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THE FIREBRAND

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Anarchy: 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.]

THINK FOR THYSELF.

Come forth into the starry night
Of stillness, when December's snow
Hath hushed the insects shrill delight.
The wind blows sharp and frosty now
Shines with the clearest splendor that great throng
Of suns and worlds, they passing heaven slow
In equal freedom, each in balance hung
As true as Truth;—a lesson learn,—
To place no foolish fable high
Against the wisdom of the sky
Heed not the maggot brains that turn
From this to that; but, sound and clear,
Think for thyself; and let no clown
In trappings wield thee for his gain.
He knows not that which swarms between
The Heaven and Earth; he hath not known
Of Heaven and Earth, ye would he feign
Full knowledge, surely; he lies—
He simply lies: to feed at ease
Upon his fellows he must give
Soul, conscience,—all that defies
The mortal man, who should be left in peace,
God of the mortal world and fit to live.

WILLIAM WALSLIN GORDAK.

HOW IT WILL COME.

Many are the reasons that lead me to believe that a condition of human society based upon the principles of Anarchist-Communism is the best form possible for the well-being of mankind—both collectively and individually; and that the principle of the desire for self-gratification, in whatever route, direct or circuitous, it may lead men, the final condition or "last word" of society will be that represented by those words.

These reasons I will not in this short article attempt to set forth, for I find that I either have too much to say or it takes too many words for me to say it to warrant its insertion in THE FIREBRAND; my purpose here is to speak of the perplexing question of how it will come, or be brought about.

Are the people ready for Anarchist-Communism; in other words, is such wide or general fraternity for which the Anarchist-Communist yearns possible at the present time?

To properly answer this question it is well to separate this hyphenated term. The people are and always have been ready or fit for freedom or Anarchy; and it is very probable that they were once communistic in a way, but owing to the terrible wounds given people by government and religion they are not (it appears to me at least) ready for that broad fraternity and solidarity so necessary to perfect Communism. The people will be ready for Communism only (1) when they see in it the means of securing for themselves the highest happiness,

and (2) when they outgrow the insanity of worshipping things or ideas that do not exist or are mere confessions of their inability to grasp the cause or fact of their existence, and, when in a rational and common sense way, they accept things as facts and become students and thinkers instead of blind believers in things absurd, things incapable of proof, demonstration or logical explanation.

How is private property to be made common property?

It is very likely that expropriation will be practically done by the millions who now so stupidly vote to favor, maintain, strengthen and defend the institutions of private appropriation of property by the predatory rich. It will be during a period of desperation, terror and frenzy, that the people in gaining their freedom will retaliate for years of fraud and injustice by taking also a freeman's legacy. When that time comes Anarchists will of course be on hand as well as others, and such as are Communists will undoubtedly secure a portion of the property corresponding with their numbers, strength and courage. The State Socialists, Individualists and others will certainly do likewise. All this is on the supposition that a violent revolution will be inevitable. If the transformation or regeneration of society can be brought about by other means so much the better.

It is not altogether improbable that necessity will lead many to co-operate through Labor Exchanges; and as government at once shows itself plainly a menace to such organizations on account of money, money laws, taxes, etc., they would do more practical work for the cause of Anarchism than all the books and speeches printed or delivered; in fact Labor Exchanges may speedily engender a hatred to the State so bitter that the latter may be overthrown, giving free play to the expansion of communistic effort, and I believe Anarchists should encourage exchanges for this reason if for no other.

To me there seems to be four somewhat distinct ages or periods of man's social relation to man. One past and the other passing; and two yet to come.

I refer to the age of purely physical expropriation; where robbery was committed openly, plainly and with no indirection; when men were like a pack of wolves, fighting over a morsel of carrion.

The second age, the present, where fraud, cunning, deceitfulness, and various forms of robbery take place legally, cloaked in sophistry, subterfuge and hypocrisy.

The next age will be one of a sort of equity or justice; more in theory of course than in fact. Excessive or legal holding of property by individuals will give way to somewhat unequal holdings, supposed to represent "equity" in division of products, and held as a sort of moral right with no other protection than a reciprocal neighborly vigilance.

As the second age is an improvement on the first age of the four, so the third will be an improvement on the second or present age.

When equity is once enjoyed, it will be seen that

it is so near to equality, considering the time and labor saved in dispensing with the commercial features, that the step will be easily and probably voluntarily taken. At any rate the so-called equity exchanges would not prevent communistic groups here and there; indeed until they should attain a certain growth the exchanges might be a decided advantage instead.

The fourth or final age will be equality of liberty and material equality, the aim of Anarchist-Communism.
E. H. FULTON.

COMMENTS.

It appears that "The Altruist" has been indulging in uncomplimentary remarks about Anarchists. Replying to a correspondent who gives a very fair statement of Anarchism, the editor says he is thereby only confirmed in his opinion that Anarchists are pig-headed self-seekers and care nothing for the welfare of their neighbors. I never heard an Anarchist deny selfishness, but I have seen the most palpable injustice advocated in the name of Altruism. The Anarchist is so selfish, in fact, that his fundamental proposition is that his neighbor interfere not in his pursuit of happiness; and this principle includes his neighbor's neighbor, being himself. But the Altruist, it would appear, so loves his neighbor that he thinks it imperative to have the State to compel him (the Altruist) to be neighborly.

MANY times have "The Firebrand" writers explained that Communism not only does not propose "organization" in any form but is utterly incompatible with the idea of organization. Notwithstanding, persons who label themselves Individualists continue to write about "organizing Communes." A. L. Ballou's article in the issue of April 12 is a case fully sustaining A. L.'s claim that Individualists have no conception of Communism apart from that particular form of State Socialism that sails under the name of Communism. Ballou says that under Anarchism "the Communist will probably organize his Commune and enjoy all things in common, while the Individualist will go it alone or associate himself with other free individuals to accomplish selfish ends." A sentence could hardly be framed to contain a greater number of fundamental errors. First he assumes that Communists propose an organization, which is not the case. Second, he says, in effect, that association is Individualism as distinguished from Communism, when in fact his proposed association is no more and no less than the whole Communistic proposition. Third, his use of the term "free individuals" as a distinction from the Communists would convey the idea that Communism is without the pale of liberty, which, since he, an "Individualist" proposes the same thing, does not argue well for his logic. Now it pleases me immensely to have such writers as Ballou and Byington to rush into a Communist paper with a defense of Individualism and an exposition of their ignorance of Communism, but it does not harmonize with my sense of the fitness of things for such communications to close with an appeal for a cessation of the discussion. It places them in a position highly amusing to the Communist.

I, FOR one Anarchist, do "find fault with the punishment of murderers" as well as with the manufacturing them. If a murderer is manufactured, murder is the logical outcome, and punishment by the manufacturer is the height of absurdity. Now why the Anarchist should not find fault with this, along with other social absurdities, is beyond my comprehension. If we say that life and liberty are inalienable rights, and that character is the result of environment, we are bound in logic to object as strenuously to the deprivation of these rights and punishment of character in the case of the so-called "criminal" as in the case of the most "virtuous" of beings. Since "punishment" implies invasion by authority (conferred or assumed) the Anarchist, as a repudiator of authority and an advocate of non-invasion must object to it whether in the present or future society.

If the present society, by furnishing the incentive, is the cause of "crime," the future society must, in like manner, be responsible. I cannot see how in the future society there can be "some criminals left" over from the present. I admit there may be a transitional and unsettled period between the two wherein violence may be equal to or in excess of the present, but that is a mere incident. Even in that case punishment would be but a violation of the principle upon which it is proposed to base the new society and, hence, a continuation of the present system. But if it were possible that some individuals should pass into the future society so tainted with crime as to continue to steal, rape and murder after the incentive had been removed (preposterous proposition!), for we understand that the abolition of the State is the removal of the cause of crime, punishment is but adding crime to crime and is a proposition which an Anarchist cannot under any circumstances entertain. But I do not admit the possibility of phenomena without cause, and if the cause of crime be absent in the future society crime itself cannot be present. As the tree is judged by the fruit it bears, so the test of the future society must be the presence or absence of crime. One thing I am logically sure of: there can be no "punishment" under Anarchism.

J. H. M.

COMMERCIALISM AND ANARCHISM.

I want to reply in one article to three, since all three are seeking my scalp (which, I acknowledge, I myself put in their way) on the same subject.

A. I. said freedom was unthinkable while Commercialism remained. I took him to mean that freedom would make it impossible to keep up commercial society even for a moment, and asked what he meant by freedom. *) He answers by defining freedom so as to let men be commercial if they wish, but explains that the commercial spirit of "get as much as you can and render as small a return as you may" necessarily leads men to support government, and always will as long as that spirit exists.

But is it not true that government gives its average supporters surprisingly little and takes from him unreasonably much? If so, will not the commercial spirit (as defined by A. I.) lead the average man to quit supporting government as soon as he gets sense enough to act logically on that spirit? Or does A. I. think that people cannot get sense enough to be logical instead of illogical commercialists without at the same time getting sense enough to become communists? †)

Besides, if it is to be impossible to get liberty while the spirit of greed continues rampant, we must get rid of the spirit of greed first—while we are still under government—in order to get liberty afterward. ‡) Can we

*) That is just what I meant to say, for as soon as we reach a condition of freedom Commercialism must be absent in that very moment. In a condition of exaction and exploitation freedom would be a mere phrase like it is to-day.

†) People may "get sense enough to act logically" and quit supporting the present government, but that does not say that they would have sense enough to substitute a condition of freedom. Evidence: Mackey, Tucker, and their disciples.

‡) It is not the "spirit" that the Anarchist-Communist is after or are struggling against. It is the form of society, the condition people live in, that produces greed, and therefore we propose a condition of freedom, in which "greed" would be an unknown term. How could greed find nourishment in a condition where

do this? I thought the usual Anarchist idea was that the spirit of greed is necessarily produced by government, and cannot be destroyed till government is gone.

This idea appears in an extreme form in comrade Eich's article "What Constitutes Freedom," so that comrade Eich's view is the direct opposite of A. I.'s. Comrade Eich rests his whole argument on the proposition that property originated in the will of rulers, and therefore must pass away when rulers cease to exist. He does not tell what evidence he has for this alleged historic fact as to the origin of property. I deny the fact, and await his evidence.

Comrade Morris thinks my ideas are suited only to "the comparatively easy-going element" in which I move—an element, to comrade Morris's mind, "of no importance to the radical movement, and one that can have no existence under Anarchism." The element in which I move, as student and school-teacher, consists mainly of school and college students, young men averaging about twenty, some of whom are supporting themselves by their work while studying, some are supported by their parents or others, but most are supported partly by their own work and partly by outside help. Most of them—not all—probably are having an easier life than the average man; but as to their being of no importance to the radical movement, I can't see it. Kropotkin and William Morris are products of college training; are they useless? The school-teachers of the country are recruited mainly from this class; is their influence on the rising generation unimportant? And as to the impossibility of such an element under Anarchism, I can see nothing likelier for the twenty-year-old member of Anarchist society than that he should be expected to do enough productive work to meet part of the expense of his support, but that part of that expense should be borne by others in order that he may give more time to his studies, the value of which the community will receive as he grows older. But this is precisely the most common condition of the American college student to-day.

I am surprised that the subject of my personal circumstances should seem so important to THE FIRST-BRAND'S contributors; but, as it seems to be a subject of interest, I know no reason why I should not submit my expense account. I left college, and ceased to depend on my father, in the summer of 1891. In the five years since then (counting in the spring of 1896, for which I am now engaged) I have been able to get steady work only two and a half years. Of my unemployed time I spent one and a half years in study, being supported mainly by funds for the help of needy students. The other year, my first unemployed year, I lived on borrowed money; I won't do it again if I can help it. In the five years have earned \$1000 cash and \$500 in board (nominal value; cash value less), have borrowed \$535 and repaid \$60 of it so far, and received \$350 of charity. Thus the amount I have had to live on, reducing board to cash, has been about \$465 a year. Of this the odd \$65 a year has gone for books, which are to a considerable extent tools of my trade. This account may make me out richer than some people, but I protest that it does not justify classing me among fortune's pampered favorites.

Now to get back to Anarchism and Communism. Comrade Morris thinks I don't know what Communism is, because I called public roads, public schools, public charities and free libraries communistic. Well, what is Communism, then? I thought it was having things for the use of the people in common, or of any of the people who want to use them. Is not this the condition of our public roads, schools and libraries? About those I can see no doubt; as to charities, I acknowledge that they are intended to serve special classes. Hospitals are only for the sick, poor-houses only for the poor, blind asylums only for the blind. But the service of these classes is regarded as a common business, which the community discharges through property held in common. Since everybody wants the sick cared for, the provision of hospitals is a service to everybody, not only to the sick; and hospitals are held as common property for that purpose. That is the theory.

As to the other institutions named, I cannot explain comrade Morris's failure to see their communistic character except by supposing that he forgot the existence of any Communism except Anarchist-Communism—led astray, possibly, by Tucker's habit of dropping the prefix. I certainly never meant to say that public libraries were run on Anarchist-Communist lines. But

everybody can produce and consume according to desire? The rest will be answered, I hope, by the comrades Eich and Morris.

A. I.

an institution may be communistic and yet thoroughly tied up with legal red tape.

Comrade Morris seems unwilling to see that anything bad can be compatible with anything good. This appears further where he says that "to the Communist exploitation and Commercialism are synonymous terms," and infers that, from the Communist standpoint, Anarchism and Commercialism are necessarily incompatible. It is obvious that there is no argument here unless we first assume that there can be no exploitation under Anarchism. I feel sure that there will be exploitation whenever a knave and a fool meet, Anarchism or no Anarchism. The only difference is that it will be harder under Anarchism, and so there will be less of it.

In my preference of free libraries rather than subscription ones, Comrade Morris finds an instance of desire "to get as much as possible without rendering an equivalent." If he knows no other reason for preferring free ones, I recommend him to study Communist literature till he understands some of the advantages of Communism.

I agree as to the necessity of sturdily opposing all ideas antagonistic to Anarchist principles. But it is almost equally important not to oppose, in the name of Anarchism, any ideas not antagonistic to these principles. I oppose gold-basis money, but I don't call my opposition "Anarchism," for I know that under Anarchism those who want gold-basis money can have it. Just so comrade Morris opposes Commercialism, and I am not trying to make him stop or slacken that opposition; but he ought not to label it "Anarchism;" it is an independent question. He acknowledges that Anarchism "would not interfere with those who chose to practice Commercialism; he will probably also agree that they would get more good from their commercial life under Anarchism than from the same commercial life under government. Well, then, these are reasons enough why they should be Anarchists even from the Commercialist standpoint; so, when he meets a man who will not take any other standpoint, let him use these reasons to make the man an Anarchist-Commercialist. Surely, however bad that may be, it is better than a Governmentalist-Commercialist.

STEPHEN T. BYINGTON.

Flashing, N. Y.

CLIPPINGS AND COMMENTS.

In sight of these manifestations of the modern state, the anarchist—the rose water and the dirty water variety alike—shout: "Away with all central directing authority; see what is does; it can only do mischief; it always did mischief!" But socialism is not anarchy. Socialism does not, like the chicken in the fable, just out of the egg, start with the knowledge of that day. Socialism rejects the premises and conclusions of anarchy upon the state and upon government. What socialism says is: "Away with the economic system that alters the beneficial functions of the central directing authority from an aid to production into a means of oppression." And it proceeds to show that when the instruments of productions shall be owned no longer by the minority, but shall be restored to the commonwealth; that when, as the result of this, no longer the minority or any portion of the people shall be in poverty, and classes, class distinction and class rule shall—as they necessarily must—have vanished, that then the central directing authority will lose all its repressive functions, and is bound to reassume the functions it had in the old communities of our ancestors, become again a necessary aid and assist in production.

The socialist, in the brilliant simile of Carl Marx, sees that a lone fiddler in his room needs no director; he can rap himself to order with his fiddle to his shoulder, and start his dancing tune and stop whenever he likes. But just as soon as you have an orchestra you must also have an orchestra director, a central directing authority. If you don't you may have a Louisiana negro Army pow-wow, you may have an orthodox Jewish synagogue, where every man sings in whatever key he likes, but you won't have harmony—impossible.

It needs this central directing authority of the orchestra master to rap all the players to order at a given moment; to point out when they shall begin; when to have these play louder, when to have those play softer; when to put in this instrument, when to silence that; to regulate the time of all and preserve the accord. The orchestra director is not an oppressor, nor his baton an insignia of tyranny; he is not there to bully any body; he is as necessary or important as any or all of the members of the orchestra.

Our system of production is in the nature of an orchestra. No one man, no one town, no one state, can be said any longer to be independent of the other; the whole people of the United States, every individual therein, is dependent upon all others. The nature of the machinery of production—the subdivision of labor, which aids co-operation and which co-operation fosters, and which is necessary to the plentifulness of production that civilization requires, compel an harmonious

working together of all departments of labor, and thence compel the establishment of a central directing authority, of an orchestra director, so to speak, of the orchestra of the co-operative commonwealth.

Such is the state or government that the socialist revolution carries in its womb. Today production is left to anarchy, and only tyranny, the twin sister of anarchy, is organized.

Socialism, accordingly, implies organization; organization implies directing authority; and the one and the other are strict reflections of the revolutions undergone by the tool of production.—[Daniel De Leon to Boston WORKINGMEN.]

The above is the mature and most powerful argument that the greatest orator and journalist of the S. L. P. in this country has been able to bring against the logic of Anarchism.

Strange as it may seem to some, the early writers on Socialism repudiated the authority of the political State and sought to establish an industrial State composed of autonomous communities or groups, federated to facilitate the interchange of products, but the "scientific" Socialists of today cling to the political State with its central directing authority as the most important of all things, and seek to bring every relation of life under its domination.

The simile of Marx is not worth a fig. The orchestra director can instruct his orchestra players in music and keep watch over their progress, aiding and instructing them, but he has no power to coerce them into anything. They may withdraw from the orchestra at will and he cannot force them to play, nor yet can he tax them. No Anarchist denies the utility of a director in all united undertakings when the end in view can be gained only by following the directions of one skilled in such work, but his "authority" ends with his instructions about the work in hand.

There is nothing analogous to an orchestra in the proposed Socialist State. The Socialist State would have power to compel action at the word of command; to control the action of its members, and prevent them from withdrawing. Should the living of the orchestra players depend upon their employment by a certain director there might be some analogy in that the power possessed by the director would probably cause him to become tyrannical, as so often happens under like circumstances. If the Socialist State had full control of the resources of the earth and tools of production the central directing authority, knowing that all must obey it or starve, would become the embodiment of tyranny and despotism.

Industry is not left to Anarchy. Were it, there would be no involuntary idleness; no panics, trusts, tariffs, patents or other forms of monopoly, or special privilege.

Anarchy would give full scope for all efforts, industrial, social and artistic, whether individual or collective, and voluntary Socialism would grow just as the needs and desires of the people demanded. But this would not suit the Socialist politicians who have so long been riding the S. L. P., for they would then have to come down off their perch and work on an equal footing with all others.

Under State Socialism everything that did not suit the central directing authority would be crushed. In Anarchy everything desirable could be attained.

H. A.

COMRADE TURNER IN AMERICA.

We learn from the FREIHET, that comrade Turner of London, is carrying on a vigorous propaganda campaign in the vicinity of New York. He has spoken on a number of topics in Paterson, N. J., and was to go from there to Newark to carry on the work there. The FREIHET says that one good feature of his work is that he is chiefly working among the American workingmen.

We are glad to know that comrade Turner is at work in this country, and that during his stay the propaganda among the American workers will receive the greater part of his attention.

It seems strange that none of our comrades were interested enough to send us word of comrade Turner's arrival, and his work and plans. We wish to make THE FIREBRAND a journal of the movement, but to do this we must have the co-operation of the comrades everywhere. In order to give news of the movement it must be sent in by comrades. We hope to be able to give reports of comrade Turner's work, from time to time, and confidently hope it may be of much stirring of thought and awakening of interest on the great problem of liberty.

H. A.

AN OPEN LETTER.

Mauritz S. Liden of Portland, Or., in a letter to me dated March 30, criticises to some length and quite severely LIBERTY LIBRARY. In a way he accuses me of deception. He quotes from the ad. in Firebrand that I did not write, the words: "It is printed on fine book paper in new clean type and is a model of neatness and skill."*) Then he wants to know if "God and State" is printed on fine book paper and if neatness and skill apply to "An Anarchist on Anarchy."

I will answer these two questions as follows: "God and State" (which has been sold by other publishers for 10 and 15 cents each, the edition from which mine is printed being 10 cent and on paper just a little better,) and sold by me at 5cent each, or 2½ cent each in quantities, is printed on print paper, it being so large that a cheaper paper need be used in order to produce the book or pamphlet at the low price I put it. If an other edition is called for I may use a better grade of paper, for I like first class paper, etc., just as well as comrade Liden. I did order 50lb paper instead of 40lb, but as the paper company had no white of that weight they sent me 40lb paper instead, as I told them they could do.

The article "An Anarchist on Anarchy" made a little more than I thought it would, so I had to pull the leads and let it go solid.

Beginning with No. 4, I will use 50lb paper of another make and be sure and lead all articles. This will make a little more expense on my part, but I think it should be done, even if the receipts are not enough to warrant it.

By comparison I find my pamphlets are as good, if not better, than many printed by other publishers, and are as cheap if not cheaper in price.

"Liberty Library pamphlets" are not printed especially as samples of artistic work and high-grade paper, but as good as possible at a price within the reach of many who are too nearly crazed with poverty to be really competent to criticise art should they see it. LIBERTY LIBRARY is published for those who, while aspiring to art and beauty, are considerate enough to know that the ideal must have a sound material basis; in other words, LIBERTY LIBRARY is not made for the dilettante.

When the poor of France were asking for bread, the suggestion was made that they eat cake. While the publishers of Anarchist papers and pamphlets are living on the paste that the cockroaches have refused to eat they are "advised" to make fewer errors and turn out more costly productions.

If about one half of those who are so profuse with advice, criticisms and suggestions would be as lavish with money as they are with words, a greater part of their criticisms would be rendered unnecessary. But as it is, we who deprive ourselves of even a decent living and get ourselves disliked by a majority of our former friends, will keep right on doing the best we can, and will even rival Mark Tapley in being jolly in our adverse circumstances.

I would respectfully suggest to those who think LIBERTY LIBRARY pamphlets should be made more artistic, etc., to go into the publishing business themselves. When anyone is ready to do better than I can, I will withdraw and leave him the field; but until that time I will be found doing business at the old stand.

I will ask THE FIREBRAND to say nothing about the merits or demerits of LIBERTY LIBRARY pamphlets from a mechanical standpoint; let each number speak for itself.

I will add in conclusion, however, that for every letter depreciating the pamphlets, twice as many letters have been received conveying praise most flattering.

E. H. FULTON.

THE PROPOSED DISCUSSION.

Mr. Byington, in issue of March 29. has a contribution of which I here give the last paragraph:

"As to how Anarchy will finally come, I should like to see more discussion. I doubt the practicability of a minority's establishing it while a majority are ready to fight it, and if we must wait till the majority are on our side, we shall find the ballot-box the most convenient weapon. But as soon as we begin to gather much power we can begin trying to set up anarchistic society here or there, and the suppression of these experiments will give a series of object-lessons that will bring the majority around rapidly. Such a policy would be likely to create a large 'don't care' or 'let alone' party who would not be willing to fight either for or against Anarchism, and might thus enable us to maintain our liberty before a majority of the people were positively on our side."

So should I "like to see more discussion" as to

how Anarchy will come, and, how long it is likely to take to win over to our side—not a majority, but a fairly numerous working minority.

There is nothing to be hoped for from the ballot-box as a "convenient weapon" or any other sort of weapon. Anything worth the winning would be decided to be "unconstitutional," while anything declared by the ballot-box to keep us where we are or oppress us more would be pronounced "constitutional;" in plain words the ballot-box would be over-ridden, if it should (most unlikely of possibilities) decide anything of moment in favor of Anarchy.

As to that which Mr. Byington says regarding experiments and their suppression I fully agree with him.

Should the "inevitable" arrive too soon in the shape of a violent revolution it would, (in my opinion) not only put us back for many a decade, but, leave us very much worse off than we now are—even the poorest of us.*) We are all more or less enslaved now—we must not work for heavier chains. However, on second thought—I think we are liable to get heavier chains without working for them,—indeed we do get them and will so continue to do, for some long time to come.†)

I believe in Mr. Byington's proposal of "more discussion," if, only to show us all how very little we know (comparatively) when our knowledge is "boiled down." But I do know that it is most absurd for Individualist and Communist-Anarchists to quarrel over mere words‡) or how different communities should live and should co-operate. There will be abundant room for all experiments to be tried, all schools to go to school. Let us all work to win freedom and not quarrel to-day over what we will do or what we will force others to do(!) under equal freedom.

I would be most glad to see many of our best writers co-operate in the suggested discussion.

CLINTON LOVERIDGE

*) I would like to know how comrade Loveridge knows we would be worse off. Everything points in the other direction to me.

†) On the other hand the discontent of the majority, and the open violation of the laws as they exist by an ever increasing minority, indicates all too clearly that no matter how many laws are made an ever increasing number will refuse to meekly wear these chains. How long it will be until we are entirely rid of our chains I would not venture to guess, but I do know that while government is tending toward despotism, the people are demanding freedom more and more.

‡) I can see no ground for a quarrel, but the discussion of principles which are to serve as guides for our actions in the future society is quite as important as the discussion of any topics. It is not a question of mere words, but of fundamental principles, and instead of being absurd is both important and instructive.

The Letter-Box.

J. C. B., Hindsboro, Ill.—Your communication received in due time and published in No. 10. 50 extra copies were sent you, which we hope you have received before now.

E. S., Chicago.—Sickness has prevented comrade Viroqua Daniels from writing—nothing else.

ORANGE BLOSSOMS, Los Angeles, Cal.—Thanks for the subscribers and trial list. Can't you send in a report of the work accomplished by comrade Gori?

M. L., Chicago, Ill.—The 50 cent received and order for pamphlets filled No. 4 of LIBERTY LIBRARY is out. It is "The True Aim of Anarchism" by E. Steinle, editor of the ARBEITER ZEITUNG.

DER ARME TEUFEL.—We had no idea of interpreting poetry for you, but you were undoubtedly wrong in supposing Basil Dahl advised the Toilers to "go west young man." We had a few contributions from his pen last summer, over a different name, and know him to be a revolutionist. "Destroy the prisons that confine your breath" shows that. We are toilers, and as it was addressed to the toilers, we feel justified in our interpreting it as we did. We have had letters from other toilers ordering quantities of the issue of THE FIREBRAND that contained this poem, and they so understood it. We did not, nor do not till yet, stop to question how Tucker understood it.

RECEIPTS.

Rehberg, \$1.00. Krieger, 65c. Finley, Rieger, Lee, Block, Franklin, Marcus, Landeck, Engvall, Dickinson, Neris, each 50c. Reinhardt, 30c. Carvens, Smith, Haiman, Tannenbaum, Stam, each 25c.

THE "office" of THE FIREBRAND: North Mt. Tabor Car Line, Center Addition North Mount Tabor.

Literature.

MARRIAGE.

We are in receipt of a play, entitled "Marriage," by Otto Wichers von Gogh. It was recently published in "Die Fackel" of Chicago. The play was written and published in the German language, but it would be well if it were translated into English at the earliest possible date.

This play shows that peace and happiness in domestic relations come only from love and freedom. It also shows how the public demanders of "woman's equality" will pass resolutions in public meetings, but forget them before they get home. It shows how the novels which most girls are so fond of reading, fill their minds with false ideas concerning married life, and cause them untold misery as a consequence thereof.

The heroine in this play, having learned that she had been deceived by her novels burns them, and by asserting her freedom finally gains her husband's full recognition of her rights, and then they realized a joy in each others love that they had never known before.

A. I.

THE TRUE AIM OF ANARCHISM.

No. 4 of LIBERTY LIBRARY is at hand. This number contains "The True Aim of Anarchism, a review of the history of the world and mankind; and the teachings resulting therefrom," by E. Steinle, in which he takes up the nebular theory in Astronomy, the evolution theory in natural science and history, and traces the development of the race, showing the constant struggle between the oppressed and oppressors. He shows how all advancement has been made by rebellion against established institutions, and that the present society, rotten as it is, must dissolve.

He concludes his work thus:

If everyone would carefully study the life and nature of man, he will find the following truths, which are so very important for the regeneration of society:

1. That full liberty for the enjoyment of things kills greed. The desire for pleasure are then held in natural limits.

2. Men will always work voluntarily, without any compulsion, when the fruits of labor come to all alike.

These are no speculations, but facts founded upon numerous careful observations; and on this immovable rock, will the anarchistic-communistic society be built.

Only by voluntary labor, the fruits of which shall be freely enjoyed by all, can the general welfare of mankind be firmly and forever be established.

And this is the true aim of Anarchism.

Correspondence.

"MUDDLED."

Editor Firebrand,

When I read my Socialist newspaper I am a Socialist, and when THE FIREBRAND is before me I am an Anarchist, and when I stop to think whether I shall cast a ballot or not at the approaching election I am muddled.

Of course I have discarded the superstition of religion, and the hallucination of State (according to legal enactments with the physical force of sheriff, police and military).

The Anarchist Community called the "Ruskin Co-operative Association" in Tennessee seems to embody your ideas in practical form, but even there the ballot is used to decide matters concerning their co-operative welfare. Now what I want to know is this:

As a sincere reformer, after ten years reading of radical literature, is it best for me to vote or to let the ballot severely alone? The Socialist Labor Party has been my choice for several years, but as THE FIREBRAND has shown the Socialists of the time of the Paris Commune and previous, to be in error—simply filling offices and doing nothing (same as all the other politicians) perhaps I had better remain away from the polls.

What I see of government is bad—nine-tenths corruption—so I do with it the same as I do with an apple that is nine-tenths rotten—throw it away. Am I right?

Anarchism and Socialism seems to be identical; both strive to bring peace, happiness, and justice to the producer. My desire is to avoid war, economic, political or barbaric; and for all to enjoy life to its full extent—still, my course of action is not clearly defined as it should be.

A NEW YORK SUBSCRIBER.

Answer:

If you have discovered the hallucination of State, to sustain it by voting, or otherwise, is equivalent to contributing to the church collection basket after

you are convinced of the superstition and nonsens of its teachings.

The "Ruskin Co-operative Association" is emphatically State Socialist, both as to membership and organization, and is trying to work according to the formulas which the S. L. P. proposes to enact into general laws for the government of the country at large.

In the cities in France where the Socialists have gained control, since the time of the Commune, they have proven themselves the most oppressive rulers the people have had during the present Republic. One of their propositions in this country is to put the Anarchists on a reservation, like the Indians, when they have "conquered the powers of State."

State Socialism, Social-Democracy, or "scientific" Socialism as it is variously termed, is an attempt to unite economic with political dictation, and place it all in the hands of the politicians. This they call economic freedom.

Anarchism, on the other hand, strives to remove the restrictions that the State imposes, thus making access to all the means of production free to all alike, full knowing that voluntary co-operation will supply every need and fulfill every function of society without recourse to coercion, or the dictation of a central directing authority. This is true Socialism.

The State makes barbaric war upon its neighbor, and so hedges its favorites about with privileges that economic war is unavoidable. It circumscribes the liberty of its inhabitants and destroys their happiness. Can you afford to support it at the polls?

H. A.

FATALISM.

Find inclosed order of one Dollar which apply to my credit on FIREBRAND subscription. I see your and your associates have your ups and downs, your trials and tribulations. Well such is destiny. People who live in perpetual sunshine never develop character to any great extent. You sow now at this time, that which you will reap in the future.

I very often have to laugh when you assail our present cannibalistic economic system. It is all right. It is just what is needed for the present. You Anarchists seem to think that your wisdom is all sufficient for the laws of evolution. If evolution is true, and I know of no logical argument that it is not, then the past was right and necessary for the present, and the to-day with all its greed and avariciousness is necessary to the evolutionary force which will produce a higher and better condition. To say that the past has not been right is to deny the evolution force in matter and spirit.

Of course I do not find fault with you, in fact not with any one; we are only parts of a grand whole. You live your life, no one can live it for you. You are no doubt so constituted that the flickering light of liberty can only be seen through Anarchistic glasses. Another has some other hobby, and each one thinks that he has the only panacea for all the evils which afflict mankind.

I look on life in a more philosophical way. I do not think conditions are wrong. They are the effect of a cause and the natural result of former conditions, and necessary for the next step in the round of evolution. To say conditions in the past and to-day are unnatural and wrong is to say that the Universe is built wrong and every thing should have been perfect at the beginning. Such a philosophy is antagonistic to evolution, and theology with its big god and perfect men the only logical result.

Hoping this will find you and THE FIREBRAND crew in good health and fighting trim, I sign

W. H. BREESE.

Comment.

In the above brother Breese attempts to criticize what is going on in the world of action as a looker on would criticize a circus, only he makes this mistake: He presupposes that the circus HAD to be, and could not have been otherwise under any circumstances. That the ring master and clowns and trained dogs and horses, and all the attendants are there for a purpose; not because they want to be there, but because they HAVE to be there, that the work of circus showing may go on. In other words his apparent conception of evolution is the essence of fatalism and the design argument.

Evolution works in all things, but it is neither good nor bad; just or unjust; perfect or imperfect;

but simply the blind, undesigning tendency to develop all forms, and institution in the line of least resistance.

Human institutions are the products of man's actions—individual and collective—are good or bad, right or wrong, just or unjust, in proportion as they serve to assist men in the gratification of their desires; in a higher intellectual growth or broader comprehension of their relations toward one another, or vice versa. Viewed in this light present institutions are bad. But because they stifle instead of develop the nobler impulses and higher aims of man, and drag millions seeking into degradation and suffering, who might live full lives of joy and improvement. To assert otherwise is equal to asserting that frost, ice, flood, drought and untitled land are the right conditions for evolution to develop a higher and better condition for plant life.

It is simply because things are not and never were "perfect" that we strive for better things.

Brother Breese's philosophy may fit the minds of the people of tropical India, but will not square with the experience of Occidentals.

H. A.

SAMPLE COPIES.

We sent out large numbers of sample copies, and if you are receiving the paper without ordering it, it is an invitation to investigate our principles. If you want the paper, let us know and you shall have it, and you may send in such amount on your subscription as you can afford. If you can't pay for it and want to read it, you shall have it anyhow. If you get the paper and don't want it, please be kind enough to have it stopped. If you have been getting the paper without paying for it, and can afford to send us some money, please do so, as we are sadly in need of it.

Labor Exchange Certificates, "Labor Tender" or other paper that will procure the necessities of life, will be received in payment for subscription. We also accept all kinds of farm products.

FIREBRAND LIBRARY.

Bases of Anarchism; Historical, Philosophical and Economical, by Wm. Holmes	5c
God and the State, by Bakounine	5c
The Commune of Paris, by Kropotkin and An Anarchist on Anarchy, by Reclus, both in one	5c
The true aim of Anarchism, by E. Steinle	5c
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