

sort of thing for argument. They can hardly be numerous enough to be worth reasoning with, even were they likely to be capable of anything like logical conviction at all. As if determined, however, to reach the topmost climax of absurdity, we have a comparison of THIERS with BORGIA and the worst of the Medici assassins, coupled with the startling statement that the men who led the Commune were among "the foremost, the purest, and the noblest patriots of France." BRUTUS, HAMPDEN, VANE, SYDNEY and JOHN BROWN are summoned to hail "their last followers" as brothers, and to give them a sort of general benediction, which makes the absurdity of the production pretty nearly complete. If Communism be really taking root among our workmen, we can imagine nothing more likely to kill it effectually than a course of rodomontade like this latest outburst of the man who undertakes to mold the destinies of American labor.

Wendell Phillips on the Commune.

The process of historical whitewashing, though not, strictly speaking, a modern invention, has, in these days, been carried to unheard-of perfection. It may be presumed that there are people who tire of hearing a man or a cause get a deservedly bad name, just as there are those who find pleasure in differing from a general consent about a good one. To people who like to be convinced that black is white, we commend the perusal of WENDELL PHILLIPS' defense of the Paris Commune in the *National Standard* of this week. Like Gen. BUTLER, Mr. PHILLIPS takes up the subject without having made any attempt to understand it. He has evidently read some of the earlier manifestoes of the Central Committee, and has constructed therefrom a fanciful programme of his own, which it would possibly have been very well for the Commune to have followed, but which, unfortunately, they did not. The very confident assertions of the apostle of the labor reformers form a highly instructive illustration of how much worse half knowledge frequently is than no knowledge at all. We suppose most people will accept the "General Council of the International Working Men's Association" as being a better judge than Mr. WENDELL PHILLIPS of what were the true aims of the Paris Commune. The leaders of the Internationals have undertaken a defense of the work of their agents, but here their resemblance with the American critic ends. The respective definitions of the basis of the insurrectionary movement are radically contradictory, as witness the following :

NATIONAL STANDARD.
"The name of 'Commune' has led almost everybody out of France to mistake the purpose and character of the movement. It had no connection with Communism. Indeed, Communism as a social theory which did away with private property and planned other grand changes, is dead in France."

"The Commune would have been much better understood here and in England had it called itself 'The Town Council,' or 'The Township,' or 'The City Corporation.' For it only planned and struggled to play the same part in the regeneration of France which the great cities of the Middle Ages took in the organization of modern Europe, and which the Corporation of London played in leading and saving England in 1640 and in 1688." * * * "It is simply a cry for 'State Rights,' and a protest against 'Centralization.'"

"The rural population of France are inert, ignorant slaves to the priests, and belong to a by-gone age. * * * In every struggle between liberty and despotism the country folk have been the dead weight which has checked all progress. * * * For seventy years rural stupidity and superstition have checkmated every move of the French Liberals."

ADDRESS OF THE INTERNATIONALS.

"The Commune, they exclaim, intends to abolish property, the basis of all civilization. Yes, gentlemen, the Commune intended to abolish that class property which makes the labor of the many the wealth of the few. It aimed at the expropriation of the expropriators."

"This new Commune which breaks the modern State power, has been mistaken for a reproduction of the mediæval Commune, which first preceded, and afterward became the substratum of this very State power. The Communal Constitution has been mistaken for an attempt to break up into a federation of small States, as dreamt of by MONTESQUIEU and the GIRONDINS, that unity of great nations which, if originally brought about by political force, has now become a powerful coadjutant of social production. The antagonism of the Commune against the State power has been mistaken for an exaggerated form of the ancient struggle against over-centralization."

"Of all the lies hatched at Versailles, and echoed by the glorious European penny-a-liner, one of the most tremendous was that the rurals represented the French peasantry. * * * The rurals knew that three months' free communication of Communal Paris with the provinces would bring about a general rising of the peasants. * * * What the French peasant really wants he commenced to show in 1849 and 1850, by opposing his Maire to the Government's Prefect, his school-master to the Government's priest, and himself to the Government's gendarme."

It would be possible to carry the comparison a good deal further, and show the irreconcilable difference in almost every statement, alike of facts and opinions, between the Commune itself and its latest defender. Enough has been said to show the absolute ignorance of the subject under which the *Standard's* article was written. It need hardly be said that the pervading assumption of superior knowledge, which it has in common with all the literary productions which Mr. PHILLIPS inflicts on a long-suffering public, makes its gross errors somewhat ludicrous. The defense of the acts of the Commune is equally inapt with the defense of their opinions. "Justice and liberty," we are somewhat needlessly assured, "are more precious than architecture. The burning of a palace may be the education of a State. In comparison with public welfare, galleries of art are chaff and the fine dust of the balance." There may be people who will take this