# THE FIREBRAND

For the Burning Away of the Cobwebs of Ignorance and Superstition.

VOL. I.

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# THE FIREBRAND

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#### FREEDOM.

ClowLY sinks the day, and dim and dimmer Grows the landscape's melancholy sight; Dying, flames the sur his parting glimmer, Leaves his realm to mourful night.

Silence reigns. No sound in wood or meadow, Lulling music murmurs soft the stream; Life seems faded—a forgotten shadow That befalls us in a midnight dream.

Wretched shadow! where forever bitter Sorrow treads upon the blossoms sweet! Smiling eyes? they are but outward glitter— Virtue dying at Oppression's feet.

Darker grows the night. But lot on yonder Forest path do I a goddess spy?

Crown of light, like an unearthly wonder, Round her aspect streaming, draws anigh.

Speak! Who art thou, being that a mortal Hast enchanted by Elysian spell?
Wilt thou lead me through the dread postal To the regions where thy equals dwell?

Art thou Venus, born from Ocean's water, Never yet spurned by feeling swain? Has Diana, Zeus' exalted daughter, From Olympus' height returned again?

Beauteous art thou! Thou art no illusion— I can touch thee with my mostal hand; Yet thy features bear a bright diffusion Of the blisa that crowns thy native land.

Thus I spake in rapture, deeply thrilling, And she raised her voice to soft reply: A fantastic swain is ever willing To retain a shadow, fleeting by!

But mistake me not—I am no vision Of the erring, long-forgotten Past; In the Future lies my promised mission— While a Tyrant breathes will it last.

I am Freedom—not a goddess reigning
From a sthrouded throne, but plain and mild,
A loving sister, servitude discaining,
Such is Freedom, simple as a child.

Art thou, then, that long-lost precious jewel
That the Poets in their sonnets sing?
Patient waits the world for its renewal.
Does thy presence such fulfillment bring?

But she waved her hand in straight denial: Credit not the legends of the hearth. Never has the finge n the dial Shown the hour reedom to the earth.

Foreign am I, though too oft rejected; I withdrew from your 'eluded kind When a Monster, heartl as but respected. Rose between me and its grasping mind.

Call it Word of God (deadly illusion!); Or subjection to a Higher Will; Call it Faith, cowards of God's confusion; Call it Freedom, but 'tis Serfdom still.

Freedom knows no fawning subjugation!
Down with ancient walls of vested right!

Evil spooks that in the darkness hour,
They must flee where Reason shows her light.

Suffer no obedience, and obey not,
Then you'll know Oppression's counterpart;
Individuals in this circle moving,
Every being sovereign in his part.

Tyranny must dwarf your brethren's action; Savage force must slay your brethren's deed; Slave and master falls into his faction, And Oppression must Resistance breed.

Freedom is not given—you must take it.
May such outlook fill your heart with awe!
Law will not recede—you must break it;
Each be to himself his god and by A.

Thus she spake. And while I yet stood gazing,
Listening to the cadence of her voice,
Thus she vanished. Morning, bright and bracing,
On the eastern sky began to rise.

Wondrous dream, by fantasy created!
Roosters herald the oncoming day.
Welcome, morning! Sad, and yet elated,
Slowly I pursue the homeward way.
HERMAN EICH.

# POPULAR GOVERNMENT.

Some people are inclined to think that a popular government necessarily brings with it a better economic condition. They seem to think that if the lawmaking power is extended, better conditions follow as an inevitable consequence. The fact is, that no such relationship exists between government and economics.

Switzerland is, of all European countries, the one where popular government is most nearly realized. In spite of this fact, the economic condition of Switzerland is worse than that of any other country in Europe—worse even than that of the United States. In Switzerland, a man, native or foreigner, who enters a town or city in search of work is compelled to pay an occupation tax before he is allowed to work. In democratic Switzerland, the land of popular government, the home of the initiative and referendum, a man is

NOT ALLOWED TO EARN A LIVING

without paying for the privilege. Think of that, ye advocates of popular government!

"Government is a conspiracy of the rich to rob the poor," and any compromise with government is simply a deal with a gigantic conspiracy. Reverence for government, respect for law and willingness to support these institutions, no matter how popular they may be, is simply a childish acceptance of tradition by some and a means of gaining wealth and power by others.

Government is the control of one or more persons by one or more other persons, and is fundamentally vicious, being founded on assumption and upheld by force. The assumption of authority is in its nature tyrannical and opprossive. If it be "popular," that does not alter the facts and conditions involved.

Ten persons finding themselves in a given locality, might associate on terms of equality, or eight of them might assume to establish a popular government and could, of course, control the other two, compelling them to do things they did not wish to do and which might be detrimental to all. This illustration can be extended indefinitely. Should no government be established, but all the dealings be voluntary and by mutual agreement, no coercion would occur; but in the event of invasion or aggression of any kind, it would be quite easy for the injured one to have the sympathy of all the non-invaders and to very quickly put a stop to the invasion. This illustration, too, might be carried to any length.

length.

So the dangers of popular government is apparent on the one side, and its non-necessity on the other. Voluntary association and mutual agreement is all that is necessary in the daily intercourse of people, and anything not of that character must be aggressive in its nature and leads to oppression and tyranny.

Popular government is one of those delusions which hold sway for long periods of time, Because it is so vague in meaning that it is never known if it is realized in practice or is yet to be attained.

Reform orators and politicians, who hope to gain control through appeals to the downtrodden, find great opportunity to exercise their powers and further their schemes by playing upon this phrase; but clear thinking people know full well that popular government, like all other forms of government, is the relentless foe of liberty and must cease to exist before we can be free to live up to our highest ideal.

HENRY ADDIS.

# AN ANARCHIST ON ANARCHY.

BY ELISEE RECLUS.

To most Englishmen the word anarchy is so evil-sounding that ordinary readers of the "Contemporary Review" will probably turn from these pages with aversion, wondering how anybody could have the audacity to write them. With the crowd of commonplace chatterers we are already past praying for, no reproach is too bitter for us, no epithet too insulting. Public speakers on social and political subjects find that abuse of anarchists is an unfailing passport to popular favor. Every conceivable crime is laid to our charge, and opinion, too indolent to learn the truth, is easily persuaded that anarchy is but another name for wickedness and chaos. Overwhelmed with opprobrium and held up to hatred, we are treated on the principle that the surest way of hanging a dog is to give it a bad name.

There is nothing surprising in all this. The chorus of imprecations with which we are assailed is quite in the nature of things, for we speak in a tongue unhallowed by usage, and belong to none of the parties that dispute the possession of power. Like all innovators, whether they be violent or pacific, we bring not peace but a sword, and are in nowise astonished to be received as enemies.

Yet it is not with light hearts that we incur so much ill-will, nor are we satisfied with merely knowing that it is undeserved. To risk the loss of so precious an advantage as popular sympathy without first patiently searching out the truth and carefully considering our duty were an act of reckless folly. To a degree never dreamt of by men who are beene unresistingly on the current of public opinion, are we bound to render to our conscience a reason for the faith that is in us, to strengthen our convictions by study of nature and mankind, and above all, to compare them with that ideal justice which has been slowly elaborated by the untold generations of our race. This ideal is known to all, and is almost too trite to need repeat ing. It exists in the moral teaching of every people, civilized or savage; every religion has tried to adapt it to its dogmas and precepts. for it is the ideal of equality of rights and reciprocity of services. "We are all brethren," is a saying repeated from one end of the world to the other, and the principle of universal brotherhood expressed in this saying implies a complete solidarity of interests and efforts.

Accepted in its integrity by simple souls,

his powers?" Well, we are simple souls, and we hold firmly to this ideal of human morality. Of a surety there is much dross mixed with the pure metal, and the personal and collective egoisms of families, cities, castes, peoples and parties have wrought on this groundwork some startling variations. we have not to do here with the ethics of selfish interests, it is enough to identify the central points of convergence towards which all partial ideas more or less tend. focus of gravitation is justice. If humanity be not a vain dream, if all our impressions, all our thoughts, are not pure hallucinations, one capital fact dominates the history of man -that every kindred and people yearns after justice. The very life of humanity is but one long cry for that fraternal equity which still remains unattained. Listen to the words, uttered nearly three thousand years ago, of old Hesiod, answering before hand all those who contend that the struggle for existence dooms us to eternal strife. "Let fishes, the wild beasts and birds, de vour one another-but our law is justice."

Yet how vast is the distance that separates us from the justice invoked by the poet in the very dawn of history! How great is the progress we have still to make before we may rightfully cease comparing ourselves with wild creatures fighting for a morsel of carrion! It is in vain that we pretend to be civilized, if civilization be that which Mr. Alfred R. Wallace has drescribed as "the harmony of individual liberty with the collective will." It is really too easy to criticise contemporary so ciety, its morals, its conventions, and its aws, and to show how much its practices fall short of the ideal justice formulated by thinkers and desired by peoples. To repeat stale censures is to risk being called mere dis-claimers, scatterers of voices in the marketplace. And yet so long as the truth is not heard, is it not our duty to go on speaking it in season and out of season? A cincere man owes to himself to expose the frightful barbarity which prevails in the hidden dephts of a society so outwardly well ordered. Take for instance, our great cities, the leaders of civilization, especially the most populous, and in many respects, the first of allthat immense London, who gathers to herself the riches of the world, whose every warehouse is worth a king's ransom; where are to be found enough and more than enough, of food and clothing for the needs of the teeming millions that throng her streets in greater number than the ants which swarm in the never-ending labyrinth of their subterranean galleries. yet the wretched who cast longing and hung yer the witchest wind cast of wealth may be counted by the hundreds of thousands; by the side of untold splendors, what is consuming the vitals of entire populations, and it is only at times that the fortunate for whom these treasures are amassed hear, as a muffled wai-ling, the bitter cry which rises eternally from those unseen dephts. Below the London of fashion is a London accursed, a London whose only food are dirt-stained fragments, Accepted in its integrity by simple souls, does not this principle seem to imply as a necessary consequence the social state formulated by modern socialists: "To each according to his needs, from each according to among them who live and die in dampness

and gloom without once raising their eyes to

What boots it to the wretched outcast, burning with fever or craving for bread, that the Book of the Christians opens the doors of heaven more widely to him than to the rich? Besides his present misery all these promises of happiness, even if he heard them, would seem the bitterest irony. Does it not appear, moreover,—judging by the society in which the majority of preachers of the gos-pel most delight,—that the words of Jesus are reversed, that the "Kingdom of God" is the guerdon of the fortunate of this world,a world where spiritual and temporal government are on the best of terms, and religion leads as surely to earthly power as to heavenly bliss? "Religion is a cause for preferment, irreligion a bar to it," as a famous commentator of the Bible, speaking to his sovereign, said it ought to be.

When ambition thus finds its account in piety, and hypocrites practice religion in order to give what they are pleased to call their conscience a higher mercantile value, is it surprising that the great army of the hopeless should forget the way to church? Do they deceive themselves in thinking that, despite official invitation, they would not always be well recieved in the "house of God?" Without speaking here of churches whose sittings are sold at a price, is it nothing to the poor to feel themselves arrested on the threshold by the cold looks of well clad men and the tightened lips of elegant women? True, no wall bars the passage, but an obstacle still more formidable stops the way,—the dark atmosphere of hatred and disgust which rises between the disinherited and the world's elect.

Yet the first word uttered by the minister when he stands up in the pulpit is "Bretha word which, by a characteristic differentiation, has come to mean no more than a potential and theoretic fraternity without practical reality. Nevertheless, its primitive sense has not altogether perished, and if the outcast that hears it be not stupefied by lunger, if he be not one of those boneless beings who repeat idiotically all they hear, what bitter thoughts will be suggested by this word "Brethren," coming from the lips of men who feel so little its force! The impressions of my childhood surge back to my mind: When I heard for the first time an earnest and eager voice beseech the "Father who is in heaven" to give us "our daily bread," it seemed to me that by a mysterious act a meal would descend from on high on all the tables of the world. I imagined that these words, repeated millions and milliards of times, were a cry of human brotherhood, and that each, in uttering them, thought of all I deceived myself. With some the prayer is

ses through the reeds Governments at least talk not the poor about fraternity; they ido not terment them with so sorry a jest. It is true that in some countries the jargon of courts compares the sovereign to a father whose subjects are his children, and upon whom he pours the inexhaustible dews of his love; but his formula, which the hungry may abuse by asking for bread, is no longer taken seriously. So long as Governments were looked upon as direct

sincere; with the greater part it is but an em-ty sound, a gust of wind like that which pas-

representatives of a heavenly Sovereign, holding their powers by the grace of God, the comparison was legitimate; but there are very few now that make any claim to this quasi-divinity. Shorn of the sanctions of reli-gion, they no longer hold themselves answerable for the general weal, contenting themselves instead with promising good admini-stration, impartial justice, and strict econo-my in the administration of public affairs.

Let history tell how these promises have been kept. Nobody can study contemporary politics without being struck by the truth of the words attributed alike to Oxenstierna and Lord Chesterfield: "Go my son, and see with how little wisdom the world is governed!" It is now a matter of common know-ledge that power, whether its nature be monarchic, aristocratic or democratic, whether it be based on the right of the sword, of inheritance, or of election, is wielded by men neither better nor worse than their fellows, but whose position exposes them to greater temptations to do evil. Raised above the crowd, whom they soon learn to despise, they end by considering themselves essentially superior beings; solicited by ambition in a thousand forms, by vanity, greed, and caprice, they are all the more easily corrupted that a rabble of interested flatterers is ever on the watch to profit by their vices. And posessing as they do a preponderant influence in all things, holding the powerful lever whereby is moved the immense mechanism of of the state-functionaries, soldiers, and police—every one of their oversight, their faults or their crimes repeats itself to infinity and magnifies as it grows It is only too true: a fit of impatience in a Sovereign, a crooked look, an equivocal word, may plunge nations into mourning and be fraught with disaster for mankind. English readers, brought up to a knowledge of Biblical lore, will remember the striking parable of the trees who wanted a king. The peaceful trees and the strong, those who love work and whom man blesses the olive that makes oil, the fig tree that grows good fruit, the vine that produces which cheereth God and man," refuse to reign; the bramble accepts, and of that noxious briar is born the flame which devours the cedar of Lebanon.

But these depositaries of power who are charged, whether by right divine or universal suffrage, with the august mission of dispensing justice, can they be considered as in any way more infallible, or even as impartial?

Can it be said that the laws and their interpreters show towards all men the ideal equality as it exists to the popular conception? Are the judges blind when there come before them the wealthy and the poor – Shylock, with his murderous knife, and the unfortunate, who has sold beforehand pounds of his flesh or ounces of his blood? Hold they always even scales between the king's son and the beggar's brat? That these magistrates should firmly believe in their own impartiali-ty and think themselves incarnate right in

soever they may be, they cannot forget that they belong to the rich and powerful, or to those, less fortunate, who are still on the lookout for preferment and honor. They are moreover blindly attached to precedent, and fancy that practices inherited from their forerunners must needs be right. Yet when we examine official justice without prejudice, how many iniquities do we find in official procedure! Thus the English are scandalized-and rightly so - by the French fashion of examining prisoners, those sacred beings who in strict probity ought to be held innocent until they are proved guilty; while the French are disgusted, and not without reas son, to see English justice, through the English government, publicly encourage treachery by offering impunity and money to the betrayer, thereby deepening the degradation of the debased and provoking acts of shame-ful meanness which children in their schools, more moral than their elders, regard with unfeigned horror.

Nevertheless law, like religion, plays only a secondary part in contemporary society. It is invoked but rarely to regulate the relations between the poor and the rich, the powertul and the weak. These relations are the outcome of economic laws and the evolution of a social system based on the equal ity of conditions.

Laissez faire! Let things alone! have said the judges of the camp. Careers are open; and although the field is covered with corpses, although conqueror stamps on the bodies of the vanquished, although by supply and demand, and the combinations and monopolies in which they result, the greater part of humanity is enslaved to the few, let things alone for thus has decreed fair play. It is by virtue of this beautiful system that a parenu, without speaking of the great lord who recieves whole counties as his heritage, is able to conquer with ready money-thousands of acres, expel those who cultivate his domain, and replace men and their dwellings with wild animals and rare trees. It is thus that a tradesman, more cunning intelligent, or, perhaps, more favored by luck than his fellows, is enabled to become master of an army of workers, and as often as not to starve them at his pleasure. In a word, commercial competition, under the paternal ægis of the law lets the great majority of merchants—the fact is attested by numberless medical inquests—adulterate

the prejudices of their class. How honest statistician he counts the slain as on the evening after a great battle. Judge by these figures. The mean mortality among the well-to-do is, at the utmost, one in sixty. Now the population of Europe being a third of a thousand millions, the average deaths, according to the rate of mortality among the fortunate, should not exceed five millions. They are three times five millions! What have we done with these ten million human beings killed before their time? If it be true that we have duties, one towards the other, are we not responsible for the servitude, the cold, the hunger, the miseries of every sort, which doom the unfortunate to untimely deaths? Race of Cains, what have we done with our brothers.

And what are the remedies proposed for the social ills which are consuming the very marrow of our bones? Can charity, as assert many good souls—who are answered in chorus by a crowds of egoists-can charity by any possibility deal with so vast an evil? True, we know some devoted ones who seem to live only that they may do good. In England, above all, is this the case. Among childless women who are constrained to lavish their love on their kind are to found many of those admirable beings whose lives are passed in consoling the afflicted, visiting the sick, and ministering to the young. We cannot help being touched by the exquisite benevolence, the indefagitable solicitude shown by these ladies towards their unhappy fellow creatures; but, taken even in their entirety, what economic value can be attached to these well-meant efforts? What sum represents the charities of a year in comparison with the gains which hucksters of money and hawkers of loans oftentimes make by the speculations of a single day? While Ladies Bountiful are giving a cup of tea to a pauper, or preparing a potion for the sick, a father or a brother, by a hardy stroke on the stock exchange or a successful transaction in produce, may reduce to ruin thousands of British workmen or Hindoo coolies. And how worthy of respect soever may be deeds of unostentatious charity, is it not the fact that the bestowal of alms is generally a matter of personal caprice, and that their distribution is too often influenced rather by the political and religious sympathies of the giver than by the moral worth of the recipient? Even were help always given to those who most need it, charity would be none the less tainted with the capital vice, that it infallibly provisions and drink, sell pernicious substances as wholesome food, and kill by slow poisoning, without one day neglecting their religious duties, their brothers in Jesus of doing a good thing, as if he conscious oness of doing a good thing, as if he extirpate in America, prevails in another form in every civilized country; for entire populations, placed between the alternatives of death by starvation and toils which they detest, are constrained to choose the latter. should firmly believe in their own impartiality and think themselves incarnate right in human shape, is quite natural; everyone puts on—sometimes without knowing it—the peculiar morality of his judges; yet judges, no more than priests, can withstand the influence of their position. They sense of what constitutes justice, derived from the average opinion of the age, is insensibly modified by

ble fruits of a wretched system, yet the best which a society of capitalists has to offer us! - From the Contemporary Review. (CONCLUDED NEXT WEEK.)

#### THE EDUCATED CLASSES.

Certainly no paper that I know of has exposed the shams, humbugs and crimes of our present mis-called social order more ruthlessly than "Liberty." It appeals more to the educated, the professional classes, and is for that reason more given to abstract discussions. But it is certain that just these classes must become radical before we can hope for success.-(Solidarity.

Listen, ye toilers! We have to wait until the educated, the professional classes become radical before we can hope for succes! All our efforts to convert our fellow workingmen are in vain if the preachers, the lawyers, the teachers, the physicians, artists, upper-class politicians, plute editors and the rest of the parasites are not with us! These very fellows, who have in former revolutions always shown their utter contempt for the workingmen as soon as it was safe for them to do so, who have caused the shedding of the blood of thousands of our comrades in France, who look down with contempt from their supposed higher plane and call us such pet names as "The mob," "Common herd," "The rabble," "Ignoramuses"; they have to be converted before we can hope for success, according to Comrade Edelman.

Now I, for one, differ with him. I assert that we do not need their help, at all; that we can get along nicely without their assistance; that there is enough commonsense practical knowledge among workingmen to dispense with the education acquired by the professional classes in their colleges. What does that amount to, after all? The object of college education is to learn how to make an easy living; how best to exploit the workingman, and not the advancement of science, of useful knowledge.

I do not see how Comrade Edelman can make such a statement. History shows us that they are always against the interests of the producing masses. They are a species of human parasite, and with few exceptions will never care to see the necessity for a radical change. Mankind moves like everything else, along the line of least resistance; and as long as a certain class makes a com fortable living under the present system, they will never make an effort to overthrow it. It is the poor, the hopeless, the desperate, the people who have nothing to lose and every thing to gain, who will force their way out of the present prison to freedom. We could wait till doomsday before the educated, the professional classes, the pseudo-plutocrats, come to our assistance. Shove them to the rear and on with the march.

EZEKIEL SLABS

## The Letter-Box.

U. TANNER, Cannon Hills, Minn.—We sent you some back numbers in which the named writers expressed their opinion about the subjects mentioned.

P. T., City.—You are right, but you must not forget that we have no editors and proof-readers like the daily papers. We have to set type, read proof, run the press; and make our living besides. You find the correction in this issue.

Mrs. M. P., City.—You believe in free love, but not in "that kind." Well, there is only one "kind" of free love, and that is when everybody can choose his or her own "kind." Prescription excludes freedom. If you prefer to live with one and the same man "for a lifetime" you can do so, but when others cannot do so, you should not interfere. But you are right when you say: In our present system we cannot always follow our inclinations.

S. M. B., Glenwood, Iowa—It is quite probable that a careful reading of anarchist literature would have a tendency to straighten out the manifest kinks in your "plan." and for that reason we are sorry you order THE FIRBRAND discontinued. You will not take offense the continue to send it until your letter with our comment appears.

DR. CARL BROCKMAN, Lore, Ia.—The review of your splendid pamphlet "Common Sense of the Twentieth Century" has been crowded out so far, but will appear in next issue.

We publish in this issue the first part of an article by Elysee Reclus. He is the renowned French geo-graper often mentioned by the Oregonian. He took an active part in the Paris commune and is at pres-est professor in the Free University lately established by radicals at Brussels, Belgium.

#### CORRECTIONS.

In the review of "Free Men in Love and Mar-riage," in last week's issue, the sentence, "In the same work I find the term shame used," read, "shame correctly expounded." Also, instead of "salutory property," read statutory property." The last sentence of the article in No. 12, headed "Legal Standing of a Wife," should read, "This seems to me a repetition of the Dred Scott decision."

#### THE FIREBRAND

Is published by a voluntary association of a few individuals whose means consist almost wholly of brains and muscle. It is not a close corporation; we want all the help we can get—brain, brawn and cash. Two or three of us have contributed nearly all the mechanical work, and we know of but one or two who have made a persistent effort to extend the irrulation. Up to date the subscriptions have a little more than met the necessary cash outlay, and we have got along very nicely until the last two weeks, when we had to hire help. It is now the busy season, and some of those who have been giving their time to the paper can do so no more; so il is necessary to make up the deficit by the greater activity of others.

In order that we may know just where we are at, all who are willing to contribute will begiven an opportunity to sign for a certain amount per week. There are two or three printers in the city who are in sympathy with the paper, and they might sign for so many hours work, instead of cash, which may be done at their own convenience, including evenings and Sundays.

THE COMMITTEE.

THE COMMITTEE.

THE sort of logic on which popular government

When I was a voter I was told that a vote presuposed an agreement to abide by the result, and that had no right to kick if conditions didn't suit me. I refused to vote, and then I was told that since I refused to exercise a choice I had no right to kick at what was given me. Now I want to know where I'm at in this sort of an arragment. Like the boy's trap, it "ketches'em goin' or comin'." J. H. M.

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