

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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WHAT IS TRUTH?

"THERE is one road to peace' and that is truth:"
That means, "an eye for eye, a tooth for tooth?"
Did not the age of chivalry indite,
In letters red, that might makes truth and right?

Knights' struggles mad, were marvels to record
Of brutish force and cunning, any lord
Of earthly state might glory in. I trow
If sized our times to fit, they'd surely "go."

If might is TRUTH, and truth's the road to peace,
Then we from strife, may snatch a quick release.
We'll snuff out life as did our lords before!
Are less like beasts, and revel not in gore?

Come! light the torch, and throw the little bomb!
You number more than masters, ten to one.
Why craven be, and longer wear the yoke?
You have your might! though you be "common folk."

Your masters mow you down in righteous (?)
wrath,—

Fools! do they think there is no aftermath?
Twice fools! they tell the underlings they hire,
"The devil's whipped, if whipped at all, with fire."

But hearken friends; do they ne'er teach what's
false?

And, must you dance, eternally, death's waltz?
Now, don't you see, the devil's home is hell,
His daily food is fire?—he loves it well!

And, wanted he, by centuries of use;
The heat wherein he'd play at fast and loose,
Would sizzle you!—'Tis but another trap.
You match his skill with fire? A likely hap!

In strategy, deception and brute force,
He has no peer; in fact, he is their source.
And 'circumvent the tricky de'il with tricks,
Will leave a man of honor in bad fix!

Oh! what is truth? We peck, and prod, and pry;
Our truth to-day is but tomorrow's lie!
We flutter 'round some artificial light;
Now hope, now rage, now mourn life's darksome
night.

Can we evade untruth's uproarious sway
By one grand leap? Must carnage clear the way,
Or merely be accessory thereto?
A bloody brace, with courage to imbue?

Is murder truth, howe'er it may be done?—
In ancient hists, by modern galling gun,
By stinting food, with clubs, by "accident,"
Or "mob's" revolt, on liberty intent!

What did we gain by slaughter in times past?
Where reason swayed, there, only, we held fast.
Our idols we in fury battered down,
Then, penitent, avenged us on—the crown!

If in the hearts of burdend, sweating slaves,
Predominates the wish to kneel to knaves,
They'll squabble o'er the angle, that shall be
Conventional thenceforward, for the knee!

But if they know subjection is a lie;
Then help them, friends, the customs to espy,
That create kings, by white'er names they're
known,

Be't president, or Emperor of LOAN.

In "vested rights of SURPLUS, large or small,
Are rulers bred. They grow from short to tall,
And arrogant—as time puffs up their "pile;"
Tithes, taxes, fees, and profits, make them smile.

If Freedom's truth, then rattle of the claims.
Repudiate, outright, fititious GAINS.
Now, lend your ear: Dominion sits in state,
Where PROPERTY uprears its regal pate.

VIROGIA DANIELS.

Lake City, Modoc Co., Cal., June 2, 1895.

FREE SPEECH.

Oh my! The Chief of Police (under in-
struction no doubt) warned Brothers Cooney
and Puckett, and myself, that our street
speaking would no longer be allowed.

Oh my! Oh my! here in Portland, the
city of boasted liberty, a city of which I have
more than once bragged of its freedom, no
one is to be allowed to speak on the streets
unless they go at it "gentlemanly" !! ?? !! ??

What did we do? We went to our accus-
tomed place on Third and Ash streets, and
spoke just the same. No attempt at arrest
was made and threats of interference by the
crowd, in the event of such attempt, were
quite numerous.

But a serious matter confronts us. The
corner of Sixth and Washington has been
dedicated to Plutocracy, and public speak-
ing is not to be allowed. Now, as soon as
circumstances are favorable we will test the
sacredness of that corner.

By the way! when a man's evidence is
thrown out of court for incompetency, is
he competent to supervise the morals of the
city, (as chief of police) even through his
policemen, detectives and stool pigeons?

Better keep an eye on the two young like-
lies, who have been acting as stool-pigeons
in our meetings. The Willamette cleanseth
from all sin.

Lets have a Fourth of July demonstration.
One in which the Declaration of Independ-
ence, that grand old revolutionary document,
will again receive the attention it deserves.

Lets orate on the right of REVOLUTION,
and its necessity, and how best to work a
THOROUGH REVOLUTION; one that will sweep
away every vestage of privilege and oppres-
sion, and MAKE ALL PERSONS FREE, without
regard to race, sex or other condition.

We can do it if we'll try. Why not try?

There is nothing like determination when
you have an enemy to overcome. It is
better than guns and swords, some times, for
without it the guns and swords can avail but
little, while with it much less destructive
means can avail much.

If we show determination to meet when
and where we please, asking no questions,
our right to do so will be recognized by the
authorities, as well as the populace.

The weather is good now, and will be for
some months to come. Let us "make hay
while the Sun shines," by keeping up open
air meetings, on the street corners and in
the parks, until the rainy season dampens
our ardor, or the ardor of our audiences.

The comrades all over the North West
can well afford to "keep a hammering," for
more persons are anxious to hear the gospel
of discontent than ever before.

The Salvation Army is not in it, in Port-
land, any more. Their drum fails to attract
a crowd when anything else is going on to
engage public attention. How to fill their
stomachs is of more interest to most people,
than how to "save their souls."

H. A.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT.

PART I

In order to obtain equitable social life the collectivity should operate productively. In order to make this proposition feasible human society should operate from a mutual, voluntary basis. Were the present producing factors released from the arbitrary environment that now prevails, they would certainly cease to give birth to the major portion of the present so-called utilities. This only shows the irrational, pent up state of the present un-social system, and that the greater portion of the life forces are being expended at a virtual loss, from a standpoint of real utility; human enjoyment. A portion of humanity are expending their energies in a feverish attempt to fit themselves into a slavish environment, while another part are expending theirs in the support and further development of this non-essential system.

This absurd spectacle of a conscious heterogeneous agent avoiding the line of least resistance, is gratifying to but a few powerful beneficiaries, who naturally desire to see the system perpetuated. Few people can entertain the assumption that humanity is yet a savage horde. This unnatural mode of association must then be a misconception of the true relations that should obtain under a just, equitable social arrangement. Liberty unmistakably presents its distorted spirit everywhere and seems to be a desirable feature in the future society. It is certainly something that any and all can properly lay claim to. The idea of enslaved humanity should then be to ascertain the fundamental basis of individual liberty. This much disputed question can only be settled by consulting and conforming to empiricism; for if truth fails to cast a ray of light, then may we expect a hopeless sea of virtual chaos to everlastingly be the plan of association.

Science can determine but two sources of causation; one is organic life, the other inorganic environment. The first in its developed stages is a perceptive, reflective, relatively responsible executive phenomenon, whilst the other is evidently an irresponsible yet powerful chemico-mechanical agent. Science cannot conclusively show the inorganic environment to have ever yet swerved, ever yet responded voluntarily to the vibrations of conscious desire. It is useless, then, to proclaim that prayer or belief contains utility where such determined stability prevails. This source is no respecter of personal desire, and the feature of arbitrary, blind authority is alike suicidal. We should be assured of knowledge where life is confronted with such powerful, influencing environment. Causation is paramount. Diminutive and infallible authori-

arians should distinguish the fact that their absurd authority will not influence such potent factors, whose attitude can alone be determined and directed by experience and experiment, while the stern logic deducted therefrom is the only safe guide for humanity to follow. Authoritarians with their pretentious knowledge should evacuate, for while they domineer none can tell who will be the next victim of fatality in the blind mechanical shuffle. The deadly environment that results from authority will finally culminate and strike down such a superstitious humanity. This event is already in close critical proximity; the finger of time on the dial of this present, outrageous system, points unmistakably to capitulation and a reconstruction of human environment upon a basis of equity, else a maelstrom, a violent, chaotic human conflict. To uphold this statement it is necessary to outline to some extent the past history of humanity.

Today empiricism is experimentally pointing to the fact that all human life is but a development from a lower form of organic life. To further cover up our origin and development with the religio-angle dream is worse than useless, for with the evolutionary colossus yet operating, we should determine life's resources and tendencies if harmony is ever to displace the drifting disorder that now prevails. If individual initiative is ever to operate as the basis of human association, but recognizes the unity and the purpose of life, it should be sufficient to create human confidence and make a free association quite feasible. This recognition of the unity humanity will yet finally triumph and bring individual liberty to the constituent parts, and give birth to the control and free use of the soil. Humanity is now scientifically considered to be the last link the product of a series of previous and progressive steps embodying in the entirety a continuous chain of reproductive organic evolution; the first principle, or primary state, resolving itself into hypothetical obscurity. By tracing humanity's social-economic evolutionary chain in its fundamental aspects, a perception of our present status is made possible. We should then, be enabled to see the points where error enters into the evolutionary chain. We must admit the possibility of error, if we claim in the least degree executive responsibility. It is therefore self-evident to reflective mortals that this stage of the proceedings commenced when the reasoning faculties began to dawn; when after ages of evolutionary transition structural development at last attained to the prominence that enabled human life to control a greater perspective, and thus displace its blind, domineering instinctive habits with a more rational

perception. Commencing at this primitive environment is sufficiently low in the chain of human causation. Its description is dependent principally upon imagination, upon ungrounded hypothesis, and humanity in part knows to its sorrow that extreme idealists, like extreme egoists, are very queer, irrational mortals. In the primary stage they are very positive individuals, in the secondary and final stage extremely dangerous to the body politic. These erratic mortals seem very suddenly to become aware of their own existence, after mature consideration they seem not quite sure whether their identity does not really exclude the possibility of other lives existing. Certainly not without their domineering authority can others expect to move and develop in a proper, orderly society. They seem to think there is insufficient room inside infinity for aught but themselves. They feel that intuitively, imaginatively, they know everything, yet they are terribly fearful lest the monster empiricism should go further into real causation, and thus upset their dreamy phantasies and absurd fallacies. Their individual knowledge finding its empiric limit, their reasoning power merges into the impersonal—the imagination: This nucleus, this limitless sphere, becomes their ideal deity, their rootless root, and causeless cause. Absurdity is the only feature in this ideal sphere.

To be continued:

— JOHN PAWSON.

Literature.

We are in receipt of "Labor Exchange Solutions," by F. W. Cotton. It is a neat pamphlet published by the Progressive Thought Co., Olathe, Kansas, price 10 cents.

It is an excellent little work on the subject treated. In it the author shows how "business, as conducted in this age, is a gigantic failure." He also shows how a system of profits must lead to ruin. He says: "No capitalist can succeed unless he can have sufficient demand for his wares and sell them at a profit; and no people can pay profits, and sweep the market clean, for the reason that as producers they have been paid just enough to buy up the goods WITHOUT THE PROFITS."

On the money question he says: "Government legal tender is issued by one central body—the government—and consequently its issue is under the control of any party, clique or corporation combine which gets possession of the government or can influence its policy. . . . Government money is a legal tender and encourages the continuation of legal tender laws and all the evil tendencies arising therefrom."

He shows how the workers can unite and rid themselves of the money loaning octopus. I can heartily recommend this book to all who take an interest in the co-operative movement.

The "Organizer's Guide" is a new book by E. Z. Esnst, announced in "L. E. Solutions." It "contains many valuable suggestions, and answers to questions." Price 10c. Olathe, Kansas.

THE MARRIAGE INSTITUTION.

ARE the marriage relations considered by the devotees of that "time honored institution," or is it the marriage CEREMONY to which sacredness is attached? Ah! there's the rub! We Americans do not worship idols as the ignorant and miserable heathen do, but we are sticklers for ceremonies. The harmonious operating of natural law is of minor consequence when a ceremony is at stake.

Still, when marriage rites are taken into account, the FEES usually contribute their share (and no mean part, either) to the performance, although the legality of the transaction is not endangered in all localities by a failure to foot the bills; but what an unappreciative and rascally fellow he is, to be sure, who evades the payment for—a wife! Does not the law literally bestow upon him this woman to love and to cherish?—and uphold him in confiscating the proceeds (in property or service) of her labor? He who begrudges the trifling sum required to pacify the law, and insure recognition by society of his "respectability," either a dolt or the personification of avarice!

"Once upon a time," when death overtook a poor mortal, his mourning friends placed a coin between his lips to induce the invisible ferryman to becomingly transport him across the "dark river." Unsophisticated souls! How easily we of modern times see that those people were hoaxed out of their wearily earned coppers. Had they lived a hundred years later, prior to giving up the ghost, they would have hired some of the Lord's satellites to "read their titles clear, to mansions in the skies;" or they would, perforce, have divided their scanty stores and have passed it over to a reverend gentleman when a child was born so it could be regularly christened, and not named off-hand like a horse or cow. The christening mummeries included an item worth remembering; the child's spirit was safely switched off the track that leads to perdition. The blessings of the "holy fathers" at the nuptial ceremonies was, no doubt, spontaneous and fervid in proportion to the size of the prospective requital for the service, etc. etc.; at every important turn in life, or one that could be conceived by any stretch of the imagination to be important. You reverent adherents to the institution of marriage, do you see in it any similarity to those institutions of "the good old times?"

Did you ever hear of a county clerk, who issues the marriage licence, or the priest, preacher or J. P., who repeats the customary formula that legally binds the couple, did you ever hear of any of these beneficiaries

giving the "happy pair" the slightest information about the forces of sex, social purity, prenatal influences or heredity? Is not the "tying of the knot" a purely perfunctory and ritualistic affair, done solely for the FEES? Then why does society look upon it as such a weighty matter? Is it not a case of the exploited worshipping the "letter?"

I shall leave to those who defend legal marriage flummeries the pleasant office of enumerating the reasons for retaining the institution, while I undertake to point out a few of its objectionable phases.

The promise exacted from the contracting parties, that they will live together till "death do part," whether the union prove to be "for better or for worse," is in the last degree revolting to a person whose dislikes are tense. It is simply preposterous to demand a promise of that sort two individuals who cannot possibly foresee the probable alterations in their temper and temperament, brought about by the inevitable change in their habits, cares, and environment generally. To compel the fulfillment of the promise is monstrous. If, under certain galling conditions AND UPON THE PAYMENT OF A PRICE, the promise may be set aside, what gross absurdity to require it.

The law by causing the wife to be dependent on the husband for even the common necessities of life, subjects her to his will, just as truly as the day laborer is subject to his master (employer. What can be worse than sex slavery?

PROPERTY, not morality, is the bulwark of the marriage institution. All the evils of any age are interdependent.

Sexual intercourse, where love is absent, is prostitution; neither sex escapes the corrupting effects.

Sex subjugation, by direct brute force, or by any indirect means, is prostitution.

Legal enactments or ceremonies do not soften the facts.

VIROQUA DANIELS.

AN JURIDICAL OUTRAGE.

Another outrage another judicial misdeed is added to the long list of those already executed by our appointed authorities. By deciding against Eugene V. Debs and his associates, the Supreme Court of the United States has plainly complied with the wish of "Corporation Attorney Olney" and capital grabbers. This decision, which rests on law—no doubt—has sanctioned the verdict imposed upon Eugene V. Debs and the rest without giving them a fair and impartial trial by a jury, which is but essential in such cases.

As the matter stands now, Debs and his friends will have to go to jail though they have had no fair trial as yet. And still we are told that the workingmen have themselves to blame. Had they kept on striking within the limits of law, nothing of this kind would have resulted. And when the workingmen

answer, that to strike within the limits of law, is to fail and fail bitterly, they are told that "for this society does not care a straw." Who is that society, anyhow? If it does not care for the workmen, why, in the name of justice, should they care for society?

But let us proceed. The law, or rather the principles of law, as laid down by Judge Crosscup, gives each individual the individual right to work or quit work, provided that their quitting does not hurt anyone but those who quit. Thus if an aggregate of individuals go out to strike refusing to work for lower wages and their places are being occupied by others while they, their wives and their children starve in the midst of their own created wealth, they are within their limit,—for the capitalists have their own way. But if the workmen, while on a strike and seeing that their own fate, the fate of their own wives and their children, hangs on the decision of the hour, should resort to so-called violent means, they are condemned as rioters and must go to jail without a fair trial. Now again, if the same aggregate of individuals should refuse to work for low wages and the great corporation should be unable to obtain sufficient help to carry on the interstate commerce and the prompt transportation of mail, they would be guilty of CONSPIRACY and would have to go to prison anyhow.

HENRY A. KOCH.

Boston, May 29, 1895.

Correspondence.

Enclosed you will find 25 cents in stamps for your grand little paper. I have been receiving it for quite a little while, and have been intending to write you my heartfelt appreciation of it, but did not have stamps to enclose until the present. I can only send you at this writing half payment for a year's subscription. I am a poor man, a broken down soldier, and draw a small pension, so cannot aid such papers as yours, "Solidarity" and "Liberty," only to a very limited extent.

If my purse was equal to my desires, yours, and the other two papers spoken of, and other worthy ones unmentioned, would receive a "lift." I have been an Anarchist since I first knew what the term meant, and even before I knew what it meant, but under another name. I shall ever help, with what health and means I have, to spread the light of the only true remedy, that has power to redeem humanity from the millions of hells that engulf it, and bring peace on earth, prosperity and happiness, and the blessings of life to every human soul.

Success to you all in your grand work.

R. E. La Fetra

Summerland, Calif.

The Plaza looks very nice, with its smothered greensward, its fountains, and wire benches: And then, too, it has new cement walks. But its beauty is marred by the ugly iron posts, connected by miserable, black chains stretched all around it.

All this mixture of natural beauty and artificial ugliness, is set off, adorned, illuminated, and glorified by certain bits of white board, stuck along the walks, on which is to be seen in big letters:

KEEP OFF THE GRASS.

REVOLUTION.

"You are an anarchist and I am a catholic said my neighbor, but if the time should come you talk about, I would do my share in downing the rich; and I am quite certain god will forgive me, is it not better that a few should die than that hundreds of innocent people be slowly tortured to death, and drawing nearer to me and putting his clenched fist on my chest, he continued, the way people live these days, is just as if somebody pushes a dirk into their heart gradually inch by inch until they are dead. Let the revolution come I am ready for it; what do I care for the promises of the future when I am gone, now while I live and am able to enjoy the benefits of the proposed change, do I want it."

This is a sample of the revolutionary sentiment existing among the people, they are ready for a change, but how to bring it about, that is what puzzles the most of them. In spite of the siren song of the advocates of political action, the great mass has lost confidence in such means, experience has taught them that it is simply a case of turning one set of rascals out and putting another set into office, and being afraid that in case of a forcible revolution the rich will hire one half of the poor to shoot down the other half, as Jay Gould proposed to do, the workers are apparently waiting for something to turn up to help them out of the difficulty.

It is this, in order to make the coming struggle effective, we must without doubt offer better inducements than the enemy to get the great number of indifferent ones over to our side, there can be no greater inducement than that held out by anarchist the guarantee, that every man or woman can be his or her own boss and have all their needs and of those at the time depending on them satisfied to the fullest extent; to accomplish this, all trace of government must be removed, occupancy and use will be the onliest title to land, in short the means of distribution and production will be the property of the commonwealth, but under the control of those operating it. Let all the food and clothing found at the day of revolution in warehouses, wholesale and retail stores be declared public property and divided out according to need until sufficient of the necessities of life can be produced or exchanged from the farmers, gardeners and fruitraisers for articles they need so that everybody can help themselves. Matters will in a very short time regulate themselves, there being no property to quarrel over, and all the inducements held out by the few remaining plutocrats in the way of money will be of no av-

ail; selfinterest will tell a man on which side to place himself, and no flags, drums and martial music will be needed to make him defend his newfound freedom; if they have once tasted the pleasure of being free from care, which is at present forever with us, nothing will induce them to return to the present slavery. It is not the today, but the fear of the tomorrow which drives men and women to the insane asylum and suicides grave. How to get through the winter, how to pay the rent, the taxes, this and that bill, how to get work and how to hold it after he gets it; these are the ever ready whips held over men to support the existing conditions.

Remove this everpresent fear of want, give an assurance beyond doubt that all needs will be satisfied and the present society with its governments and parasites, its humiliation and poverty will disappear in a day.

E. SLABS.

CORRECTIONS.

I the article "Human development," on the second page, second column, the 34 line read "to but recognize" instead of "but recognizes;" 36 line "should be" instead of "it should be;" 38 line "unit" instead of "unity;" 42 "the social environment" instead of "the soil," third column, in the 3. line, after the word "causation," the sentence: "Below this point everything becomes vague—impersonal," is left out.

NOTICE

Owing to the fact that the office in which we have been getting THE FIREBRAND out, has been sold to parties who are going to get out some secret Rituals, we cannot print any more issues of THE FIREBRAND until we can make other arrangements. We intend to get an outfit of our own, and from that on we will always have the paper out on time.

If any of the comrades or groups can help us a little, just now, it will be very encouraging, and put the paper on a safe and permanent footing immediately.

Don't be backward about sending in all you can spare, it shall all be accounted for in the paper.

Send money by Express Money Order, when convenient, payable to Henry Addis, 291 Alder street. Portland, Oregon.

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Firebrand Office

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

THE FIREBRAND 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.

LABOR EXCHANGE Tacoma, Washington, 1522 C street. Radical Reformers meet every Tuesday evening. Everybody interested in bettering their condition invited.

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.

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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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