., where the whole question is discussed with full knowledge of the texts.

¹² Nasse, *Ueber die mittelalterliche Feldgemeinschaft und die Einhegungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts in England* (Bonn, 1869), pp. 4, 5; Vinogradov, *Villainage in England* (Oxford, 1892).

rally prevalent so late as the grandfathers of this generation.'¹³ The very object of the Enclosure Acts, as shown by Mr. Seebohm, was to remove this system,¹⁴ and it was so well removed by the nearly four thousand Acts passed between 1760 and 1844 that only faint traces of it remain now. The land of the village communities was taken by the lords, and the appropriation was sanctioned by Parliament in each separate case.

In Germany, in Austria, in Belgium the village community was also destroyed by the State. Instances of commoners themselves dividing their lands were rare,¹⁵ while everywhere the States coerced them to enforce the division, or simply favoured the private appropriation of their lands. The last blow to communal ownership in Middle Europe also dates from the middle of the last century. In Austria sheer force was used by the Government, in 1768, to compel the communes to divide their lands—a special commission being nominated two years later for that purpose. In Prussia Frederick the Second, in several of his ordinances (in 1752, 1763, 1765, and 1769), recommended to the *Justizcollegien* to enforce the division. In Silesia a special resolution was issued to serve that aim in 1771. The same took place in Belgium, and, as the communes did not obey, a law was issued in 1847 empowering the Government to buy communal meadows in order to sell them in retail, and to make a forced sale of the communal land when there was a would-be buyer for it.¹⁶

In short, to speak of the natural death of the village communities in virtue of economical laws is as grim a joke as to speak of the natural death of soldiers slaughtered on a battle field. The fact was simply this: The village communities had lived for over a thousand years; and where and when the peasants were not ruined by wars and exactions they steadily improved their methods of culture. But as the value of land was increasing, in consequence of the growth of industries, and the nobility had acquired, under the State organisation, a power which it never had had under the feudal system, it took possession of the best parts of the communal lands, and did its best to destroy the communal institutions.

¹³ Seebohm, *The English Village Community*, 3rd edition, 1884, pp. 13–15.

¹⁴ 'An examination into the details of an Enclosure Act will make clear the point that the system as above described [communal ownership] is the system which it was the object of the Enclosure Act to remove' (Seebohm, *l.c.* p. 13). And further on, 'They were generally drawn in the same form, commencing with the recital that the open and common fields lie dispersed in small pieces, intermixed with each other and inconveniently situated; that divers persons own parts of them, and are entitled to rights of common on them . . . and that it is desired that they may be divided and enclosed, a specific share being let out and allowed to each owner' (p. 14). Porter's list contained 3,867 such Acts, of which the greatest numbers fall upon the decades of 1770–1780 and 1800–1820, as in France.

¹⁵ In Switzerland we see a number of communes, ruined by wars, which have sold part of their lands, and now endeavour to buy them back.

¹⁶ A. Buchenberger, 'Agrarwesen und Agrarpolitik,' in A. Wagner's *Handbuch der politischen Oekonomie*, 1892, Band i. p. 280 sq.

However, these institutions of the tillers of the soil at this date covered with the English and European village life dating from the village-communities notwithstanding all the changes of things, it prevailed as in Gomme—one of the villages attracted attention to the subject—of the communal possession of the 'rig' tenancy having been in certain villages of Inverclyde the land for the whole county and to allot it after the allotment and re-allotment of the last twenty-five years,' and the vigour in certain islands of the great famine; and a law unnoticed until Nasse and others leave no doubt as to the fact widely spread, in nearly all parts of the century.¹⁸ No more than 'greatly surprised at the loss of rights, necessarily implying joint cultivation and joint cultivation brought under his notice, but persisted so late as that the old customs would undoubtedly be written of this country of

As to the Continent, in many parts of France, Prussian lands, and Spain

¹⁷ G. L. Gomme, 'The Villages and Forms of Survival in Great Britain,' 1890, pp. 141–143; also his *Pr*

¹⁸ 'In almost all parts of the country, particularly, but also in the west—in the north, as in Yorkshire, the 316 parishes of Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire; about 50,000 acres more than half of Wiltshire; and 130,000 were common in Sir Henry Maine's *Village Communities*, 1876, pp. 88, 89).

¹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 88; also Fifth I even now, is well known.

²⁰ In quite a number of books consulted I have found charming nothing about the daily life at

However, these institutions so well respond to the needs and conceptions of the tillers of the soil that, in spite of all, Europe is up to this date covered with *living* survivals of the village communities, and European village life is permeated with customs and habits dating from the village-community period. Even in this country, notwithstanding all the drastic measures taken against the old order of things, it prevailed as late as the beginning of this century. Mr. Gomme—one of the very few English scholars who have paid attention to the subject—shows in his recent work that many traces of the communal possession of the soil are found in Scotland, 'run-rig' tenancy having been maintained in Forfarshire up to 1813, while in certain villages of Inverness the custom was, up to 1801, to plough the land for the whole community, without leaving any boundaries, and to allot it after the ploughing was done. In Kilmorie the allotment and re-allotment of the fields was in full vigour 'till the last twenty-five years,' and the Crofters' Commission found it still in vigour in certain islands.¹⁷ In Ireland the system prevailed up to the great famine; and as to England, Marshall's works, which passed unnoticed until Nasse and Sir Henry Maine drew attention to them, leave no doubt as to the village-community system having been widely spread, in nearly all English counties, at the beginning of this century.¹⁸ No more than twenty years ago Sir Henry Maine was 'greatly surprised at the number of instances of abnormal property rights, necessarily implying the former existence of collective ownership and joint cultivation,' which a comparatively brief enquiry brought under his notice.¹⁹ And, communal institutions having persisted so late as that, a great number of mutual-aid habits and customs would undoubtedly be discovered in English villages if the writers of this country only paid attention to village life.²⁰

As to the Continent, we find the communal institutions fully alive in many parts of France, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, the Scandinavian lands, and Spain, to say nothing of Eastern Europe; the

¹⁷ G. L. Gomme, 'The Village Community, with special reference to its Origin and Forms of Survival in Great Britain' (*Contemporary Science Series*), London, 1890, pp. 141-143; also his *Primitive Folkmoets* (London, 1880), p. 98 sq.

¹⁸ 'In almost all parts of the country, in the Midland and Eastern counties particularly, but also in the west—in Wiltshire, for example—in the south, as in Surrey, in the north, as in Yorkshire, there are extensive open and common fields. Out of 316 parishes of Northamptonshire 89 are in this condition; more than 100 in Oxfordshire; about 50,000 acres in Warwickshire; in Berkshire half the county; more than half of Wiltshire; in Huntingdonshire out of a total area of 240,000 acres 130,000 were commonable meadows, commons, and fields' (Marshall, quoted in Sir Henry Maine's *Village Communities in the East and West*, New York edition, 1876, pp. 88, 89).

¹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 88; also Fifth Lecture. The wide extension of 'commons' in Surrey, even now, is well known.

²⁰ In quite a number of books dealing with English country life which I have consulted I have found charming descriptions of country scenery and the like, but almost nothing about the daily life and customs of the labourers.

village life in these countries is permeated with communal habits and customs; and almost every year the Continental literature is enriched by serious works dealing with this and connected subjects. I must, therefore, limit my illustrations to the most typical instances. Switzerland is undoubtedly one of them. Not only the five republics of Uri, Schwytz, Appenzell, Glarus, and Unterwalden hold their lands as undivided estates, and are governed by their popular folknotes, but in all other cantons too the village communities remain in possession of a wide self-government, and own large parts of the Federal territory.²¹ Two-thirds of all the Alpine meadows and two-thirds of all the forests of Switzerland are until now communal land; and a considerable number of fields, orchards, vineyards, peat bogs, quarries, and so on, are owned in common. In the Vaud, where all the householders continue to take part in the deliberations of their elected communal councils, the communal spirit is especially alive. Towards the end of the winter all the young men of each village go to stay a few days in the woods, to fell timber and to bring it down the steep slopes tobogganing way, the timber and the fuel wood being divided among all households or sold for their benefit. These excursions are real fêtes of manly labour. On the banks of Lake Lemman part of the work required to keep up the terraces of the vineyards is still done in common; and in the spring, when the thermometer threatens to fall below zero before sunrise, the watchman wakes up all householders, who light fires of straw and dung and protect their vine trees from the frost by an artificial cloud. In nearly all cantons the village communities possess so-called *Bürger-nutzen*—that is, they hold in common a number of cows, in order to supply each family with butter; or they keep communal fields or vineyards, of which the produce is divided between the burghers; or they rent their land for the benefit of the community.²²

It may be taken as a rule that where the communes have retained a wide sphere of functions, so as to be living parts of the national organism, and where they have not been reduced to sheer misery, they never fail to take good care of their lands. Accordingly the communal estates in Switzerland strikingly contrast with the miserable state of 'commons' in this country. The communal forests in the Vaud and the Valais are admirably managed, in conformity with the rules of modern forestry. Elsewhere the 'strips' of communal fields, which change owners under the system of re-allotment, are very well

²¹ In Switzerland the peasants in the open land also fell under the dominion of lords, and large parts of their estates were appropriated by the lords in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. (See, for instance, Dr. A. Miaskowski, in Schmoller's *Forschungen*, Bd. ii. 1879, p. 12 *sq.*) But the peasant war in Switzerland did not end in such a crushing defeat of the peasants as it did in other countries, and a great deal of the communal rights and lands was retained. The self-government of the communes is, in fact, the very foundation of the Swiss liberties.

²² Miaskowski, *ibid.* p. 15.

manured, especially as the high-level meadows are excellent.²³ And when on the road, the peasants' cattleshed house in Switzerland, we find the *châlet* being taken from the communal quail to the communal meadows, and built by communal work.

It hardly need be said that the customs continue to be gathered for shelling in the household; the evening is going to marry; the taking in the crops, as required by one of the children from one canton to two languages, French and habitual;²⁴ while, on the are met in the same meadows have been sold, the communes still continue to fields have been left in twenty, or thirty years common stock, which is a great number of small necessities for life—breeds only on a limited scale spreads in Switzerland between ten to thirty p mon, and cultivate the dairy associations for thised everywhere. In fact of co-operation. It off of all sorts of small and all sorts of modern want in almost every village a fire, for boating, for mai for the supply of water, societies of archers, sh and the like, originated

²³ See on this subject a suggestive chapters (not yet to the German translation of

²⁴ The wedding gifts, which comfort of the young house

manured, especially as there is no lack of meadows and cattle. The high-level meadows are well kept as a rule, and the rural roads are excellent.²³ And when we admire the Swiss *châlet*, the mountain road, the peasants' cattle, the terraces of vineyards, or the school-house in Switzerland, we must keep in mind that without the timber for the *châlet* being taken from the communal woods and the stone from the communal quarries, without the cows being kept on the communal meadows, and the roads being made and the schoolhouses built by communal work, there would be little to admire.

It hardly need be said that a great number of mutual aid habits and customs continue to persist in the Swiss villages. The evening gatherings for shelling walnuts, which take place in turns in each household; the evening parties for sewing the dowry of the girl who is going to marry; the calling of 'aids' for building the houses and taking in the crops, as well as for all sorts of work which may be required by one of the commoners; the custom of exchanging children from one canton to the other, in order to make them learn two languages, French and German; and so on—all these are quite habitual;²⁴ while, on the other side, divers modern requirements are met in the same spirit. Thus in Glarus most of the Alpine meadows have been sold during a time of calamity; but the communes still continue to buy field land, and after the newly-bought fields have been left in the possession of separate commoners for ten, twenty, or thirty years, as the case might be, they return to the common stock, which is re-allotted according to the needs of all. A great number of small associations are formed to produce some of the necessaries for life—bread, cheese, and wine—by common work, be it only on a limited scale; and agricultural corporation altogether spreads in Switzerland with the greatest ease. Associations formed between ten to thirty peasants, who buy meadows and fields in common, and cultivate them as co-owners, are not unhabitual; while dairy associations for the sale of milk, butter, and cheese are organised everywhere. In fact, Switzerland was the birthplace of that form of co-operation. It offers, moreover, an immense field for the study of all sorts of small and large societies, formed for the satisfaction of all sorts of modern wants. In certain parts of Switzerland one finds in almost every village a number of associations—for protection from fire, for boating, for maintaining the quays on the shores of a lake, for the supply of water, and so on; and the country is covered with societies of archers, sharpshooters, topographers, footpath explorers, and the like, originated from modern militarism.

²³ See on this subject a series of works, summed up in one of the excellent and suggestive chapters (not yet translated into English) which K. Bücher has added to the German translation of Laveleye's *Primitive Ownership*.

²⁴ The wedding gifts, which often substantially contribute in this country to the comfort of the young households, are evidently a remainder of the communal habits.

Switzerland is, however, by no means an exception in Europe, because the same institutions and habits are found in the villages of France, of Italy, of Germany, of Denmark, and so on. We have just seen what has been done by the rulers of France in order to destroy the village community and to get hold of its lands; but notwithstanding all that one-tenth part of the whole territory available for culture, i.e. 13,500,000 acres, including one-half of all the natural meadows and nearly a fifth part of all the forests of the country, remain in communal possession. The woods supply the commoners with fuel, and the timber wood is cut, mostly by communal work, with all desirable regularity; the grazing lands are free for the commoners' cattle; and what remains of communal fields is allotted and re-allotted in certain parts of France—namely, in the Ardennes—in the usual way.²⁵

These additional sources of supply, which aid the poorer peasants to pass through a year of bad crops without parting with their small plots of land and without running into irredeemable debts, have certainly their importance for both the agricultural labourers and the nearly three millions of small peasant proprietors. It is even doubtful whether small peasant proprietorship could be maintained without these additional resources. But the ethical importance of the communal possessions, small as they are, is still greater than their economical value. They maintain in village life a nucleus of customs and habits of mutual aid which undoubtedly acts as a mighty check upon the development of reckless individualism and greediness, which small land-ownership is only too prone to develop, and of which Zola has given such a ghastly picture in *La Terre*—the more ghastly as it may be true as regards individual facts but is totally untrue as a generalisation. Mutual aid in all possible circumstances of village life is part of the routine life in all parts of the country. Everywhere we meet, under different names, with the *charroi*, i.e. the free aid of the neighbours for taking in a crop, for vintage, or for building a house; everywhere we find the same evening gatherings as have just been mentioned in Switzerland; and everywhere the commoners associate for all sorts of work. Such habits are mentioned by nearly all those who have written upon French village life. But it will perhaps be better to give in this place some abstracts from letters which I have just received from a friend of mine whom I have asked to communicate to me his observations on this subject. They come from an aged man who for years has been the mayor of his commune in South France (in Ariège); the facts he mentions are known to him from long years of personal observation, and they have the advantage of coming from one neighbourhood instead of being skimmed from a large area. Some

²⁵ The communes own 4,554,100 acres of woods out of 24,813,000 in the whole territory, and 6,936,300 acres of natural meadows out of 11,394,000 acres in France. The remaining 2,000,000 acres are fields, orchards, and so on.

of them may seem trifling in the world of village life.

In several communes in our country of *l'emprunt* is in vigour. When making some work—dig out potatoes, the neighbourhood is convoked; young men do nothing; and in the evening

In the same communes, when the neighbourhood come to aid in sewing, continue to spin a good deal. In it is done in one evening—all the communes of the Ariège and the Indian corn sheaves is also done. Nuts and wine, and the young people's custom is practised for making. In the same is done for bringing in the fête days, as the owner stakes. It is given; all do it for each other.

In the commune of S. the whole of the land shepherds are elected by all of the communal.

In the commune of M. the whole brought together and divided into higher meadows. Each owner

In the hamlet of C. a three household; the fifteen to twenty supplied by all the families. They are rented out by their own owners invited in the usual way.

In our commune of R. the work which was required for was supplied by the county. The work of carrying sand and was done entirely by volunteers. Other communes have built in other smaller appliances are found

Two residents of the friend, add the following

At O. a few years ago there was a tax upon the commoners. It was and partiality, that he should be ground free.

At St. G. few peasants taken place—so it was lately from it—a chaldron, a bed-chamber reconstituted. All the neighbours the family is lodged free by

²⁶ In Caucasia they even a poor man cannot afford to come to aid in the work.

of them may seem trifling, but as a whole they depict quite a little world of village life.

In several communes in our neighbourhood [my friend writes] the old custom of *l'emprunt* is in vigour. When many hands are required in a *métairie* for rapidly making some work—dig out potatoes or mow the grass—the youth of the neighbourhood is convoked; young men and girls come in numbers, make it gaily and for nothing; and in the evening, after a gay meal, they dance.

In the same communes, when a girl is going to marry, the girls of the neighbourhood come to aid in sewing the dowry. In several communes the women still continue to spin a good deal. When the winding off has to be done in a family it is done in one evening—all friends being convoked for that work. In many communes of the Ariège and other parts of the south-west the shelling of the Indian corn sheaves is also done by all the neighbours. They are treated with chestnuts and wine, and the young people dance after the work has been done. The same custom is practised for making nut oil and crushing hemp. In the commune of L. the same is done for bringing in the corn crops. These days of hard work become fête days, as the owner stakes his honour on serving a good meal. No remuneration is given; all do it for each other.²⁶

In the commune of S. the common grazing land is every year increased, so that nearly the whole of the land of the commune is now kept in common. The shepherds are elected by all owners of the cattle, including women. The bulls are communal.

In the commune of M. the forty to fifty small sheep flocks of the commoners are brought together and divided into three or four flocks before being sent to the higher meadows. Each owner goes for a week to serve as shepherd.

In the hamlet of C. a threshing machine has been bought in common by several households; the fifteen to twenty persons required to serve the machine being supplied by all the families. Three other threshing machines have been bought and are rented out by their owners, but the work is performed by outside helpers, invited in the usual way.

In our commune of R. we had to raise the wall of the cemetery. Half of the money which was required for buying lime and for the wages of the skilled workers was supplied by the county council, and the other half by subscription. As to the work of carrying sand and water, making mortar, and serving the masons, it was done entirely by volunteers [just as in the Kabyle *jemma'h*]. The rural roads were repaired in the same way, by volunteer days of work given by the commoners. Other communes have built in the same way their fountains. The wine press and other smaller appliances are frequently kept by the commune.

Two residents of the same neighbourhood, questioned by my friend, add the following:—

At O. a few years ago there was no mill. The commune has built one, levying a tax upon the commoners. As to the miller, they decided, in order to avoid frauds and partiality, that he should be paid two francs for each bread-eater, and the corn be ground free.

At St. G. few peasants are insured against fire. When a conflagration has taken place—so it was lately—all give something to the family which has suffered from it—a chaldron, a bed-cloth, a chair, and so on—and a modest household is thus reconstituted. All the neighbours aid to build the house, and in the meantime the family is lodged free by the neighbours.

²⁶ In Caucasia they even do better among the Georgians. As the meal costs, and a poor man cannot afford to give it, a sheep is bought by those same neighbours who come to aid in the work.

Such habits of mutual support—of which many more examples could be given—undoubtedly account for the easiness with which the French peasants associate for using, in turn, the plough with its team of horses, the wine press, and the threshing machine, when they are kept in the village by one of them only, as well as for the performance of all sorts of rural work in common. Canals were maintained, forests were cleared, trees were planted, and marshes were drained by the village communities from time immemorial; and the same continues still. Quite lately, in *La Borne* of Lozère barren hills were turned into rich gardens by communal work. 'The soil was brought on men's backs; terraces were made and planted with chestnut trees, peach trees, and orchards, and water was brought for irrigation in canals two or three miles long.' Just now they have dug a new canal, eleven miles in length.²⁷

To the same spirit is also due the remarkable success lately obtained by the *syndicats agricoles*, or peasants' and farmers' associations. It was not until 1884 that associations of more than nineteen persons were permitted in France, and I need not say that when this 'dangerous experiment' was ventured upon—so it was styled in the Chambers—all due 'precautions' which functionaries can invent were taken. Notwithstanding all that, France begins to be covered with syndicates. At the outset they were only formed for buying manures and seeds, falsification having attained colossal proportions in these two branches;²⁸ but gradually they extended their functions in various directions, including the sale of agricultural produce and permanent improvements of the land. In South France the ravages of the phylloxera have called into existence a great number of wine-growers' associations. Ten to thirty growers form a syndicate, buy a steam engine for pumping water, and make the necessary arrangements for inundating their vineyards in turn.²⁹ New associations for protecting the land from inundations, for irrigation purposes, and for maintaining canals are continually formed, and the unanimity of all peasants of a neighbourhood, which is required by law, is no obstacle. Elsewhere we have the *fruitières*, or dairy associations, in

²⁷ Alfred Baudrillart, in H. Baudrillart's *Les Populations Rurales de la France*, 3rd series (Paris, 1893), p. 479.

²⁸ The *Journal des Economistes* (August 1892, May and August 1893) has lately given some of the results of analyses made at the agricultural laboratories at Ghent and at Paris. The extent of falsification is simply incredible; so also the devices of the 'honest traders.' In certain seeds of grass there was 32 per cent. of grains of sand, coloured so as to deceive even an experienced eye; other samples contained from 52 to 22 per cent. of pure seed, the remainder being weeds. Seeds of vetch contained 11 per cent. of a poisonous grass (*nielle*); a flour for cattle-fattening contained 36 per cent. of sulphates; and so on *ad infinitum*.

²⁹ A. Baudrillart, *l.c.* p. 309. Originally one grower would undertake to supply water, and several others would agree to make use of it. 'What especially characterises such associations,' A. Baudrillart remarks, 'is that no sort of written agreement is concluded. All is arranged in words. There was, however, not one single case of difficulties having arisen between the parties.'

some of which all but irrespective of the yield association of eight separate lands, which they medical aid have been for same department; associated with the syndicates; and our villages,' Alfred Baudrillart, which take in each region.

Very much the same peasants could resist them in communal ownership, Baden, Hohenzollernberg.³¹ The communal state, and in thousands divided every year among the *Lesholztag* is widespread. In Westphalia one finds vated as one common estate modern agronomy. As they are in vigour in most which are real fêtes of labour, phalia, Hesse, and Nassau for a new house is usual the neighbours join in building. In Frankfort it is a regular one of them being ill all

In Germany, as in France, repealed their laws against

³⁰ A. Baudrillart, *l.c.* pp. 5. syndicate (Ariège), wrote to my Toulouse our association has prohibited. The society undertook one-fourth was paid by each. had got prizes. The result would have done it otherwise. contributed 10 per cent. of the spent 6 to 7 francs each.'

³¹ In Württemberg 1,629 communes owned in 1863 over 1,000,000 acres have communal land; in 1884 culture, and 675,000 acres of forest. In Saxony 39 per cent. of the *Jahrbuch*, 1886, p. 359). In Hohenzollern-Hechingen 41 village communities (Buchenberg)

³² See K. Bücher, who, in a has collected all information re

³³ K. Bücher, *ibid.* pp. 89, 9

some of which all butter and cheese is divided in equal parts, irrespective of the yield of each cow. In the Ariège we find an association of eight separate communes for the common culture of their lands, which they have put together; syndicates for free medical aid have been formed in 172 communes out of 337 in the same department; associations of consumers arise in connection with the syndicates; and so on.³⁰ 'Quite a revolution is going on in our villages,' Alfred Baudrillart writes, 'through these associations, which take in each region their own special characters.'

Very much the same must be said of Germany. Wherever the peasants could resist the plunder of their lands they have retained them in communal ownership, which largely prevails in Württemberg, Baden, Hohenzollern, and in the Hessian province of Starkenberg.³¹ The communal forests are kept, as a rule, in an excellent state, and in thousands of communes timber and fuel wood are divided every year among all inhabitants; even the old custom of the *Lesholztag* is widely spread: at the ringing of the village bell all go to the forest to take as much fuel wood as they can carry.³² In Westphalia one finds communes in which all the land is cultivated as one common estate, in accordance with all requirements of modern agronomy. As to the old communal customs and habits, they are in vigour in most parts of Germany. The calling in of *aids*, which are real fêtes of labour, is known to be quite habitual in Westphalia, Hesse, and Nassau. In well-timbered regions the timber for a new house is usually taken from the communal forest, and all the neighbours join in building the house. Even in the suburbs of Frankfort it is a regular custom among the gardeners that in case of one of them being ill all come on Sunday to cultivate his garden.³³

In Germany, as in France, as soon as the rulers of the people repealed their laws against the peasant associations—that was only in

³⁰ A. Baudrillart, *l.c.* pp. 300, 341, &c. M. Terssac, president of the St. Gironnais syndicate (Ariège), wrote to my friend in substance as follows:—'For the exhibition of Toulouse our association has grouped the owners of cattle which seemed to us worth exhibiting. The society undertook to pay one-half of the travelling and exhibition expenses; one-fourth was paid by each owner, and the remaining fourth by those exhibitors who had got prizes. The result was that many took part in the exhibition who never would have done it otherwise. Those who got the highest awards (350 francs) have contributed 10 per cent. of their prizes, while those who have got no prize have only spent 6 to 7 francs each.'

³¹ In Württemberg 1,629 communes out of 1,910 have communal property. They owned in 1863 over 1,000,000 acres of land. In Baden 1,256 communes out of 1,582 have communal land; in 1884-1888 they held 121,500 acres of fields in communal culture, and 675,000 acres of forests, i.e. 46 per cent. of the total area under woods. In Saxony 39 per cent. of the total area is in communal ownership (Schmoller's *Jahrbuch*, 1886, p. 359). In Hohenzollern nearly two-thirds of all meadow land, and in Hohenzollern-Hechingen 41 per cent. of all landed property, are owned by the village communities (Buchenberger, *Agrarwesen*, vol. i. p. 300).

³² See K. Bücher, who, in a special chapter added to Laveleye's *Ureigenthum*, has collected all information relative to the village community in Germany.

³³ K. Bücher, *ibid.* pp. 89, 90.

1884-1888—these unions began to develop with a wonderful rapidity, notwithstanding all legal obstacles which were put in their way.³⁴ 'It is a fact,' Buchenberger says, 'that in *thousands* of village communities, in which no sort of chemical manure or rational fodder was ever known, both have become of everyday use, to a quite unforeseen extent, owing to these associations' (vol. ii. p. 507). All sorts of labour-saving implements and agricultural machinery, and better breeds of cattle, are bought through the associations, and various arrangements for improving the quality of the produce begin to be introduced. Unions for the sale of agricultural produce are also formed, as well as for permanent improvements of the land.³⁵

From the point of view of social economics all these efforts of the peasants certainly are of little importance. They cannot substantially, and still less permanently, alleviate the misery to which the tillers of the soil are doomed all over Europe. But from the ethical point of view, which we are now considering, their importance cannot be over-rated. They prove that even under the system of reckless individualism which now prevails the agricultural masses piously maintain their mutual-support inheritance; and as soon the States relax the iron laws by means of which they have broken all bonds between men, these bonds are at once reconstituted, notwithstanding the difficulties, political, economical, and social, which are many, and in such forms as best answer to the modern requirements of production. They indicate in which direction and in which form further progress must be expected.

I might easily multiply such illustrations, taking them from Italy, Spain, Denmark, and so on, and pointing out some interesting features which are proper to each of these countries. The Slavonian populations of Austria and the Balkan peninsula, among whom the 'compound family,' or 'undivided household,' is found in existence, ought also to be mentioned.³⁶ But I hasten to pass on to Russia, where the same mutual-support tendency takes certain new and unforeseen forms. Moreover, in dealing with the village community in Russia we have the advantage of possessing an immense mass of materials, collected during the colossal house-to-house inquest which was lately made by several *zemstvos* (county councils), and which embraces a population of nearly 20,000,000 peasants in different parts of the country.³⁷

³⁴ For this legislation and the numerous obstacles which were put in the way, in the shape of red-tapeism and supervision, see Buchenberger's *Agrarwesen und Agrarpolitik*, Bd. ii. pp. 342-363, and p. 506, note.

³⁵ Buchenberger, *l.c.* Bd. ii. p. 510. The General Union of Agricultural Co-operation comprises an aggregate of 1,679 societies. In Silesia an aggregate of 32,000 acres of land has been lately drained by 73 associations; 454,800 acres in Prussia by 516 associations; in Bavaria there are 1,715 drainage and irrigation unions.

³⁶ For the Balkan peninsula see Laveleye's *Propriété Primitive*.

³⁷ The facts concerning the village community, contained in nearly a hundred

Two important conclusions are drawn from the evidence collected by the Russian statisticians: fully one-third of the peasants are ruined by heavy taxation, small allotments, and a very severe tax-collecting system; and during the first five-and-twenty years of the serfs, a decided tendency to the concentration of property in land within the village has been observed. 'horseless' peasants abandoned their property often became the property of the village. Additional incomes from trade, or from the sale of property for exacting rack rents from the village, are a flaw in the land redemption system. In buying peasants' lands at a high price, the officials mostly used their own money, as against communal ownership. A strong wind of opposition to the land redemption blows again through the village. The efforts are being made between the rich and the poor. As to the fertile Steppes, which are so populous and the richest part of the empire, colonised, during the present century, by ownership or occupation. But since improved methods of agriculture have been introduced in the steppe, they have begun themselves to transfer from communal possession, and on the other hand, a very great number of serfs of recent origin.³⁹

The Crimea and the part of the Caucasus (the province of Taurida)

volumes (out of 450) of these interesting and excellent Russian work by V. V. Laveleye, St. Petersburg, 1892, which, apart from the data relative to this subject, contains a vast literature, in which the modern statisticians have from the domain of generalities deduced sufficiently detailed facts.

³⁸ The redemption had to be paid in instalments, and the greatest part of the smaller remaining part of the redemption was paid individually, advantage was taken of the fact that for half its value from the ruin of the village to such sales.

³⁹ Mr. V. V., in his *Peasants and the Land*, has pointed out to this movement. About the spread of machinery English statisticians (Odessa, Taganrog).

Two important conclusions may be drawn from the bulk of evidence collected by the Russian inquests. In Middle Russia, where fully one-third of the peasants have been brought to utter ruin (by heavy taxation, small allotments of unproductive land, rack rents, and very severe tax-collecting after total failures of crops), there was, during the first five-and-twenty years after the emancipation of the serfs, a decided tendency towards the constitution of individual property in land within the village communities. Many impoverished 'horseless' peasants abandoned their allotments, and this land often became the property of those richer peasants, who borrow additional incomes from trade, or of outside traders, who buy land chiefly for exacting rack rents from the peasants. It must also be added that a flaw in the land redemption law of 1861 offered great facilities for buying peasants' lands at a very small expense,³⁸ and that the State officials mostly used their weighty influence in favour of individual as against communal ownership. However for the last ten years a strong wind of opposition to the individual appropriation of the land blows again through the Middle Russian villages, and strenuous efforts are being made by the bulk of those peasants who stand between the rich and the very poor to uphold the village community. As to the fertile Steppes of the South, which are now the most populous and the richest part of European Russia, they were mostly colonised, during the present century, under the system of individual ownership or occupation, sanctioned in that form by the State. But since improved methods of agriculture with the aid of machinery have been introduced in the region, the peasant owners have gradually begun themselves to transform their individual ownership into communal possession, and one finds now, in that granary of Russia, a very great number of spontaneously formed village communities of recent origin.³⁹

The Crimea and the part of the mainland which lies to the north of it (the province of Taurida), for which we have detailed data, offer an

volumes (out of 450) of these inquests, have been classified and summed up in an excellent Russian work by 'V. V.', *The Peasant Community (Krestianskaya Obschina)*, St. Petersburg, 1892, which, apart from its theoretical value, is a rich compendium of data relative to this subject. The above inquests have also given origin to an immense literature, in which the modern village-community question for the first time emerges from the domain of generalities and is put on the solid basis of reliable and sufficiently detailed facts.

³⁸ The redemption had to be paid by annuities for forty-nine years. As years went, and the greatest part of it was paid, it became easier and easier to redeem the smaller remaining part of it, and, as each allotment could be redeemed individually, advantage was taken of this disposition by traders, who bought land for half its value from the ruined peasants. A law was recently passed to put a stop to such sales.

³⁹ Mr. V. V., in his *Peasant Community*, has grouped together all facts relative to this movement. About the rapid agricultural development of South Russia and the spread of machinery English readers will find information in the Consular Reports (Odessa, Taganrog).

excellent illustration of that movement. This territory began to be colonised, after its annexation in 1783, by Great, Little, and White Russians—Cossacks, freemen, and runaway serfs—who came individually or in small groups from all corners of Russia. They took first to cattle-breeding, and when they began later on to till the soil, each one tilled as much as he could afford to. But when—immigration continuing, and perfected ploughs being introduced—land stood in great demand, bitter disputes arose among the settlers. They lasted for years, until these men, previously tied by no mutual bonds, gradually came to the idea that an end must be put to disputes by introducing village-community ownership. They passed decisions to the effect that the land which they owned individually should henceforward be their common property, and they began to allot and to re-allot it in accordance with the usual village-community rules. The movement gradually took a great extension, and on a small territory, the Taurida statisticians found 161 villages in which communal ownership had been introduced by the peasant proprietors themselves, chiefly in the years 1855–1885, *in lieu* of individual ownership. Quite a variety of village-community types has been freely worked out in this way by the settlers.⁴⁰ What adds to the interest of this transformation is that it took place, not only among the Great Russians, who are used to village-community life, but also among Little Russians, who have long since forgotten it under Polish rule, among Greeks and Bulgarians, and even among Germans, who have long since worked out in their prosperous and half-industrial Volga colonies their own type of village community.⁴¹ It is evident that the Mussulman Tatars of Taurida hold their land under the Mussulman customary law, which is limited personal occupation; but even with them the European village community has been introduced in a few cases. As to other nationalities in Taurida, individual ownership has been abolished in six Esthonian, two Greek, two Bulgarian, one Czech, and one German village.

This movement is characteristic for the whole of the fertile Steppe region of the south. But separate instances of it are also found in Little Russia. Thus in a number of villages of the province of Chernigov the peasants were formerly individual owners of their plots; they had separate legal documents for their plots and used to rent and to sell their land at will. But in the fifties of this century a movement began among them in favour of communal possession,

⁴⁰ In some instances they proceeded with great caution. In one village they began by putting together all meadow land, but only a small portion of the fields (about five acres per soul) was rendered communal; the remainder continued to be owned individually. Later on, in 1862–1864, the system was extended, but only in 1884 was communal possession introduced in full.—V. V.'s *Peasant Community*, pp. 1–14.

⁴¹ On the Mennonite village community see A. Klaus, *Our Colonies (Nashi Koleni)*, St. Petersburg, 1869.

the chief argument be
The initiative of the re
followed suit, the last ca
Russia, it is a fact that
individual ownership t
favour of re-establishing
prieters who had lived
return *en masse* to the

This movement in
against the current eco
culture is incompatible
charitable thing that ca
never been submitted to
domain of political met
show, on the contrary, t
concurrence of favourab
are on the average, and
initiative among their
the very means for intr
and village life altogeth
leader to progress, than
from the following fact

Under Nicholas the
used to compel the peas

⁴² Of course there were
munal possession, and the
struggles often lasted for y
the law being impossible to
individual ownership and th
until the two coalesced into

⁴³ This movement is so
There is a considerable numb
the regulation allotments,
in individual ownership. T
Kursk, Ryazan, Tambov, Ore
introducing the village comm
who were liberated from ser
ments—each family separat
system, which they have intro
origin, and non-Russians too j
after having remained for six
troduced the village commu
of Berdyansk just now figh
peasant proprietors (*Kleinwir*
now in their villages in the s
Samara the Russian governm
villages on the system of indi
property of 105 acres. Now
already notified the desire o
facts from the excellent wor
facts recorded in the above-m

the chief argument being the growing number of pauper families. The initiative of the reform was taken in one village, and the others followed suit, the last case on record dating from 1882.⁴² As to Middle Russia, it is a fact that in many villages which were drifting towards individual ownership there began since 1880 a mass movement in favour of re-establishing the village community. Even peasant proprietors who had lived for years under the individualist system now return *en masse* to the communal institutions.⁴³

This movement in favour of communal possession runs badly against the current economical theories, according to which intensive culture is incompatible with the village community. But the most charitable thing that can be said of these theories is that they have never been submitted to the test of experiment: they belong to the domain of political metaphysics. The facts which we have before us show, on the contrary, that wherever the Russian peasants, owing to a concurrence of favourable circumstances, are less miserable than they are on the average, and wherever they find men of knowledge and initiative among their neighbours, the village community becomes the very means for introducing various improvements in agriculture and village life altogether. Here, as elsewhere, mutual aid is a better leader to progress, than the war of each against all, as may be seen from the following facts.

Under Nicholas the First's rule many Crown officials and serf-owners used to compel the peasants to introduce the communal culture of small

⁴² Of course there were struggles between the poor, who usually claim for communal possession, and the rich, who usually prefer individual ownership; and the struggles often lasted for years. In certain places the unanimity required then by the law being impossible to obtain, the village divided into two villages, one under individual ownership and the other under communal possession; and so they remained until the two coalesced into one community, or else they remained divided still.

⁴³ This movement is so interesting that some instances of it must be specified. There is a considerable number of ex-serfs who have received one-fourth part only of the regulation allotments, but they have received them free of redemption and in individual ownership. There is now a wide-spread movement among them (in Kursk, Ryazan, Tambov, Orel, &c.) towards putting their allotments together and introducing the village community. The 'free agriculturists' (*volnyie khlebopashchy*), who were liberated from serfdom under the law of 1803, and had bought their allotments—each family separately—are now nearly all under the village-community system, which they have introduced themselves. All these movements are of recent origin, and non-Russians too join them. Thus the Bulgares in the district of Tiraspol, after having remained for sixty years under the personal property system, have introduced the village community in the years 1876-1882. The German Mennonites of Berdyansk just now fight for introducing the village community. The small peasant proprietors (*Kleinwirtschaftliche*) among the German Baptists are agitating now in their villages in the same direction. One instance more: In the province of Samara the Russian government created in the forties, by way of experiment, 103 villages on the system of individual ownership. Each household received a splendid property of 105 acres. Now out of the 103 villages the peasants in 72 have already notified the desire of introducing the village community. I take all these facts from the excellent work of V. V., who simply gives, in a classified form, the facts recorded in the above-mentioned house-to-house inquest.

plots of the village lands, in order to refill the communal storehouses after loans of grain had been granted to the poorest commoners. Such cultures, connected in the peasants' minds with the worst reminiscences of serfdom, were abandoned as soon as serfdom was abolished; but now the peasants begin to reintroduce them on their own account. In one district (Ostrogozhsk, in Kursk) the initiative of one person was sufficient to call them to life in four-fifths of all the villages. The same is met with in several other localities. On a given day the commoners come out, the richer ones with a plough or a cart and the poorer ones single-handed, and no attempt is made to discriminate one's share in the work. The crop is afterwards used for loans to the poorer commoners, mostly free grants, or for the orphans and widows, or for the village church, or for the school, or for repaying a communal debt.⁴⁴

That all sorts of work which enters, so to say, in the routine of village life (repair of roads and bridges, dams, drainage, supply of water for irrigation, cutting of wood, planting of trees, &c.) are made by whole communes, and that land is rented and meadows are mown by whole communes—the work being accomplished by old and young, men and women, in the way described by Tolstoi—is only what one may expect from people living under the village-community system.⁴⁵ They are of everyday occurrence all over the country. But the village community is also by no means averse to modern agricultural improvements, when it can stand the expense, and when knowledge, hitherto kept for the rich only, finds its way into the peasant's house.

It has just been said that perfected ploughs rapidly spread in South Russia, and in many cases the village communities were instrumental in spreading their use. A plough was bought by the community, experimented upon on a portion of the communal land, and the necessary improvements were indicated to the makers, whom the communes often aided in starting the manufacture of cheap ploughs as a village industry. In the district of Moscow, where 1,560 ploughs were bought by the peasants during the last five years, the impulse came from those communes which rented lands as a body for the special purpose of improved culture.

In the north-east (Vyatka) small associations of peasants, who travel with their winnowing machines (manufactured as a village industry in one of the iron districts), have spread the use of such machines in the neighbouring governments. The very wide spread of threshing machines in Samara, Saratov, and Kherson is due to the peasant as-

⁴⁴ Such communal cultures are known to exist in 159 villages out of 195 in the Ostrogozhsk district; in 150 out of 187 in Slavynoserbksk; in 107 village communities in Alexandrovsk, 93 in Nikolayevsk, 35 in Elisabethgrad. In a German colony the communal culture is made for repaying a communal debt. All work at it, although the debt was contracted by 94 householders out of 155.

⁴⁵ Lists of such works which came under the notice of the *zemstvo* statisticians will be found in V. V.'s *Peasant Community*, pp. 459-600.

sociations, which can afford what the peasant cannot. And it is clear that the village communal fields system had to be introduced as we see in Russia many instances of introducing the rotation system usually set apart a portion of the artificial meadows, and the experiment proves successful in their fields, so as to suit the soil.

This system is now introduced in Smolensk, Vyatka, and other communities give also attention to fruit-growing. Finally, the little model farms and culture grounds—which are the conduct of the school, to the support they furnish.

Moreover such peasant associations are of frequent occurrence in Moscow—all three introduced have been accomplished with less than 180 to 200 members themselves with the special dry Steppes of Novouza and several hundreds of men while in a wealthy German colony worked, men and women a dam, two miles long, which men do in that struggle they obtain through irrigation with the marmot plough, poor, commoners and in order to conjure the plague been of no use; to assure

And now, after having which are practised by I see that I might fill a the life of the hundred tutorship of more or with modern civilisation

⁴⁶ In the government of which was reserved for the

⁴⁷ Several instances of which *Official Messenger*, 1894, N begin to appear also in Sou

sociations, which can afford to buy a costly engine, while the individual peasant cannot. And while we read in nearly all economical treatises that the village community was doomed to disappear when the three-fields system had to be substituted by the rotation of crops system, we see in Russia many village communities taking the initiative of introducing the rotation of crops. Before accepting it the peasants usually set apart a portion of the communal fields for an experiment in artificial meadows, and the commune buys the seeds.⁴⁶ If the experiment proves successful they find no difficulty whatever in re-dividing their fields, so as to suit the five or six fields system.

This system is now in use in *hundreds* of villages of Moscow, Tver, Smolensk, Vyatka, and Pskov.⁴⁷ And where land can be spared the communities give also a portion of their domain to allotments for fruit-growing. Finally, the sudden extension lately taken in Russia by the little model farms, orchards, kitchen gardens, and silkworm-culture grounds—which are started at the village schoolhouses, under the conduct of the schoolmaster, or of a village volunteer—is also due to the support they found with the village communities.

Moreover such permanent improvements as drainage and irrigation are of frequent occurrence. For instance, in three districts of Moscow—all three industrial to a great extent—drainage works have been accomplished within the last ten years on a large scale in no less than 180 to 200 different villages—the commoners working themselves with the spade. At another extremity of Russia, in the dry Steppes of Novouzen, over a thousand dams for ponds were built and several hundreds of deep wells were sunk by the communes; while in a wealthy German colony of the south-east the commoners worked, men and women alike, for five weeks in succession, to erect a dam, two miles long, for irrigation purposes. What could isolated men do in that struggle against the dry climate? What could they obtain through individual effort when South Russia was struck with the marmot plague, and all people living on the land, rich and poor, commoners and individualists, had to work with their hands in order to conjure the plague? To call in the policeman would have been of no use; to associate was the only possible remedy.

And now, after having said so much about mutual aid and support which are practised by the tillers of the soil in 'civilised' countries, I see that I might fill an octavo volume with illustrations taken from the life of the hundreds of millions of men who also live under the tutorship of more or less centralised States, but are out of touch with modern civilisation and modern ideas. I might describe the

⁴⁶ In the government of Moscow the experiment was usually made on the field which was reserved for the above-mentioned communal culture.

⁴⁷ Several instances of such and similar improvements were lately given in the *Official Messenger*, 1894, Nos. 256-258. Associations between 'horseless' peasants begin to appear also in South Russia.

inner life of a Turkish village and its network of admirable mutual-aid customs and habits. On turning over my leaflets covered with illustrations from peasant life in Caucasia, I come across touching facts of mutual support. I trace the same customs in the Arab *djemmah* and the Afghan *purra*, in the villages of Persia, India, and Java, in the undivided family of the Chinese, in the encampments of the semi-nomads of Central Asia and the nomads of the far North. On consulting notes taken at random in the literature of Africa, I find them replete with similar facts—of aids convoked to take in the crops, of houses built by all inhabitants of the village—sometimes to repair the havoc done by civilised filibusters—of people aiding each other in case of accident, protecting the traveller, and so on. And when I peruse such works as Post's compendium of African customary law I understand why, notwithstanding all tyranny, oppression, robberies and raids, tribal wars, glutton kings, deceiving witches and priests, slave hunters, and the like, these populations have not gone astray in the woods, why they have maintained a certain civilisation, and have remained men, instead of dropping to the level of straggling families of decaying orang-outangs. The fact is, that the slave-hunters, the ivory robbers, the fighting kings, the Matabele and the Madagascar 'heroes' pass away, leaving their traces marked with blood and fire; but the nucleus of mutual-aid institutions, habits, and customs, grown up in the tribe and the village community, remains; and it keeps men united in societies, open to the progress of civilisation, and ready to receive it when the day comes that they shall receive civilisation instead of bullets.

The same applies to our civilised world. The natural and social calamities pass away. Whole populations are periodically reduced to misery or starvation; the very springs of life are crushed out of millions of men; reduced to city pauperism; the understanding and the feelings of the millions are vitiated by teachings worked out in the interest of the few. All this is certainly a part of our existence. But the nucleus of mutual-support institutions, habits, and customs remains alive with the millions; it keeps them together; and they prefer to cling to their customs, beliefs, and traditions rather than to accept the teachings of a war of each against all, which are offered to them under the title of science, but are no science at all.

P. KROPOTKIN.

ERA
PRONUN

THE article on the pronun-
pages last October, (I)
between speech and scri-
modification to which we
all times, (II) it defin-
Erasmians and Reuchlin-
controversy, it followed
the West, up to the tin-

The circumstances
*Dialogue*¹ are so extra-
most strange instances
that, were they not rec-
they might well have b-
are, however, fully adm-
no doubt as to the au-
relate.

We have seen tha-
Academy, the members
traditional pronunciat-
he himself taught Gree-
Chrysoloras, the standar-
then by Gaza's Gramma-
into Latin and publishe-

But there is further
unreserved manner in w-
traditional pronunciat-
him of Busleiden's ('Hi-
a college at Louvain; a
Hebrew had already bee-

¹ Printed by Froben, at F-
Cologne in 1529. It is inclu-
as well as in Haverkamp's S-