THE FIREBRAND

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

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THE BLOOD-STAINED BANNER OF THE WEST

What be these streaks of crimson hue
Which glitter in the sun?
These circled stars in heavenly blue
That sparkle one by one?
How snugly proud it sucks the air
And dances in the breeze,
As conscious of its power to snare,
The dazzled sense to seize.
(It long has lured each greaning wretch
To fly the eastern shore,
And myriad eyes to fondly stretch—
But now will lure no more.)

The blood-stained banner of the West,
The symbol of the slave,
Beneath whose folds true manhood's best
If hounded to the grave!

'Tis Shylock's mantle, fiercely flung
To shield his murderous gang,
To guard the spoil from misery wrung
And float where shackles clang!
It flies above a realm of fraud,
Of sorrow, shame and sin,
By gorging gross or hunger gnawed,
And hellish hate within;
Where many starve that few may shine,
Where toilers beg in vain,
Where hundreds dance and millions pine,
Where Truth and Right are slain,

What, ho! ye cumberers of the earth
Who neither toil nor spin,
Ye traffickers in human dearth
Who waste what others win,
Ye idle rich, ye birthright band,
Ye cutthroat trading crew,
Ye pimps of power, ye thieves of land,
Ye wasps who bonds renew,
Gird up your greasy loins today
And hie ye o'er the sea,
And seek there best your pranks to play
Where wealth alone is free,

But ye who love your fellow men,t
And love the truth as well,
Whose hearts revolt at cynics when
They preach the creed of hell,
Who labor for the bread you est
In field or city's din,
Nor seek to snare your brother's feet,
Abbor this silken sin!
Tear from the staff its strumpet threads
And stamp them in the dist!
It but a shameful shadow sheds
Of lying greed and lust.

The blood-stained banner of the West,

Beneath whose folds true manhood's best

Is hounded to the grave!
—[Lathrop Withington.

A SHORTSIGHTED EGOISM.

The symbol of the slave,

BENJ. R. TUCKER, editor of Liberty, New York, perpetrates the following as a sample of Egoistic philosophy:

At present the entire universe is subject to my appropriation, so far as my might permits. There are, however' other beings on earth of whom the same is true. With these obviously I shall clash. It will be to my advantage to reduce the appropriable portion of the universe, if I can thereby hold securely and with less clashing such portion of the remainder as I may succeed in appropriating. I am willing, then, to enter into an agreement with others whereby each of us shall undertake; (1) to refrain from attempts to appropriate certain portion of the universe; (2) to join in preventing these portions of the universe from being appropriated by anybody; and (3) to join in protecting the property of those who may appropriate any other portion of the universe. What portions of the universe shall we exempt from appropriation? It is for my interest and for the interest of those contracting with me to surrender as little as possible of the appropriable sphere, and yet it is equally essential to surrender so much of it that the possibility of interference with appropriation of the remainder may be reduced to a minimum. The forces which cau thus interfere and whose liability to interfere can be lessened by admission to participation in the agreement are those, and only those, which are capable of understanding and entering into the agreement. It is for my interest, then, that all such forces, and any others, should be excluded from the appropriable sphere. These forces comprise only human beings, and only such human beings as have reached a stage of mental development which enables them to promise not to invade as a condition of not being invaded. My agreement, therefore, shall be with these mentally-developed human beings, and the right to appropriate any other being or anything that exists and is not already appropriated.

I have yet no occasion to alter, my characterization of so-called Individualism as a social philosophy run aground—a social theory that is in no essential respect in advance of the present system. The right to "get all you can and keep all you get", as another has epitomized the foundation of the present society, is here reasserted. The only difference between the proposed and the present system is a slight change in the form—not the spirit—of protection to prop-

erty. For this appears to be the only reason this sort of philosopher can find for human association—to come to an agreement as to what persons shall be subject to enslavement and what wealth shall be open to the general scramble for appropriation.

"Of course", he seems to say, "these other beings are a nuisance, and only interfere with my owning the universe; but if I attempt to appropriate the earth in spite of them, there may be one among them able to appropriate me; therefore, rather than take such hazardous chances, I will propose a compromise."

And in this contract those who are not actually feared in the competition for appropriation are to be excluded — placed in the appropriable sphere. In this class are the children and all who are mentally undeveloped. The only reason, apparently, that physically inferior adults are permitted to enter the contract is the necessity of making the provisions lax enough so those inside will be sufficient in number to render those outside absolutely helpless. The monopolist of today is always ready to combine with a competitor he fears, with the double motive of personal safety and the greater insecurity of the exploited class.

If we grant that this sort of Egoist (for Mr. Tucker and his followers have not a monopoly of Egoism) realizes that the aim and end of existence is enjoyment, happiness, then the most peculiar feature of his philosphy is the premise that to own the universe is the highest possible happiness; and that, barring the ability to appropriate the whole, the nearest approach to bliss is to corner as much of it as possible. Thus, it is easily seen, so far from adding to his happiness, his fellow beings only stand in the way of its full realization.

This sort of Egoism appears never to have asked the question, "Whence comes this mania for owning men and things? and is it a natural or reasonable desire?" It is essentially a shallow philosophy, urged on by desires resulting from the usages and customs—and in most instances erroneous ones—of past ages. But these desires, once felt, the assumption is that, to be an Egoist, one must set about satisfying them without further specific.

I think we are a in fair way to establish the essential difference between so-called Individualism und Communism. Those who claim a monopoly of Egoism would tell us that the one is the Egoistic philosophy and the other the Altruistic. But let us see.

An Egoist is one who acts from motives of self-interest.

An Altruist assumes to sink self and exalt others.

A Communist, I claim that the Altruist creed is false and impracticable. Many people claim to practice it, and honestly believe in the possibility of its social realization, but they are self-deceived. Its philosophy is as shallow as that of Tucker's Egoism. Socialled Altruists are perhaps persons of broad sympathies, but they are impelled by the motive of self-satisfaction no less than the Egoist who thinks he would be quite happy in undisturbed possession of the universe.

The Anarchist-Communist does not pretend to Altruism. He is an ultra-Egoist, he

seeks personal happiness.

But his idea of happiness differs from that of the Tuckerian Eggoist. He finds his highest enjoyment in association with his fellows—his equals. I do not refer, in this connection, to equality of might or mind, any more than of stature, but I do mean

equality of station.

Beyond his physical and mental needs, he can conceive of the usy of owning the universe; and from the from the fact that, under a system which is proverbially wasteful, one useful worker not only provides for himself, after a fashion, but supplies seventeen other persons with comfort and luxury, he concludes that when production and distribution are free and equitable not only will ownership of the universe be undesirable, but that monopoly of any part of it will be useless and burdensome. The only incentive to accumulation is to provide against want, and the Communist has no fear of want so long as production is free. J. H. Morris.

A VISION OF ANARCHY.

Anabchy: A social theory which regards the union of order with the absence of all direct government of man by man as the political ideal; absolute individual liberty.—[Century Dictionary.

Every man, they say, has a religion; my religion is Anarchism. In contemplating the future I see it radiant with the sunlight of universal liberty. I catch a vision of the days to come - the curtain rises upon a grand scene; I see before me a glorious panorama. The hideous nightmare of government - the subjection of man to man-is gone, and I hear the happy sound of many voices of men and women singing of liberty, and mingled with it the laughter of children. I see a grand civilization dawning upon the world-a new heaven on a new earth. in which every man and woman shall be a sovereign with his or her own individuality for an empire; in which authority shall have no place and in which national boundaries shall be blotted from the map and the flags of all nations shall be merged into the red emblem of universal brotherhood. I see the grim specter of war fade forever from the scene and over all spread the white pinions of peace. I see the jails turned into workshops, courthouses into institutions of learning, and where once fell the awful shadow of the gallows, I see the flowers bloom. No more is heard the wild blast of war, and where once the earth trembled with the martial tread, I behold the peaceful artisan at his work.

Such is the geat hope, the grand ideal, the sublime dream of Anarchy.

Ross Winn.

"HUMAN NATURE."

WE Anarchists, after having explained our principles to some inquirer, generally find them acknowledged to be good. "But," says our inquiring friend, "such principles could only be realized by a society of Angels: human beings are too fallible, too wicked by nature to be able to live in harmony without coercion, without government."

This answer is generally held to completely destroy any argument in favor of Anarchism; but we contend that a very slight enquiry will effectually dispose of this error.*

*It is just as erroneous for Anarchists—agitators and speakers—to tell us that we must reform ourselves before we are "fit" to live in a free society, which idea has so frequently been suggested lately, as to say that we should learn to swim before we go into the water. A. I.

These ideas are upheld by no section of the community more than by criminals and capitalists, landlords and loafers; they would seem to be two very opposite sections of society, but their means of livelhood are the same:-they produce nothing useful; therefore they consume the luxeries and necessaries poduced by the Why do the workers allow themselves to be robbed of the result of their toil by these parasites? If they were naturally bad and selfish it would be impossible for huge fortunes to be accumulated; for they would, without reference to the justice or injustice of the present system, be so constantly cheating and robbing, by violence or fraud, any one who chanced to be possessed of more than some one else that accumulation would be impossible. But this is not so; it is because the workers generally belive it right and moral that they should pay rent to a landlord and that the product of their labor-should be owned, controlled and consumed by those who produce nothingthe capitalist class-that 'the "rights of property" can be enforced today.

Again, although the possession of power generally develops the worst qualities of the human being; we do find many people who try to use the power they wield to allay the suffering and distress caused by the abstraction of that power from the workers. The perpetration of an outrage upon the life or liberty of any individual hurts the moral sense of the community and induces it to assent to the perpetration of laws to punish the offenders.

Those who infringe the liberties of others are not necessarily theph ysically strong; for they are endowed with as greata moral sense (as far as their perception goes) as their weaker brethern. We see this in the growing acknowledgement of the right of women to greater freedom and control of themselves, and the interference of people to protect children against brutal parents and employers.

Our friends will say: "But these protections are sanctioned and enforced by law!" True, we reply, but these laws are founded upon the moral sense of the people indignant at the perpetration of an injustice—itself an outcome of laws previously passed and still enforced. And we contend that Law is in itself a wrong and an injustice; because it is an assertion of the right of one section of the community to control the rest.

For instance, Law asserts the right of some not to use the land and the natural wealth

therein, and to prevent others from using it; it asserts the right of some to produce nothing and to consume what others produce; it enables some to accumulate wealth at the expense of the workers, and punishes those who actively object to this proceeding; it allows one set of mountebanks and fortune-tellers to gain a livelihood by prophesying to the credulous the kind of life they will lead when they are dead, and punishes another set who prophesy their fortune in life. Law lends the brute force at its disposal to the monopolists to assist them in robbing Labor of its produce, but hangs and imprisons those who, forcibly or otherwise, ease the monopolist in turn; it makes of those who have proved their capacity for bullying, lying, and prevarication JUDGES, to expound morality from the bench and punish lawbreakers; it permits some people to read certain kinds of literature, and then to declare that the rest of humanity are so corruptible that they must not be allowed to read them; and when one person murders another, the law hires some one else to murder him.

"Yes," says our inquiring friend, "I acknowledge all that; but those are bad laws: we want to make some good laws to set them right." This brings us to the question of the morality of law. While we contend that human nature is nor inherently bad, we also maintain that no person or set of persons are so good, so moral, so altruistic that they are fit to control, reward or punish their fellow creatures. We say Law is bad because those who make and administer it usurp, or are entrusted with, a power outside of themselves which changes the man into a master, and the power of mastership developeinto despotism. The power to punish, to dis, pose of the lives of others, will change the most tender-hearted into a bloody tyrant.

In fact it is nothing more than a belief in their right to punish that has caused some people to kill others whose happiness and comfort were built on their misery and suffering.

We further argue that Law is a barrier to the progress of the race, being the outcome of the ideas of the past, or, at best, of the present, designed to regulate the future; and the future, nor being past or present, is always out of harmony with Law. Why are we workers growling? Because the laws, made in the past, assert the right of the monopolists to employ us, sack us, evict us, starve us, and appropriate what we produce.

Even if the power of governing did not corrupt the governors, which it does, the corruption of the governed is very evident; for instead of helping the oppressed they shout "Police!" instead of putting the fire out, even where possible, they run for the firemen; instead of understanding the natural courses of health and sanitation they allow themselves to be poisoned and then run to the doctor; instead of using their intelligence to guage what is right and just, they concern themselves with what is LEGAL,—and no one, not even a lawyer, knows what that may be.

Thus these officials become exalted into little gods, and brutal and despotic like gods are usually described to be; while the mass of the people lose their initiative and depend on these officials to tell them how to live, which the aristical life does not enable them to do.—[T. C., in Freedom, London.

FROM EARNEST TO JEST.

I HAVE received THE FIREBRND for several weeks, and so far as my present state of mind is concerned I am almost tempted to answer you as Watson Heston did. I am unable to reason myself into your way of thinking. But as it was several years before I could fully surrender to Darwin's evolution theory, I have since been more circumspect about how I condemn things without full investigation.

However, I must give you fellows credit for persistence, pluck and self-sacrifice. I think Spies, Parsons, Engel and Fischer died the most heroically of anybody since the dawn of history for what they considered right and truth, and I am satisfied that when we authoritarians, as you call us, hanged them for their opinions' sake, without law or cause, and certainly without justice, we gave you people a boom. I told everybody so at the time, but was accused of being "a damned Anarchist" myself and some thought the hanging ought to extend to yours truly. It was vain to call their attention to the fact that I was only a consistent anti-Anarchist "Why did I circulate petitions to keep them from hanging?"-"Hang them without judge or jury!" This disposition of the majority to do as they please is my reason for depending on law, although frequently misapplied and vengeful; and I cannot see how you can explain it away. Humanity as it is, is as much a fact in nature as anything else, and must be consided a factor in the problem of reforms of this and future ages, just as we must consider every other factor, not as we would like it, but as it is.

But I am willing to learn if you are able to teach. As your paper represents the fruits of your literature, I think it unnecessary to read further just now. I think from an intellectual standpoint your contributors are capable of doing your cause justice. There is no fault to be found with their intelligence.

I think, however, that "Zeke Slabs" and Bellamy ought to hug each other nearly to death if they ever meet. It is so easily done. and that by opposing theories, to perfect man's happiness at once. Their methods differing should cut no figure, just so the outcome is the same! While Viroqua Daniels is frank enough to admit that monopolists and other naturalborn deadbeats will probably have to be supported by those who are disposed to do right until they (the parasites) will get ashamed! I had for my "copy" once: "Man will consent to slavery if told that he is free." While I am going to learn something from Daniels, I hope she will commit that "copy" to memory as a matter of reciprocity between us.

And now comes my saddest task, that of calling the gifted poet, Miriam Daniell, (although poets have a right to roam where philosophers scora to tread) down to earth. She makes her discarded lover of the ideal future ay:

You find in him I last night saw you with Some notes that make your notes more great and blythe.

I wish you well: Mistakes too oft become Fatal, eternal errors through false laws, And rob heartstrings of harmony for some, But we, invincible, shall mould a cause. And may we still be friends?

I honestly think he will continue to speak about like this:

Who was that pup I last night saw with you, That with his notes and yours made loud ado? Just see this fist! Well, by its power and vim—I don't care for his size!—I'll thump him well.

God damn him! I'll put a head on him— For ain't I busted, feedin' you ice cream?

· But, seriously, fair Miriam, I don't like the way you women are building ideal men. Jane Porter, Miss Muloch, Mrs. Ward and others too numerous to mention, all killed their ideals young. And now you come with yours, in the ideal future, and make him still more excessively accommodating, always without any female reciprocity of self-sacrifice. Have I not seen Farmer John Smith come home (in real life), tired, hungry and cold, and then told to get wood and water, as the children had gone off to spelling school and neglected it, and then get himself a "cold bite" for supper, as she (Mrs. John Smith) was so busy working a green worsted dog on a red back ground to show at the fair! And for this never-ending drudgery John is rewarded by the almost daily exclamation, "I do love to see an intellectual man!" in a manner not at all complimentary to John's intellectuality, considering his opportunities. She then complains of poor John in "Lucifer", or, worse yet, in the agricultural paper, because of his inconsiderate treatment of her at timesthe only relaxation he ever has, unless he forgets his temperance pledge, which she also forced upon him, Then people wonder how a kind, loving(?) farmer's wife can breed monopolists, deadbeats and pitiless, greedy monsters! And now, in the ranks of reform, you dream and talk of ideal men who grant everything and ask for nothing. Oh, what darlings you are!

I protest. I herein retaliate, and will build an ideal woman. Just hear her gentle voice:

Nay, Henry, speak no lies; in fine, You find in her I saw with you last night Some greater charm than I have grace or might To give. Go on, my love, seek every joy
You can, for life is short, sweet darling mine.
I wish that e'en no shadow should annoy
Or mar thy bliss. Alas! could love like thine, That—caused by customs of the ages long-Is still polygamous, be mine alone!

You see, opposite sexes build different ideals. I suppose "Lucifer's" fair contributors will claim these verses were not inspired by ethics and angels, but by instinct. Nevertheless, the fact mentioned remains for them to wrestle

I am sorry to have to stop these verses for the pick and shovel, but they, and not poetry, get me my grub.

HENRY STEPBYSTEP.

JEAN GRAVE'S BOOK.

THE DYING SOCIETY AND ANABGHY, translated by Olive Rossetti, is of the greatest value to anarchist propaganda.

Our friends of the Torch publish it at the low price of 10 cents. All those who desire to get our friend's book should write to the Torch, 127 Ossulton St. N. W., London, England; or send orders to THE FIREBRAND.

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THE WORKERS' CONGRESS.

LAST week I gave my opinion of the above institution. We have received a manifesto regarding the matter, the main part of which is published below in order that readers may see the question from the standpoint of our English comrades, from whom it emanates.

The real, perhaps the only, usefulness of these International Congresses is the opportunity they provide for the workers of different countries to meet and exchange their views. Representing a section, and by no means an unimportant section, of the working classes, we cannot allow another congress to meet without protesting against any attempt to make party capital out of that which should be of benefit to the whole of the labor world. The spirit of intolerance that we complain of first manifested itself at the Paris congress of 1889, when the so-called followers of Marx refused to listen to S. Merlino or to allow him to move an amendment he had given notice of, and followed this up by his forcible ejection, a course of procedure which led to the secession of the greater number of the Italian and English delegates. It grew to gigantic proportions in the expulsion of all Socialists opposed to political action from the Zurich congress, except the few who were in possession of trade union credentials. It has now so overpowered the reasoning faculties of the organizers of next year's congress that they refuse to recognize as eligible for admission any section of the working classes not agreeing with their views on political action.

We have no objection to a Social Democratic congress as such, or to a congress to which only believers in political action are admitted, pro. vided no attempt is made to claim that such a congress is representative of and speaks in the name of labor. In we object to remain silent allow a body of political adventurers-members of parliament, capitalists and manufacturers. journalists, professors, lawyers, shopkeepers and a whole crowd of German middlemen, all politically on the make - to take credit to themselves as the only representatives of labor and to gull the wage slaves of capital with promises of a better time to come; promises which could never be realized if their tactics were successful, as that success would allow them to continue to live by exploiting the worker while their dupes would continue to starve. We claim that an International Socialist Workers' Congress should be open to workers of every shade of opinion, and we denounce as treason to the cause of labor the attempt to exclude the Anarchists for no other reason than that their views differ from those of the people who have made the bossing of these institutions a fine art.

the bossing of these institutions a fine art.

We appeal to your sense of fair play. Only the opponents of political action, as defined by the Social Democrats, are excluded—everybody else is admitted. According to the wording of the invitation the most reactionary Tory workingman the proven enemy of his class, can sit and vote as a delegate at the congress; we alone who surely have given sufficient proof of the sincerity of our convictions, the earnestness of our endeavors to alter the conditions of the downtrodden and wretched, are excluded because we would spoil the game of the party bosses and endanger their efforts to blind you in the future as they have done your brothers on the continent in the past.

FROM betwixt the clouds that rear their brows like adamantine rocks, the moon sails forth triumphantly and crowns the night. Wrapt in solemn stillness are the woods afar, and the mountains are anointed with the dew of eve. The tender saplings lift their topmost twigs from out the silver mist that bathes the vale. Upon the flowers' silken leaflets glimmer drops of rain, like gems.

Come, my bride, in my embrace, and smile my longing into cheerfulness. In the purple, sunbeam-interwoven robe of my love I will enfold thee. Nightly will I watch thy tranquil sleep, and see the moon look down on thy face, until the sun shall kiss thine eyelids open. Sweeter than the sapient kings' of yore shall be my song of thee. A wreath of pearly numbers I will twine around thy brow.

Art thou contented?

GRATEFUL is the scent of lilies to the senses, but the hidden powers of humbler plants alleviate our pain. Pleasant are the charms of women in an hour of gladness, but the bright effulgence of the mind illuminates the soul in sadness. Both virtues I have sought in thee. Down to the bottom of thy heart I sent my reason as a skillful diver, and he found there precious pearls. Our ideas - the colors of our minds - I have compared. Our various propensities and feelings are congenial. Two blended notes of different instruments produce one sweet accord, yet each is audible apart: So let us live.

Art thou contented?

ш.

LET others spread the pinions of their tenderness about woman like eagles, and prev upon her independence like vultures. Let others guard their wives as shepherds watch their sheep: I will prize thee and esteem thee as my equal. Thy faithful friend, thy comrade I will be, not thy master nor thy slave. Be as unshackled in my arms as a stream that overleaps its precipice and runs into the sea. Turn the skiff of thy fancies at thy will: Thou art thine own.

Art thou contented?

J. BOWSER.

NOTES AND CRITICISMS.

I object to the terminology used by Lizzie M. Holmes last week in reference to Communism. She says no Individualist, under Anarchchism, would prevent the "organization" of Communistic groups. I object to the word "organization". I can think of no more incongruous combination of words than "organized Anarchist-Communism". Organization always involves the assumption of authority and force, and has no existence apart from them. In organization are distinctions, the setting up of one above another, and is, therefore, incompatible with social equality. The word itself is a negation of Anarchism and Communism, and Communists certainly do not propose any such thing. The "social organism" is a meaningless term to them. What they do propose is liberty

of association, which is not possible under any social organization.

I want to ask somebody a question: What is the "law of equal liberty", and where did it originate? How many varieties of liberty are there, anyway, and is there a law for each kind?

"PATRONIZE home industry" is a good sentiment, provided the industry is union make. If it is made by scabs it is a delusion and should properly be called boarding house industry.-Coast Seaman's Journal.

So long as workingmen can be kept apart by such silly phrases as "home industry" and "union make" the robber class will continue to feast and fatten in security. But when they can say, with Thomas Paine, "The world is my country," and recognize each other as brothers, they will unite and abolish all parasites, plutocrats, politicians and "labor leaders" alike.

GRONLUND IN TACOMA.

Last Monday, Oct. 7, I listened to one of the apostolic preachings of Mr. Gronlund. The audience numbered about twenty persons. Mr. Gronlund preaches government ownership of transportation and communication and State work for the unemployed, to be inaugurated by the Populo-Socialist party.

I got the floor for about fifteen minutes after him and spoke on the futility and humbuggery of political reform. If individuals are able to guide themselves they do not ask anybody to lead them; and if they cannot distinguish good from bad how are they capable of selecting the man to represent their interests? Centralized power has always perverted the people's intentions in every organization, religious or political, from the days of the Roman empire to Social Democrary in Germany.

At the close I challenged Mr. Gronlund for a joint discussion, but he declined. Scratch a 'great authority' and you always find a coward.

CHILD OWNERSHIP.

I have just received No. 33 of The FIRE-BRAND, and want to add my mite to what has been said. Most people lay great stress on the fact that parents have to care for their children, and on that account should have the use and control of them.

Does the child have any voice in the matter of birth? Is it consulted beforehand? For and by whose pleasure are children brought into this world? Their own? No. Then why should they lose their liberty, and be treated as slaves because of their inability to resist? Good parents can get their children to do what they wish them to without force. When the child is old enough to take care of itself force is of no use, and to use it before only makes slaves of freeborn(?)men and women. It is to stamp the idea of authority on them.

Chas. L. Bodendieck, 1140 Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, Ill., is agent for THE FIREBEAND, and authorized to collect and receipt for the same.

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