

THE FIREBRAND

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

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THE FIREBRAND

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UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE.

Continued from No. 17.

Nor could the parliamentary system yield other results. The community at large has not a single common interest, but it necessarily has many of a diverse and often opposite character, which cannot be regulated by the same individual or by the same assembly. Any authority which legislates on every subject and for everybody must needs be arbitrary and despotic; and the voter who imagines himself free and independent because he drops a ballot in the urn at election time, while on the other hand he tamely submits to any law that may be imposed upon him, is the victim of an illusion, and in reality he is a slave in whose hand has been placed a toy sceptre.

These remarks on parliamentarianism presuppose that the vote of the citizen is unfettered and enlightened. But what shall we say of the franchise exercised by a mob steeped in poverty, brutalized by ignorance and superstition, and at the mercy of a cunning minority in the exclusive possession of wealth and power, and which holds at its absolute disposal the means of existence indispensable to the majority? As a rule the poor elector is neither capable of voting with intelligence, nor free to vote as he wishes.

Without preliminary education, and destitute of the means for self-instruction, obliged to place implicit faith on what he reads in some irresponsible newspaper (assuming that he has the ability and the time to read), knowing nothing of men and things apart from his own narrow life, how can the workman know what things to ask from parliament, or through what channel to make his wants known? Is it possible for him to have any clear idea of the nature of a parliament?

Assuredly workmen and peasants, even the

most uneducated know far more than professors about political economy in things where their own interests are at stake: the things they see and touch, their work, their daily life. Most assuredly they can form an opinion on all questions that touch them, when put to them in a straightforward way. They know full well if they like their master, who has not done a stroke of work, to take the greater part of their labor. They know full well if they like military service or not. They would know well enough how to make use of the riches of their commune or country if they had the necessary data as to the disposable product, and as to the power of production and the needs of their fellow-countrymen. They would know how to teach their children to work. And they would learn very quickly all they do not know or do not understand if they were compelled to look after their own affairs when brought face to face with some pressing necessity. But if the questions put to them do not concern them, or if they are so complicated by foreign interests that they do not recognize them; if the most simple things are obscured by a technical terminology which turns politics into an occult science; if they have no time for study and for reflection, and if they do not feel the necessity of doing so, knowing, that whatever happens they will not be called upon to decide the question and that others are thinking for them; then their vote will be necessarily unconscious, as indeed is usually the case.

Supposing that a poor elector understood how he should vote, would he be really free to vote as he wished?

His life and that of his children are at the mercy of an employer, who can, by refusing the laborer work, reduce him to a state of starvation. And not only employers; but agents of the government and of the stronger parties have a thousand ways of avenging themselves by open or hidden means on the laborer who has not voted as they wished. On the other hand, a thousand promises, a thousand cajoleries, a thousand favors, may at any moment bring doubt into the soul of the worker, in bringing into conflict his con-

science with his tenderness and duty to his family, and compel him either to sell his conscience or refuse those he loves a life a little less miserable, or at least a temporary relief of their daily sufferings. The vote is secret our opponents say. But what does that mean when the employers, or the government, or the parties can make their dependants vote under the inspection of their agents, and can by some tricks of the trade control each vote, or even only make believe that they can control it. What is the use of secret balloting, when the very fact of exacting that it should be secret, is a proof of hostility to the employers, and makes the man liable to be hated and sent away from the workshop or farm? And it is worse when an employer makes all his dependants conjointly answerable for the election of a deputy by threatening the stoppage of the works or some other retaliation, as has often happened in large establishments that take in government contracts and that need a deputy to protect their interests. Then it happens that the workers watch and spy one another for fear the candidate of their employer should not succeed. So corrupting is the fear of misery! The proletarian masses may revolt and risk everything in the hopes of an immediate victory, but with great difficulty they risk their work, that is to say their bread and peace, when a struggle is at issue which offers them only a promise, a hundred times belied, of a slow and distant amelioration, and which leaves the combatants, be they victorious or vanquished, at the mercy of the employer. No, the poor elector is neither conscious nor free: and it would not be possible for him to be otherwise. If misery did not brutalize men, if economic pressure and the fear of to-morrow did not make men submissive and timid, if in fact the people were conscious of their rights and were determined to enforce them, they would not need to be looking for men, more or less capable and honest, to entrust with the carrying out of their claims. They have always the means of emancipating themselves to hand and they would use them. The work-

(Concluded on fourth page)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

1. GIVEN: the present revolution, any time within the next ten years is a success on all lines of reform; liberty (without any exception clause); the woman suffrage question; finance; transportation; the land question, with all its resources; the utter extinction of all monopolies, monarchies, plutocracies, oligarchies; what would the masses do with the situation?

2. Reforms move slow, except at the flood tide of necessity: take a retrospective view for ten centuries in the religious and political worlds; has not the reaction in each case been worse for the masses?

3. Must not the intellect of the masses be brought to a certain evolutionary point, before any reform can become permanent?—I do not mean the intellect of the few because that condition begets tyrants, oligarchs, exploiters.

THE above questions were sent to me, and I was requested to answer them through THE FIREBRAND.

They are pretty big questions to tackle, and I make no pretension of being seer or oracle. However, I am willing to record my ideas about them, though I do not wish what I write to be taken as my final conclusions, for I may think differently respecting them next year. What I think to day is not not in every instance what I thought yesterday.

1. The present "line of reform," if every "ist" and "ism" is included, are so at variance with one another, that I cannot figure out a way for all of them to be successful at one time; and if "liberty (without an exception clause)" were miraculously thrust upon us within ten years, the masses would—"its too technical for me!"

Human beings and every other growing thing, whether animal or vegetable, that I have observed, are, to a great extent, creatures of HABIT.

Primitive man, according to all accounts, was, intellectually, but a trifle in advance of the lower animals. His possibilities were certainly greater. Man's advancement is unquestionably limited only by his powers for developing his perceptive faculties, and by his capabilities for overcoming habit.

"Liberty, without an exception clause," means the reaching by man of a state of perfect knowledge relating to his associations with his fellowmen, and the acquisition of sufficient insight to enable him to unerringly adapt himself to his surroundings; it means the total destruction of all our customs pertaining to industry and exchange, for Authority either entirely and directly oversees the minutest details of the work of production and the disposal of the finished product, or brings to bear upon the toilers a strong indirect influence; it means a complete transformation in our habits of living, for we are enslaved by our appetites, by our styles of dress and ornamentation, by our religious

and political gods, and by social conventionalities, all of them connected, more or less closely, with our commercial serfdom.

The handling of the "situation" of "liberty without an exception clause," by the masses, composed of perfect individuals, would perhaps be similar ten years hence to the handling of the situation a hundred years later; but what the probable conduct of unblemished humanity might be, my imagination refuses to portray.

The questioner may object to the scope given to the question; I defend the apparent licence taken by reminding him that the opinions of different persons regarding "liberty, without an exception clause" are bound to vary. Quite likely there are some people who suppose (I'll not say think) that that precise degree of liberty is granted us by "our constitution." But let us come down a little and look at the reforms specified.

Woman suffrage agitation is good in so far as it dispels the notion of woman's natural inferiority to man, lessens the restrictions that retard her development, and enlarges man's conception of truth; in short, the agitation is beneficial when it increases freedom of thought and action. As a panacea for the aggregation of ills of our distracted society—failure, is branded on all sides of it, for suffrage, male or female, is merely a bait fastened to the political machinery to coax the populace to tolerate the government trap.

That division of the "rabble" to whom liberty signifies more than "equality before the law" is determined on the extermination of the governmental species of despotism.

The admission of women into political jobs would diminish not at all the principles of tyranny inseparable from the state.

If I must submit to dictatorship, that is, be a slave, it is unimportant to me whether I have one or many rulers, or what their sex, color, creed or nationality may be. The only interesting feature I find attached to the affair is the amount of authority assumed and exercised by the usurpers.

"Finance reformers" are working for the introduction of a "safe, sound and flexible" currency, or really "honest money" not of the "gold-bug" nor "silver-bug" stripe. A hopeless task; for the reason that the instant a price is put upon a product, dishonesty begins. The money contrivance is a fraud to start with, and metal or paper "promises to pay" try in vain to hide the fact from prying eyes, or evade the reckoning time fails not to bring, for "nature is true, and not a lie."

It is utterly impossible to measure accurately the value of one person's labor, for many fingers help mix every industrial pie; and there must always be a percentage of the results due to the accumulated mental ac-

men and physical expertness of ancestors, and to training bestowed upon the workers by their immediate predecessors. If, as so many people insist, each laborer should have undisputed possession of every article his toil produces, or its equivalent in money or other product, when his part shall have been picked out from the inextricable tangle, the miscellaneous ancestral shares must decay for want of claimants, or some one will get more of the spoil than he is entitled to.

The custom of hoarding may have easily begun, with the attempt to parcel off each one's plunder, no matter how procured, by handicraft, priestcraft, statecraft, or commercial craft. The shrewdest hoarder is always "Somebody," and money imperialism is not a mild form of oppression. The hoarding of fictitious wealth, —deeds, bonds, money etc.—can be more extensively indulged in than the laying up of perishable goods.

Price and debt are boon companions.

There never was an honest debt, for the "debtor is a slave." Without price on which to hang a cumbrous and intricate exchange system, money with "intrinsic value," "flat money," or Labor Exchange "certificates" would be nonentities, and "finance reform" ditto. Price precedes and insures profit (and loss); possession of piled up profits propagates power; power is privilege to pinch. Finance reform is one of the straws the drowning Pinchers are just now catching at. If they are to keep their heads above water, the herd must be made to fight over something: national pride, religious prejudices, popular suffrage, labor caste, the money question with its welcome chance for hairsplitting—anything to keep the cattle bellowing and pawing the earth, and an assortment of goods is required to urge them to extremities.

I see but one way to settle the labor question; repudiate all titles and claims except those of occupancy and use. Rent of every description is objectionable. Interest on mortgage, single tax, and the tribute the hired man pays to his employer, are no whiter than the plain, unvarnished, old fashioned rent.

The difficulties which beset transportation might be overcome by a general strike of the employees in conjunction with the farmers, factory hands, etc., etc.; a strike, not for palliatives for their hard lot, but for the DISPOSSESSION OF THE EXPLOITERS. When the masses have taken their own, conduct transportation and all other industrial concerns on the principle of, "From each according to ability; to each according to need." No state supervision if you please. We cannot afford the luxury of public "servants" much

longer; besides they are as troublesome as the impudent house servants we hear so much about. Transportation appliances are but a fraction of the tools that should be common stock for the convenience of the whole people.

With the "utter extinction of monopolies" must come the extinction of "monarchies, plutocracies and oligarchies," for the latter are merely monopolistic variations.

Governments of every despoism, from popery and czarism down to "pure democracy," are built upon profits, though they may be called by other names; commercial monopoly, likewise, attains supremacy from profits. Power and glory inevitably keep pace with the filling of the strong box and the swelling of the purse. When power becomes a boast, depend upon it, a full purse is behind it.

As fast as the exploited see the fraud of one kind of profit-mongering, new institutions are invented and introduced by stealth.

2. My view of the religious and political world for ten centuries back is exceedingly defective my opportunities for historical research having been very limited.

In the narrations of those time that I have seen, precious little space was wasted telling about the masses. Apparently they were "not in it." But if permitted to judge the past by present conditions, may we not consistently infer that every upheaval in society transpired simply because the old social mill had ground the last thing that could run through it, and the effort to force it to do further duty terminated in a smash up?

Why should we conclude that "the reaction in each case" was worse for the masses? What would have been their fate had the old order been retained to eternity, the order not fixed in the exact groove where it was located when that break occurred, but persisting in its onward march in the geomstric ratio natural to it?

The modern commercial mill has ground the last spark of obtainable profit out of the living masses, and is at this moment run by the fictions of presumable profits of the masses yet to come. It has worked every thing in sight, and nearly all speculative futures. Can we keep on forever in the old way? Still, we are lothe to give it up. The reverence of the masses of former years for the clergy and nobility is counterfeited by their later reverence for DEALERS. If the Labor Exchange succeeds in exposing that folly, it will perform a good deed. Has not our speculative "lie and the burden of evil it has brought, been passed on; shifted from back to back, and from rank to rank; and has it not now landed on the dumb lowest

rank, who with spade and maddock, with sore heart and empty wallet, daily comes in contact with reality and can pass the cheat no farther?" The speculative lie is a new shape for the Old Lie of dominion and subjection that mankind has ever been proclaiming and disclaiming. When it has been spurned, was it worse for the masses? I think not.

3. If the people's achievements depend upon the action of their minds, and I think that to be the case, then their intellectual developement is the important factor in reforms.

A body of revolutionists cannot hold the ground they gain, if the lack comprehension of the new opportunities, or alertness in taking advantage of them. Our forefathers proved that for us, for although they threw off the yoke of one pack of oppressors, they turned the tiniest bit in their tracks and bent for the new yoke of the taskmasters in their midst.

The monopoly of "learning" is one of the hardest to combat. Artificiality is so easily taken for developement; then, too, a onesided cultivation of the brain organism is the rule. "Intellectual tyrant" sounds paridoxical and he is a reality owing to deficient culture of the "bunch" of universal good will, or the absolute ignoring of that mental peculiarity, and also to the fostering care lavished upon a number of the apartments that generate self-esteem. The latter "bunch" is a curious combination. The egoist may rival the clown in ridiculousness, if he be over anxious to exhibit his fine person or superior education; he may be a worshiped or hated despot, and conventionally circumspect; or he may be a consistent and persistent revolutionist, so tenacious of his conception of truth as to appear foolhardy to the branch of egoists of smaller caliber.

The means for "education" has been cornered as far as possible by influential men, or the despotic division of egotists. Notice how actively interested they are in the schools. See the colleges and universities endowed by multi-millionaires. Listen to the information Macauley gives us with reference to the instruction of the well-to-do in the last quarter of the seventeenth century: "The liberal education of the youth passed almost entirely into the hands of the Jesuits, and was conducted by them with conspicuous ability. They appeared to have discovered the precise point to which intellectual culture could be carried without fear of intellectual emancipation." It is safe to say that the Jesuits were not the original discoverers, and the art was not with their decline of popularity.

The masses have been drilled in the doct-

rine of "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" in season and out of season, but fighting courage must have for an associate courage to abandon customs, or the killing will be of no avail.

VIROQUA DANIELS.

The Work of Propoganda.

It may be interesting to the comrades to know how the propoganda is progressing on the Western Coast.

There is here a rich field for work. "Times" and the mental condition of the people make propoganda very easy work. I found that one comrade in Tacoma—comrade Clemencie, who has a little tailor shop at 1542 R. R. st.—had, in less than eighteen month, started such a wave of anarchist sentiment that a goodly number of persons are avowed anarchists, while many more seemed "almost persuaded." The Glennis Co-operative Colony has, through his interest in its welfare, and his exposition of anarchist principles, become much nearer an anarchist settlement than a nationalist colony, as originally designed. He has also carried the propoganda into the Free Church, and convinced one of the Episcopal ministers that he—the minister—is an anarchist-communist. This minister is now preaching a series of sermons to prove that Jesus Christ was an anarchist-communist. The revolutionary sentiment around Tacoma is quite strong, although no public meetings are held—except an occasional "silver" meeting.

Yet the propoganda is growing.

In Seattle I found considerable activity in pushing various schemes, such as the "single tax" "free silver" and the referendum. Luckily the state socialists were scattered and not working under the leadership of the "old old socialist labor party" as dictator De Laon calls it. Many of them are reasonable and ready to learn of something better. Some of them were anxious to know more about anarchism and where to get literature. The populists and more reasonable single-taxers were usually willing to hear what anarchism is and gave it favorable consideration. The revolutionary spirit is strong and while the "silver craze" has but little effect on the thinking public it is stirring many of the business and professional men into willingness to learn the cause of economic and industrial troubles. Almost any working-man can give them pointers.

Before I went to Seattle the only propogand carried on in the city was a little by the German comrades. No newsdealer in the city had any anarchist literature of any description. Although only a few copies of THE FIDELERAND had been going there I heard it mentioned in a number of places and no one condemned it. We formed a club, to be called the Free Thought Club, for the purpose of free discussion and agitation, the club to meet in the University Park every Sunday afternoon.

At Whatcom I found the people blue enough to shame an indigo bag. Nevertheless when they heard something different from the free silver and fiat money humbugery they became interested and wanted to know more about anarchism and its purposes. At Fairhaven, an adjoining town, I found the people reduced to the "clam diet" in reality. They dig clams, catch fish and chop driftwood for their own use. When their clothes are worn out "active resistance" will be a necessity, and I was informed by the shoemaker, whose shop is headquarters, that they had "their knives sharp and their guns primed." A clear-headed anarchist among them could do much for the propoganda. A Methodist preacher in Seat-

tle who had to leave the pulpit because he became too populist, in speaking of his experience among the farmers along the Snoqualme river said he could not get subscribers to the populist papers he was canvassing for because, the farmers said, they were "not radical enough."

What we lack in the Puget Sound country is a few good workers who could devote their time to the propaganda. Owing to comrade Morris' necessary absence I had to return to Portland.

Henry Addis.

(Continued from first page.)

ers would refuse to work for their masters; the taxpayers would refuse to pay taxes; the soldiers would refuse to obey, and thus would be destroyed at one blow, private property and the political state, the two links of the chain that binds and torments mankind.

Having thus demonstrated by facts and arguments that popular suffrage, such as is understood by the parliamentary system, is powerless as an instrument of emancipation, it is plain why the privileged classes, who formerly feared it and fought it to death, have now found in it an effectious means of prolonging their rule and of calming revolutionary tempests. When it becomes impossible for them to keep the people in subjection by brutal force, and the lies of the priests have no longer the power to make them accept misery as a law made by God, and do not fear the police, then there is only one way of keeping them enslaved; and that is to give them an illusion of liberty, by making them believe that they are masters, and that the social institutions are made by them and can be altered by their will.

The bourgeoisie shows political talent in conceiving to the people the right of suffrage, that would only be the right of choosing one's master when exercised in a condition of consciousness and independence, and that, in the present condition of ignorance and economic subjection, is only a vulgar mystification with which imposters cheat their consciences and speculate on the enthusiasm of others.—Enrico Malatesta, in Liberty, London.

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 circulation. 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 it is necessary to make up the deficit by the greater activity of others.

THE COMMITTEE.

NO NATIONALITIES.

The fact is, as individualism suppresses individuality, so nationalism suppresses all that is worth keeping in the special elements which go to make up a real and not an artificial nation. The sham community of the present—the nation—is formed for purposes of rivalry only, and consequently suppresses all minor differences that do not help it to supremacy over other nations. The true community of the future will be formed for livelihood and the development of all human capacities, and consequently would avail itself the varieties of temperament caused by differences of surroundings which differentiate the races and families of mankind.—WILLIAM MORRIS, London.

Self development is greater than self-sacrifice.—GRANT ALLEN.

The Letter-Box.

N. H., UNION, OR.—It was a slight mistake on Sol. Smith's part. Fitch is not a Secularist, but believes in public appropriations for sectarian purposes. He has been a constant and bitter fighter of the Anarchists, because the latter considered him from the beginning as a politician and office-seeker.

S. A. P., PHILADELPHIA, Pa.—We agree with you. Only a woman who would sell herself would answer such an advertisement. No one did answer it. A member of the group inserted it. None of the rest of us agree with him on the subject.

D. Y. Seattle, Wash.—We have not received copy, two months, and suppose it has suspended. The groups that favored consolidating it and THE FIREBRAND will probably help us a little more.

I. Rudash, N. Y.—Your letters, containing two dollars in all, were received in due time.

We are late in getting out this issue, but when I give the reasons, I think, all our subscribers and the comrades generally will not find fault. When I arrived in Portland, I found the office in a condition of chaos; no work done toward getting the paper out, part of the last issue still undistributed; money I had sent in had been intercepted and diverted into other channels; a lot of job work to do to square office debts, and myself made sick twice during the week by improper food. But we are about square again and hope to be out a little in advance of our regular publication day regularly soon.

Now if anyone who reads this can appreciate the conditions under which we are working, and wishes to help get the paper in good shape again, we will gladly accept such assistance as they may see fit to render, no matter in what form it may come.

Henry Addis.

LUCIFER THE, LIGHTBEARER, stands for light against darkness; for freedom against slavery; for freethought, free speech, free press, free mails, free land, free currency, free trade, free manhood, and—above all—free womanhood and motherhood.

Published at 116 E Fourth St., Topeka, Kansas, With the FIREBRAND \$1.25 a year.

Comrades will please send in notices of any and all meetings of groups, clubs, or meetings that have free discussions on economic questions.

THE FIREDRAND CLUB, meets next Saturday evening, at the intersection of Third and Ash streets.

FIRST SPIRITUAL SOCIETY, G. A. R. Hall, conference meeting every Sunday at 11 a. m. Progressive Lyceum at 12:30

FREE THOUGHT CLUB, Seattle, Washington, meets every Sunday at 2 p. m. in University Park.

FIRST FREE CHURCH, Tacoma, Washington. Class in Social Studies meets every Sunday at 12:30. W. J. Thompson, leader.

ANARCHIST JOURNALS.

THE TORCH, 127, Ossulton St., London, N.W.

FREEDOM, 7, Lamb's Conduit St., London, W.C.

LIBERTY, 7, Beadon Road, Hammersmith, London, W.

THE ANARCHIST, D.J. Nicoll, Broomhall St. Sheffield.

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LES TEMPS NOUVEAUX, -J. Grave, 140, Rue Mouffetard, Paris.

LA SOCIALE.—E. Pouget, 23, Rue des trois Freres, Paris. France.

ALL comrades who publish newspapers, reviews, pamphlets, songs, or any literature with reference to anarchism and socialism, are requested to send at least one copy to Mr. A. HAMON, 132 Avenue de Cliche, Paris, France, who intends to use them for sociological study.

SOLIDAIRTY, the fearless and energetic advocate of Anarchist-Communism, is again being published in New York, at 50 East First street. Price 60 cents per year. Send all money to R. Edelmann, Arlington, New Jersey.

Anything More My Lord?

By LOIS WAISEBROOKER.

Dealing with the population question and the use of contracepts. Extracts:

"Has not the miner's wife as good a right to be a mother as the wife of the millionaire? Certainly she has, and a moral right to enough of the world's wealth to make her comfortable as a mother, but after having robbed her of this right, it is no proposed that it be made the basis of still further robbery. When women's place and work, together with the higher uses of sex come to be rightly understood, no prospective mother will lack any possible comfort."

"What we need to do is to develop ourselves, to unfold and round out our own natures, to surround ourselves with all that tends to do this; and this not for the sake of children, but because of the love of so doing, and we need to take no thought, to have no fear that our children will not follow the law if like is producing like."

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