THE REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT.

Revolution rushes the people into changed conditions they do not understand, the advantages of which are taken on trust from the leaders. Evolution awaits an enormous movement of the mass mind in response to percolating propaganda; and it always will wait. Revolution can be controlled not only by compromise and powerful dictatorship; and these are the very forces it intends to destroy; yet, when masses of people are to be governed and directed, there are no other methods. Evolutionary Socialism does not appeal to the operatives to make up their minds between God and Mammon, between Caesar and Jesus. Those reforms that come along in the casual shape of parliamentary concessions are accepted by the worker, but they have no effect upon his mind. He accepts accident insurances, reduced hours and the operations of wages boards only to remain a conservative wage-slave at heart. He does not know that the roads by which these slight concessions travelled are strewn with the bodies of martyrs, because the mass memory is a short memory. The man who is going to put shape and direction into the future Australian Communist Republic may be languishing in a Burlington dungeon at the present moment, but that is a matter of small concern to the bricklayer's labourer, who has just had his wages jumped a pound a day. Everybody enjoys the very factor in our social condition that helps to make us different from the chattel slave and serfs of feudalism is stained with the agony and blood of martyrs.

The leader is one; the mass is many. It is the Machiavellian principle of the Plutocrats to strangle the leader and placate his followers with gifts. It is also the Parliamentary method, and works excellently, because the leaders are deficient in revolutionary spirit. For one leader that has betrayed his followers there are tens of thousands of working men who have betrayed their leaders and left them stranded and solitary to face the surgery of roused capitalistic law.

Evolutionary methods must be discredited because they are too safe, too softening, and too slow. Fresh problems pile themselves upon the old, before the old have had time to solve themselves. Revolutionary action is urgent, because we are not sure that the cure is any better than the disease. But revolutionary action spreads responsibility more equally: "If there should be a counter-revolution to-morrow, what have you done to deserve it?"

This revolution, with its spice of danger, must prove the integrity of its followers, and by such integrity great things can be accomplished and great combinations of mind and courage formed. Revolution forces people to make their minds up. Australia's social salvation depends on absorbing its spirit, and not being made drunk by it.

A small concession wrested from the master class against its will has an inspiring psychological effect upon those who make the demand. Whether it be called spontaneous concessions have no effect upon the masses, excepting to make them more conservative. They will never understand that the philosophers of the movement do that all capitalist concessions are inspired by fear, and are managed with considerable cunning. They are
the result of profound conspiracy. The Entente will lift the blockade and allow food to enter Poland only on condition that the Socialist Peasant Cabinet is deposed, and a less revolutionary party returned to power. The Church is used as an instrument to put these alternatives of slavery or starvation before the people.

The plutocrat knows more about the power of the masses than the masses themselves know, and he easily becomes afraid; but the concessions he makes are really investments in humanitarian bonds. He puts food into Poland, receives the gratitude of the starving inhabitants, and saves Poland for capitalism.

The revolutionary spirit is the courage to demand justice; revolution is the effort to achieve justice after it has been refused. There is no instance in revolutionary history where the masses have not asked the oppressor to give peaceably what their outraged patience has been forced ultimately to take by bloodshed.

Australia has no parallel in history nor in the world; our conditions are unique. We are a happy people without a soul to help us understand slavery. We have never been hungry enough to die for justice, and we will be the last generation bred by the sea from the ocean of plutocracy, because capitalist concessions have made us complacent. Talk revolution and Australia will retort that she is young and tolerably contented, and does not wish to die. She is wise.

We must not talk bloodshed, we do not ask for revolution, but we must aspire to the courage of the revolutionary spirit—the right to demand our right.

P.L.H.

OPEN LETTER TO FELLOW-CITIZENS.

III.—To the Clergy Who Supported the War.

Reverend Sirs,—There is little doubt that you are in favour of having the Kaiser tried by a Court of the Allies, but you have not a word to say against Capitalism. You contend in your vanity that this trial will show England up in all her glory and righteousness to the eternal damnation of the German. You are very hopeful also that the trial of the Kaiser will divert attention from your guilt in the war, and hope that people will not ask "What of the Churches?"

Let us for a moment enquire what you did during the war—i.e., during the five years' murder. Certainly, your churches were often nothing more than recruiting halls, where the consciences of men were ridiculed—that is, if they felt war to be an ungodly thing. Certainly your ministers thought more of the flag than you did of men's lives. The portions of the Bible relating to peace, love, forgiveness and goodwill made you, the Church of God, uneasy, while the parts that breathed hatred, revenge and cruelty pleased you, justified you, and were naturally often quoted by you as examples for men to follow. You twisted the Sermon on the Mount; you exculpated away the sixth Commandment. If Agnostics, Atheists and unbelievers generally had done this, we could have understood—but not God's ambassadors on earth. You, the Church of God, cheapened your book, which you call God's word. You, the followers of Christ, cheapened Christ. You, that in times past had unblinking records to your honour, that in the past uplifted and changed men, set yourselves the task of making men devils. You who were the light of the world have loved darkness rather than light. You who were the salt of the earth have salted away the salt. You, the Church of God, who should have rescued a distressed and stricken world, were a clog, a disgrace, and a menace. For when you saw men grooping in the dark, you held up a torch pretending to lead them to better things. In your cruelty and treachery you led them to a precipice instead, and then, with shocking savagery, you mocked their trusting souls and hurled them into the chasm. You have cheapened the most precious things that are good. You have cheapened moral bravery, conscience, the love of man to wife, family and home. You have cheapened the most exalted, and glorified the most debase. You, the Church of God, have cheapened the hope of men that good would ultimately overcome evil. God and men looked to you for fruit; they searched for grapes, and, behold, wild grapes. You snicked with small things. You were shocked if men's graves were likely to be desecrated by the unspeakable Turk, yet regarded not the shell made by a "Christian" country that blew him to pieces. You are scandalised by widows being asked to contribute to the cost of chiselling on a soldier's tombstone, yet allow the blockade which is responsible for deaths by the million. What must Christ think of you for so cheapening His Church?

If you had pleaded expediency, or the suddenness of fright, or exceptional circumstances, men might have excused you. But you adopted the superior attitude that your words and deeds required no justification. You boldly quoted Scripture, boldly preached men out of the Church, boldly told them that nothing mattered but the "Empire." While even "worldly" men see the horror of war and want it banished, you seem willing and ready to repeat your actions when the next war comes. The Capitalist and the international financier know they can count on you then. The diplomatist knows he can depend on you for a slogan for the next war. For you have dragged religion into warfare, and mixed heaven with hell. You have called evil good, and good evil. You have caused little ones to perish.

For all this you repent not, nor retract any of your vile statements. You are not changed. You, the Church of God, that preached repentance to men for lesser sins than murder, have not yourselves repented. You are not perturbed when meaner men take your place in witnessing the world's evil. We hear no declaration from you that you have shed innocent blood.

We do, however, hear from outsiders the pronouncement continually that, if you had been true to your Leader's ideals, this war would have been very likely averted, or at any rate shortened. The position, however, is not quite hopeless. The world still requires leadership, help, counsel and kindness from you. You can still take your place of usefulness in the world if you will. But it will not do to be calm, unchanged, undisturbed. You must sweat, agonise, cry for help and mercy, must confess to the world and to God your guilt. You must learn that your only war-duty is to withstand war, and that you must tell the world boldly of your new attitude. You must do it with the oppressed, the poor and needy, and him that hath no helper. In a word, you must be born again,—Yours, etc., WARRIGAL.