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Friedrich Engels

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## NOTES AND MEMORANDA.

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### FRIEDRICH ENGELS.

READERS of this journal will have heard with peculiar interest of the death of Friedrich Engels, the last of the four who have claims to the founding of scientific socialism. Of the others, Rodbertus and Lassalle have long since joined the majority, and Marx has been in his grave twelve years. But Engels survived till August 5, 1895. Though not the first in point of originality and brilliancy, he was behind none of the others in powers of work and devotion to his cause; and a great part of his writings is of permanent value. We are bound to recognize the service rendered to political economy by scientific socialism. Socialism will be always with us. If it is scientifically fruitless as a Utopia, as a science it means serious economic study,—not less serious because aimed eventually at the lessening of human suffering.

In another part of this issue will be found an account by Professor Lexis of the third volume of *Das Kapital*, edited by Engels from the manuscripts of Marx. No one can read the preface to this volume without realizing the immense labor the editor has unselfishly spent in giving to his friend's papers something like an intelligible order, and rescuing his book, so far as could be, from the reproach of incompleteness. It should be remembered also that the publication of the second volume\* involved no less toil,—toil in putting the manuscripts into shape, and even in deciphering the bad handwriting of the author. In comparison with this Herculean task, it must have been an easy matter for Engels to add, in his preface to that second volume, his vindication of the originality of Marx against the champions of Rodbertus. Yet the vindication is of considerable value not only for its arguments,

\* Reviewed by Professor Lexis in the *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie*, vol. xi. (1885) pp. 452-465.

but for its references to economic literature. That there should be special pleading and over-anxiety to acquit Marx of all shortcomings is pardonable in a man who has at all times so disinterestedly identified himself with his departed friend; and a certain acerbity of tone can be forgiven to an old campaigner.

Engels was born at Barmen, in Rhenish Prussia, on November 28, 1820. His father, a wealthy cotton manufacturer in that town, passed him early into the business, and, as soon as he had served his year in the army as *Freiwilliger*, sent him over to the English branch of the firm at Manchester (1843). Coming with a mind well prepared, he laid deeply to heart what he saw in the northern districts of England in one of the darkest times of their history. The result was his remarkable book on *The Situation of the Working Classes in England* (1845), written in German. It is dated from Barmen, March 15, 1845; but Engels was by that time out of touch with business, and the factory in either branch saw little of him for the next five years. He had joined with Marx and Ruge at Paris in conducting the *Deutsch-französische Jahrbücher*, 1844, for which short-lived paper he had written *A Criticism of Political Economy* and a sympathetic review of Carlyle's *Past and Present*. He went with Marx to Brussels and Cologne, and was author with him (1845) of the *Holy Family*, an attack on Bruno Bauer and other former friends, now bitter enemies. He was editor with Marx (1848-49) of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. The famous Communistic Manifesto of 1848 was their joint work. In 1849 Engels fought on the republican side in the luckless rising in Baden, after which, a not unwilling exile, he spent twenty years in the Manchester factory. Retiring from partnership in 1869 with an ample competency, he spent the rest of his life in London, where, on the death of Marx in 1883, he became the oracle of his party, more especially the German section of it. His wife (an Irish lady) died some years before him, and he has left no family.

As long as Marx lived and even afterwards, Engels effaced himself, and appeared as the willing follower. Yet it is owing to Engels quite as much as to Marx that socialism became

both "scientific" and international. Engels helped to build up the theory of Surplus Value and the Brazen Law of Wages, the sources at least of valuable economic discussion, though not impregnable to criticism any more than essential to socialism. He was with Marx the director of the International, at one time so formidable. His book on *Herr Dühring* (1878) shows the range of his powers perhaps more than any other of his writings; but even here Marx is in the foreground. The relation of the two men may be compared to the relation of Darwin and Wallace. As Mr. Wallace's *Darwinism* is in many ways more telling than the *Origin of Species*, so for a lucid statement of the historical, philosophical, and economical basis of scientific socialism we should go rather to Engels's book on *Herr Dühring* than to any work of Marx. The gift of exposition appears in the more popular *Development of Socialism from a Utopia to a Science* (1883) and in *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1888). The smaller writings of Engels make a long list, going down to the *Contribution à l'Histoire du Christianisme Primitif* in the present year (in the *Devenir Social*, Paris, April and May, 1895), and including two remarkable papers on Russia in *Time* for April and May, 1890.

He was a good linguist, and was widely read in science and literature. His natural tenderness, humor, and good humor appeared little in his books, but endeared him to his relatives and friends. He was to the end too uncompromising, and perhaps, like all enthusiasts, too inclined to believe that he who is not wholly with us is entirely against us. He bequeathed to August Bebel and Paul Singer, members of the German Reichstag, his books and copyrights, and £1,000 in trust, to be applied in furthering the election to the Reichstag of such persons as they may think fit. Possibly to avoid the appearance of superstition or more probably from a sentiment of real sublimity, he directed in his will that his remains after cremation should be thrown into the sea.

JAMES BONAR.