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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.]

### TRUE STATUS OF COMMUNISM.

A POINT which seems to escape the attention of a great many Anarchists who discuss the relative merits of Individualism and Communism,—and it is a point which is vital to the discussion—is that the laws of nature are not to be abrogated in any particular by the triumph of the Anarchist idea, and, consequently, the Anarchist society will not constitute itself after individual or community ideas of the eternal fitness of things any more than does the present capitalist society; but will, as always has been, and as always will be the case as long as this old world continues to roll its majestic way through illimitable space, develop results that are strictly logical consequences of its basic principle, or rule of action.

The question, then, is not, Which social synthesis—Individualism or Communism—is the more fit to maintain the integrity of the Anarchistic form, but, Which is the necessary consequence of the existence of that form? By thus shifting the ground of argument we shall arrive at a more rational basis for discussion. Now what is Anarchy? It is a state of society wherein men have absolute liberty to direct their own movements free from authoritative domination, either social, economic, political or ecclesiastical, by their fellow men.

Although this definition is rather crude in expression, I fancy that it is comprehensive enough to cover the ground, and there are probably few Anarchists who would feel inclined to quarrel with it. It is universal in its application, and it leaves men to associate themselves together in obedience to the immutable laws of the universe and the dictates of their natural social instincts.

Then, the question recurs: What synthesis is the logical outcome of such a state? I unhesitatingly answer, Communism. Now, let us not be anachronistic in this matter. Let us remember that Anarchy is posited as a fundamental principle, and avoid the error of carrying over conceptions of Communism which can only refer to a state of slavery. This is the common error.

In a recent issue of Lucifer Comrade Ballou gently criticises the comrades of THE FIREBRAND for their adherence to the Communistic form. After alluding briefly to the numerous failures in Communistic experiment he says: "I imagine our Anarchist friends without exception will ascribe the failure to the presence of authority within the community or state outside. For myself, I incline to the opinion that it is always the authority with-

in the Commune. And just how a state of Communism can be maintained without this authority I fail to understand, and so I cannot reconcile Communism with Anarchism."

Here is exhibited that remarkable confusion of thought which nearly always enters into this discussion. The assumption here is that the maintenance of a state of Communism is to be the end of Anarchistic effort. This assumption violates the fundamental principle of Anarchy. It is this holding up of Communism as an end, and the bending of human energies for the compassment of that end, when the primary conditions are wholly unfavorable, that has resulted in failure of the Communistic experiments alluded to. But Communism is not an end. It is merely a means to an end; the end being the most perfect satisfaction of human wants and the social instincts in a state of Anarchy. We cannot imagine free men sacrificing their freedom merely for the sake of maintaining a Communistic form of society, no more than we can imagine free men maintaining an individual property form after the primary conditions of existence had rendered it positively useless and harmful. The question is purely an economic one and at bottom is always so considered; though the discussion quite frequently transcends economic lines.

Now, Anarchists need to arrive at a clear understanding of the idea of property before they can discuss this question intelligently. Comrade Addis is quoted as saying: "I shall always claim the right to hold many things as my very own private property." With all deference to Comrade Addis, he doesn't mean this at all; he makes the common mistake of confounding the right of property with the right of possession. I wonder if Anarchists have entirely forgotten Proudhon's formula: "Possession is a right; property is against right."

The idea which the term property inevitably conveys cannot be carried into the discussion without sacrifice of clearness. Emerson somewhere said: "What the owners wish to do, the whole power of property will do, either through the law or else in defiance of it." It is this inherent absolutism of property that endows it with its specific form and causes men to confound its physical attributes with its prevalent social uses. One of the old authors quoted by Carl Marx proclaimed a fundamental truth when he said: "If each man's labor were but enough to produce his own food there could be no property." As a corollary of this fundamental truth comes another fundamental truth—that if each man is left in secure possession of the product of his labor there can be no property. It then follows that in a state of Anarchy there can be no property. It comes to a question of the economic disposal of surplus possessions so as to secure the most perfect satisfaction of individual wants. I say, Communism.

I have here attempted to indicate what I believe to be the proper basis of the discussion, and will postpone further remarks out of consideration for THE FIREBRAND's space.

W. P. BORLAND.

### COBWEB BARRIERS.

As I have received several copies of your grand little paper and have become interested in the profound discussions constantly going on therein, I have concluded to become a subscriber and at the same time seek for an explanation of a few points which seem to me to be a barrier to perfect freedom:

(1) Is not selfishness an inherent quality or trait in all animated nature?

(2) Are not the weaker among animals and in all the roving tribes of mankind compelled to give way to the stronger?

(3) Do not all birds, animals, fishes, etc., have to guard against their enemies?

(4) Is it not a natural law that one species of the animal kingdom shall live by devouring some other?

(5) Have we not living proof of the fact that the more education, the more thought, the more humanity tries to investigate natural laws, the wider becomes the gulf between human intellects, tastes, hopes and aspirations?

(6) Will history not bear me out in the assertion that nearly all philanthropists have been abused, maligned, scorned and many died martyrs at the stake or in dungeons? Now if any of the above are nature's gifts to man how is man to revoke the same?

Hoping that through your paper my eyes may be opened to see the true way to perfect freedom,

C. SINNOTT.

Edison, Wash.

### Answer:

(1) Selfishness is the mainspring of action.

(2) So far as I know, yes.

(3) Yes.

(4) I know nothing of any laws of nature—I have not been favored with a copy of the statute book. Law implies intention, which again implies brain and reasoning power. If there be such a law, then many species are outlaws. But because big fish swallows the little one it does not follow that men, who boast of so much superiority of intelligence, should follow the example. We have instances where in the absence of food civilized men have eaten human flesh. But in the absence of the necessity, why should one human being live at the expense of another? No matter how the "lower" animals may live, there can be no excuse for one man luxuriating on the misery of thousands, except the stupidity of the latter in allowing it.

5.—The real gulf, or inequality, is in the education and opportunities. In a savage state men's tastes, aspirations, etc., differed little or none. But because of the monopolization of opportunities by a few the inequalities have grown up. What opportunity has the street arab to develop the aesthetic taste possessed by the child who is surrounded by beautiful and artistic objects?

6.—Yes. It has been to the interest of those in power to work upon the ignorance and prejudices of the people to that end. Deprived of the opportunity of enlightenment, they have accepted the opinions ready-made for them by their masters, and in the belief that they were acting in their own best interests, have destroyed their benefactors. J. H. M.

GRAND JURIES, as a rule, are so worse than useless, that it will soon be as close to charge a man with having served on one. Star.



## IS THIS FEASIBLE?

I submit the following plan for consideration. Its basic principles are economic association to enable us the better to resist pressure bearing upon us; to establish an object lesson; to create a source of means for propaganda, and to train reformers in the communal mode of living and working. To my mind there is no reason why such an association should not accomplish its purpose, that is, to help overthrow the present wage slavery.

First, no one should be asked to join unless the organizer has perfect confidence in his ability and willingness to adapt himself to these new conditions, for it is absolutely trustworthy.

Second, all arrangements need to be carried on so that no cause for distrust can come up.

Third, a communal home need to be established.

Fourth, establish a common workshop near the home; or if the shop already exist, open up the home near by.

Fifth, the whole establishment to be as near the laboring population as possible inside the city limits.

It is out of question to plant a commune in a part of the country foreign to the members, as the cost of transportation would eat up all possible benefits. A location like Chicago, New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia or San Francisco, from which the markets of the world are readily reached, is the proper place.

Sixth, no member working in the common shop should live outside the communal home, as that would require a cash division of earnings and cause a diversity of interests; but members may work outside and live in the home, turning all their earnings into the common fund. This would be a test of good faith, but a fair one if the member was under obligation to no person outside.

Seventh, no stipulated amount necessary to become a member, but each to contribute according to his ability. It is not financial standing that should qualify, but personal merit.

Eighth, it should be insisted upon that candidates for membership have no desire to make money, get rich; but simply to create wealth and enjoy life at their own expense.

Ninth, meetings to be held at least once a week by those contemplating the establishment of such a Commune. When the home is in running order it should be open to friends at any proper time and meetings for economic education should be held every evening.

Tenth, perfect freedom being accorded every member to employ himself as he sees fit. The best workman in his line may become foreman by common consent.

Eleventh, every member to be supplied with what he needs and do in return what he can. If a member desires an article which the Commune does not have, he may see to it that the Commune comes into possession of the desired article.

Twelfth, there are various ways of raising the means to carry out such a plan, but borrowing on interest is to be strictly avoided. If it can be done money may be borrowed on the proposition to repay five or ten per cent yearly, giving by common consent a mortgage as security. Other means are, advance-money for services to be performed, wages earned by some members, and whatever those may have who wish to join. Nothing should be bought on time; buy for cash and at lowest prices.

And last, if any member wishes to leave the Commune he should take none of the communal property, but he should be welcomed back at any time. The sole object of the whole being to make Communism universal as rapidly as possible, lending a helping hand to all who profess Anarchist-Communism as their religion.

BODENDIECK.

## GALL AND BUST.

I AM in receipt of "The Hornet," a populist presidential boom paper of Washington, D. C. It emanates from the woman who aspires to become "Mrs. Frankie Cleveland's successor on the 4th day of March, 1897." She means, not her successor as the wife of Grover, but merely as mistress of the "White house."

This woman is somewhat gifted with that quality vulgarly called cheek; still there is something refreshing in her straightforwardness. She wants her husband elected president, and says so. She has also something to say of herself. She is "a duplicate of Mrs. Langtry, but one inch larger across the shoulders and two inches larger in bust measurement." Now I am un-

fortunate in having forgotten whether Mrs. Langtry resembles more a bean pole or a bag of wool with a string around the middle; but I shouldn't be surprised if this extra two inches of bust elected her husband to the presidency. Although she speaks of these things as "personal matter" there is an evident desire to make them public. In mental capacity she is "willing to stand up and be counted with any American woman 23 years of age." But there is no need for counting; her superiority in what she mistakes for mentality will be conceded until a wilder scheme is sprung.

David Wayne Marion, the man whose wife proposes to make him president of the United States, is the self-elected president of the "Patriotic Sons of America." I was some time ago favored with a prospectus of this order. The main feature is a certificate entitling the member to draw from the public treasury at Washington \$900 upon the election of Mr. Marion. This feature alone is expected to do the business. As an illustration the case of a Democrat is cited who lived a year in the house with Mr. Marion and departed without the strongest Populist argument having made an impression. When confronted with the \$900 proposition he capitulated and according to the record, has added hundreds to the membership of the order. Now, it is sagely concluded, \$900 is a bigger price than the old parties can pay for votes, and success is assured. If a man wants votes I see no reason why he should not buy them at the market price. But Marion is too prodigal—I can tell him where to get them at one dollar each, but the sellers prefer the glitter of the coin to this glittering promise.

I have also received one of these \$900 certificates duly signed by the president of the Patriotic Sons, but I carelessly mislaid it and am afraid it has been used to kindle the fire to cook a seven-cent meal.

An interesting item in the "Hornet" is a notice of a worker for the order, which closes with the cheering assurance that "He is billed for a good position after March, 1897." In other instances the "fat positions" are plainly held out to the best "workers." Certainly; but we didn't talk that way in the days when I was a Populist. We "workers" had a way of coming to an understanding, nevertheless. Haven't I been nudged with the suggestion that I was "just the man" for this or that office by an aspirant for some higher office? And how we hugged ourselves and each other in the firm conviction that the people needed just such men as ourselves to govern them.

The "Hornet" gravely proposes to elect any man to any office (except president) who will get the Populist nomination and follow instructions. We are also assured that the Patriotic Sons "have three billions of dollars if they have a dollar." How brilliant! Only the other day a "kid" tried to "stuff" me in the same manner.

You think the candidacy of D. W. Marion is a big bluff," says the "Hornet." Bless you, no! We take it all in, and with his backing of gall and bust we shall not be surprised at the outcome.

EX-POPULIST.

## FREE THOUGHT?

THE kind of freethought(?) some people possess is illustrated by the following sentence from letter which we lately received:

"I will not subscribe to any paper that will DARE say anything against any free thought lecturer, whoever that may be."

This letter was drawn out by the statement in a late issue that Ingersoll, et al., had done good work as iconoclasts, but that at the present time the economic question was of most importance. This freethinker (?) became so incensed at this that he shows all the venom of a middle-ages christian. The merits or demerits of the lecturer are not to be taken into consideration. If he is only a freethought lecturer no one must dare to say aught against him, no matter what kind of man, beast or tyrant he may be.

Such infidels should drop the title freethinker, organize a church, or an order, duly ordain their lecturers, and institute a campaign for the enactment of stringent laws to punish blasphemers of their holy lecturers. That would be in line with the sentiment expressed in this letter.

H. ADDIS.

COMMERCE is the art of abusing the desire or need that someone has of something.—Bros. Goncourt.

## COMMENTARY ON A COMMENT.

"If the present society, by furnishing the incentive, is the cause of crime, the future society must in like manner be responsible. . . . If it were possible that some individuals should pass into that society so tainted with crime as to continue to steal, rape and murder, after the incentive had been removed, for we understand that the removal of the State is the removal of the cause of crime, etc. 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."—[Morris].

If government is the sole cause of crime then government itself is a crime. But if the State is the only cause of crime, and consequently the great fundamental crime, then man could not commit crime without the existence of the State, and hence could not originate government the embodiment of organized crime. But historically government or the State is a human production, hence mankind must have invented and defined and committed the greatest of all crimes before any crime could be committed.

Now the inference which Brother Morris gets, from the premise that the State is the source of all crime is that the State should be abolished. Let's see. The sole cause or condition of tooth-ache is teeth. Hence the way to get rid of tooth-ache is to abolish teeth. Some people do that way and it seems to work well. The cause of a head-ache is the existence of a head. Hence the way to get rid of head-ache is to eliminate your head. But it may be objected that a person cannot live without his head. On the contrary our spiritualistic friends affirm that he can, and get along better than he did with it. I do not believe that society can exist without the State. Our anarchistic friends affirm that it can and in an infinitely better, more harmonious, and altogether lovely way. No proof of this, so far as I know, has ever been adduced.

But I do not admit that there ever has been or can be any evidence produced to show that the State is the only cause of crime. I consider it an elementary fact in history, archeology, and anthropology, that men have always perpetrated all sorts of cruelties and crimes, and that the farther back we go into the past, the more brutal and savage the average men were, the more they possessed of the attributes of the ape and tiger. The making of laws designating these actions as crimes was an advance towards distinctively human society.

D. PRIESTLEY.

I deny that teeth are the cause of tooth-ache and call for proof. If it were so people who have teeth would have tooth-ache constantly. This attempt at analogy is a "trick with a hole in it".

It is easy to isolate and criticise a sentence, but let those interested study my comment in connection with what has been said before, and there is no need to waste time and space on "trick criticism."

In this instance only the crimes which have been so defined by the State were under discussion; and, little as it speaks for the "advance toward distinctively human society", only the smallest and pettiest have been so defined. I suppose that when the State shall admit and define its own criminality we may consider ourselves purely human!

History furnishes the proofs called for by Mr. Priestley, both as to the possibility of society without the State and the fact that such society is more conducive to human happiness than the present.

MORRIS.

## ESKIMAU LIFE.

EDWIN ASTRUP, the young Norwegian explorer, in his book, "Among the Neighbors of the North Pole," says: "Having no money and no means of accumulating wealth of any description, their system of existence is upon the most ideal plan of applied socialism and individual liberty. If one hunter is smarter and stronger than the rest of the tribe his extra supply of meat is the property of all the others, and satisfying himself with the admiration and esteem of his comrades, he divides his prey with them with the utmost goodwill and joyfulness.

"The settlement consists of from five to six families, each living in their own hut, but there is no attempt of authority being exercised by any one. Each person follows his or her own sweet will without consulting anybody else.

"There is very little lying among them, as no object exists for telling a story. Innocent deceptions occur, but their object is usually to create fun at somebody's



expense. This was often the case toward the members of the expedition, whom the Esquimaux delighted in fooling, with an object of demonstrating that the wisdom of the white man is not fully sufficient to enable him to act the role of superior in North Greenland.

"Marriages are usually meant to be for life, but it happens that where dissensions occur an Esquimaux will arrange a deal with a good and kindly neighbor to trade wives for a given length of time. This usually pleases all hands concerned, but invariably has the inestimable effect of everybody returning to their original choice with great joy and a declared intention always to agree in future. From three to five children is the result of the average marriage; six children born to one couple is very unusual. The children are treated with touching tenderness, and are in themselves well behaved and, as a rule, very good looking. They play with each other without quarrelling or fighting, and their language is shorn of any bad names or threatening epithets to apply to each other. Their disposition is sweet in the extreme, and they might be strikingly described as a lot of very dirty angels, for the climate is much against cleanliness.

"Also toward their dogs do the Esquimaux, even under the most trying circumstances, show an amount of patience and kindness which would be quite desirable among us Christians. It happened that on one occasion the dogs had eaten nearly their whole harness and drag lines, which are made of walrus skin. Instead of getting angry, my Esquimaux guide blamed himself loudly for having neglected to feed the animals."

#### CLIPPINGS AND COMMENTS.

THE military authorities, after patient experiment with Indians as soldiers, have decided to enlist no more red men for our regular service. They are good fighters when thrown upon their own resources, and brave to recklessness, but they do not bear military discipline well. The restraint and subordination to which this subjects them are odious in their sight, and they chafe against them constantly. They are therefore practically worthless as soldiers, though sturdy fighters, and the decision to enlist no more of them is wise.—[Oregonian.

It is a great pity that the whites are not as restless of restraint and subordination as the Indians. Why should any man subordinate himself and obey the commands of another? It seems that this does not harmonize very well with De Leon's statement concerning the Indians obeying a central directing authority.

HERE is an admission from one of the most conservative papers in the United States, The Youth's Companion:

"It is said that the municipal ticket of the dominant party in one of our largest cities, for the last campaign, was named by a single party leader. . . . This way of selecting candidates strikingly witnesses how far "boss rule" has superseded popular government in many of our large cities. It has gone quite the point of setting up a vulgar despotism; and although, theoretically, there lies in the use of the ballot a means of destroying it, in practice the ballot is sadly inefficient."

It seems to me that when the main upholders of popular government, law and order, etc., are forced to admit the inefficiency of the ballot, it is a poor time for those opposed to majority, or any other, rule to begin its advocacy.

FOR the edification of hero-worshippers and ballot howlers, I take the following from the Buffalo Arbeiter Zeitung (Labor News):

"That we are not alone in being skeptical about the efficacy of the ballot, is proven by an expression of Eugene V. Debs, which he made a short time ago at a meeting in Cincinnati: 'If you believe in deliverance through the ballot-box, then do it. But one thing is certain: your children will not believe in it any more. They will have passed through the school of the bloodiest revolution the world ever saw, and will have learned that only the justified forces of defense of the oppressed are of avail against the brutal power of the ruling classes.'"

What do our good friends say now to this expression of a thoughtful, peace-loving man?

MAN is the sum of parents and nurse, places and times, air and temperature, sound and light, food and clothing; his will is the necessary consequence of all these things.—Moleschott.

Is vain you tell me artificial government is good, that I fall out only with its abuse; the thing, the thing itself is the abuse.—[Burke.

#### HOSPITAL REPORTS.

BY L. SMIRNOW, M. D.

I.

HOSPITAL reports have heretofore been written only from the medical point of view, and hence were of interest to medical men only. Each report bringing them tidings of some newly-discovered remedy; some new fad for permanent cure of consumption; a new mockery for preservation of health; results of experiments with anti-toxine of all kinds, with animal and vegetable germicidal principles, with serum and nuclein; the conclusion in all cases being invariably the same,—whenever conditions are unfavorable for good health no remedy yet discovered can improve it. And while salubrity is so extremely imperfect among all people,—among the poor on account of their great deprivation, and among the rich on account of their gluttony and idleness, it would not be surprising if medical men were impelled to seek the insidious cause that hinders their success. Indeed physicians who wish to benefit humanity, who desire to have realized the principles of their science, and who do not practice their art merely for the advantages it affords them, must of necessity recognize that there are underlying causes to these various diseases; not merely the direct cause of disease, not only the bacteria, fungi, organic change, nutritive disturbance, nervous influence, heredity, uric acid diathesis, etc., but foul atmosphere, improper food, irregular habits, overwork, gluttony with some and deprivation with others,—i. e. social evils. Yes the physicians ought to be the first to observe this anomaly, for it behooves them most of all to witness suffering humanity, to see the direct effect of this social system on the people in general. It is for this very reason that I write these hospital reports; not, however, for the purpose of convincing the physicians that their art is to a great extent inane and fruitless, for many of them are unconvinced, but for the purpose of instructing those that are directly concerned,—the working-people.

It would be of no little interest to describe the management and general supervision of an hospital, and such description in this case may be considered as more or less typical. We have some very generous and kind people, good church folks, who so gratuitously donate some little sums that the poor unfortunate sick may be cared for, that they may receive medical treatment and hence may at least entertain hopes. Yes, some kind good-hearted manufacturer who so repeatedly pays his "shop-girls" their due earnings, five or six dollars every week without fail, whose tender heart is so keenly affected by the sufferings of the "lower classes," contributes some five or ten thousand dollars towards the hospital fund, "feeling provoked" that the newspapers have glorified his name, and that it has been inscribed, in gold letters, in a conspicuous place in the hospital buildings. Some good land-lord too, often thinks that there must be some suppository for tramps, paupers, and the rest of the "common people," who ought to be out of the way when they are sick so that there would not be that hideousness in front of his windows and behind his doors; his philanthropy at length reaches such an extent that he can not resist the temptation of donating several thousand dollars for the hospital, and "out of his own pocket too" say all the newspapers. And the State, the government "by the people and for the people," so promptly furnishes five thousand dollars, out of the "people's treasure," for the use of the "people's sick," and every year at that, without the least consideration for the great banquets and balls that might be made that much more brilliant if this sum were appropriated for them. And the city, too, so willingly pays four dollars every week for every patient who is unable to pay for himself if only they were sick instead of hovering around looking for work or something to eat, and often overcrowd the station houses at night. And so do the exploiters, the capitalists, land-lords, manufacturers, and other rapacious creatures "provide" for the poor and the sick, and so also do these laborers, the toilers, the producers of all wealth, after many years of wearisome toil depend upon these "benefactors" for further existence. Nothing can be more revolting than the fact that the working-people, those that create all means of subsistence, that produce all superfluity,—wealth and luxury, that they, after life-long labor and endurance, are finally compelled, when old and enfeebled, to "as paupers, or "free bed patients" in some public institution. O! is there anything to appease the anger and indignation of the reflective mind when it views these

horrors? Is there some remedy that would induce peaceful tranquillity, be it for ever so short a time, to the mind that reflects over these injustices? No, nothing except patient submission and cowardly endurance! which is precisely what has destroyed many a noble enterprise, and has played so prominent a part in the enslavement of mankind. In this way are hospitals supported: by donations from various tender-hearted and noble souls who "earned" every cent of their few millions of dollars; by church collections and state appropriations, scrapings from every nook and corner, snatches from misers and bachelors who have so much of the people's wealth that they know not what to do with it. These benefactors select their own managers who, not knowing the requirements of the sick, not knowing nor taking the pains to know the circumstances and environments of the inmates, attempt to "manage" the hospital affairs.

The condition of the patients will be best understood by describing our little hierarchy, which, although small and insignificant, has a boundless proclivity to coerce and command all that are within their jurisdiction. This little pseudo-hierarchy consists of the superintendent, who is a thorough business man, his wife, a "sociable" woman, Dr. B. (one of the resident physicians) whose sole object in life is money, and, lastly, the superintendent of nurses, whose countenance is so expressionless, sphere of activity so untraversed and intelligence so little displayed that I am wholly unable to find any one thing that would signify her character and natural propensities. Like princes of other hierarchies, they contend for supremacy, and amusing indeed are their little private wars. But what is common to them all is that sublime Self, or the Mysterious Me, as Carlyle puts it, playing so prominent a part in their career. Wherever they go and whatever they say or do, that invincible Me at once takes up a prominent place in their brains, and hence they give vent to it in their conversation and actions. Each for himself thus takes care of his own Mysterious Me that it may not suffer hunger, thirst or displeasure of any kind. It is amusing to see a person who is aged by years but not by experience; and such a one is our sociable woman, who is never tired of relating the pleasures she has had and the dinners and entertainments she attended when she was at Atlanta "for her health." "All the nurses in the hospital," says she, "have not as much sense as a cat; they are of the low class, most of them coming from the shops, and they haven't sense enough to know one thing from another." "Certainly," interposes Dr. B., whose thoughts about money prevented him from hearing a word that was said; "certainly, that's true indeed." In this way our entertaining lady will tell one day everything about the neighbors, their business, their property, when and how they were married and the next day she will gossip about the patients. That woman feigned sickness so that her husband would love her the more; others are not as sick as they seem to think, and others still ought not to be in the hospital on a "free bed"—if they can't pay they needn't come here. To all of which our money-dreamer readily gives his assent. Often she wonders why "our" consumptives don't go to California or Florida, where they could at least live comfortably, instead of being here on free beds. "Yes," says Dr. B., just returned from Moneyland, "it is a wonder they don't go there instead of hanging around here."

Such is the interest the plutocrats find in life! and a miserable life it is. But this woman is greatly superseded by her husband, the superintendent of the hospital, who, by the way, does not present the characteristic appearance of a strict temperance man. He manifests much condescension in occupying a position of this kind, but his great business abilities find vent in extreme economy about the food of the patients. A half-pint of milk a day, he thinks, is enough for any sick person, and it is only those who are too sick to eat anything else that can have milk. His ambition goes so far that he often has the patients make a breakfast or supper of pure hot tea and bread, and at the end of the year he reports to the directors that he runs the hospital at less expense than his predecessors, in view of which they conclude that the hospital is doing first-rate, and he is reappointed. A short acquaintance with this creature is most beneficial and instructive, as he is a fair representative of the aristocratic class. His sophistry is past all powers of argument and reason, and in this way does he view the world and its people, or rather the little world he sees around his Mysterious Me. "Servant girls" and washer women he designates as "domestics," and many of the working people, he thinks, are not as good as faithful dogs. At times he



goes into extreme ecstasy over the prosperity of the hospital, counting with delight the diurnal increase in the number of patients. Never had I thought there was a business side to a hospital, but I am now convinced that hospitals are, in the majority of cases and to a great extent, business institutions.

A fit interne is Dr. B., whose business pursuits are in vogue with the aim and object of the hospital. There are some doctors who have profited very little by their studies and are too indolent to exercise the little they do know, but are, furthermore, of the authoritative kind wishing to coerce others to execute their, often unreasonable, orders. To these qualities add religious fanaticism, self love, vain pride, incapability of independent thought (except some obstinate caprices), and you will have a fair representation of the house physician who is to care for over eighty patients during the four subsequent months—a fact which many of the patients regret. This young man, who laughs when others laugh and says yes or no according to majority rule, and who thinks more of pleasure than of the sick, knows, however, how to “make” friends, and on his morning and evening rounds he so pleasantly shakes hands with every patient and compliments many of the female inmates, with a view to securing their patronage when he is established in practice.

And now we come again to the superintendent of nurses, and to consider the welfare of the patients from this standpoint. I can say absolutely nothing of her, and this in itself is a great deal. Much of welfare of the sick is directly dependent upon the nurses—the care and attention they afford them—and the superintendent is supposed to direct and manage them and see that their work is properly done. But really there would be far better order and better work done if such supervision were dispensed with.

## The Letter-Box.

C. H. Y., Chicago.—The paper has been sent regularly and it would be in order to inquire at the post-office about it. The missing copies are sent again; we will also change your address after May 20th.

E. G., New York.—I hope you have received my letter ere this. Will write again as soon as time permits.

F. P., New York.—(1) There is an effort to establish a Commune in Connecticut. The agent is Fritz Nadler, 898 Eleventh avenue, your city. Our opinion of such attempts will be found in this number. (2) We cannot express an opinion of E. Z. Ernst. If men can better their present condition by means of the Labor Exchange there is no reason why they should not do so; but it is not by any means a solution of the social question.

## TURNER'S PROPAGANDA.

It seems to me that never did the Philadelphia comrades have such a treat as when Comrade Turner, of London, delivered his lecture on Anarchism at the L. L. League. The hall was filled with intelligent, enthusiastic people, many of whom belonged to the professional classes.

Comrade Turner proved that the idea of Anarchy could be traced even five centuries back. The meeting was earnest and successful and it is the desire of the Philadelphia comrades to hear Turner again.

L. RABOTNIK.

Philadelphia, April 28.

## 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.

## RECEIPTS.

Fry, Johnson, Kuhran, Sinnott, Notkin, each 50 cts. Halpern, Gaisberg, Culbertson, each 25 cts. Brown, Powell, each 10 cts.

## NOTE AND COMMENT.

“A PLEA for the New Woman” is an address by May Collins published by the Truthseeker Co., New York, at ten cents per copy. The author is a young woman of progressive mind and her little book shows ability in handling her subject. She urges the necessity of liberty in order that her sex may develop its possibilities. We welcome her to the ranks of the advocates of liberty and hope she may develop until her efforts are not confined to a sex or class.

INDIVIDUALLY I doubt the feasibility of Comrade Bodendieck's proposition found in this issue. The colony idea as a social solvent has proven itself impracticable. It may seem inconsistent that a Communist should find fault with any attempt at the formation of Communes, but I find it necessary to do so sometimes. Free association is a desirable thing and practicable under proper conditions. My own experience proves to me that two or more persons may associate for industrial and social purposes with pleasure and profit if the temperaments are compatible. To be a success the Commune must be an association of compatible natures—that is, each individual must be free to choose his associates; and this freedom is just what is and must be lacking under present conditions. The fact that a person is a Communist is no reason why he should be a member of this or that Commune if his presence is not agreeable to each and every other member thereof. The aim of Communism is to secure freedom of association rather than a scheme for increased production, like harnessing so many oxen to this plow and so many to that harrow. The mere presence of a particularly objectionable individuality is sufficient to overshadow all the joys of existence; and I hold that it is not the “duty” of any person to suffer avoidable misery in order to set an example of Communistic life. Such “self-sacrifice” could only prove abortive and harmful in the end, because it would be a living lie in itself and the evident inharmoniousness would repel instead of attracting. If two or more persons can increase personal enjoyment by communal association, let them do it—neither I nor any one can find a valid objection to it. But let them do it for personal happiness, for only on condition that such association is harmonious and happy can it be a benefit either to them or to the cause.

In speaking of Communism as a religion, if the comrade means to use a figure of speech it is in poor taste, it seems to me; and if he means it in an actual sense I very seriously object. The mistake is too obvious for comment. Similarity is absolutely lacking. And don't let us be narrow in our sympathies. Need is none the less galling because the needy hold opinions different from our own. Let us extend a helping hand whenever possible, not only to our brother Communists, but to our brother men everywhere.

I ACCEPT Comrade Borland's definition and concede that, if the word possession is recognized in the sense in which he uses it, I do not wish to claim any property at all. But in my reply to Comrade Koch I simply tried to show my opposition to any compulsion or interference by the community and my right to hold my personal belongings against all comers.

The press reports have it that President Cleveland has volunteered his services in settling the trouble between Spain and Cuba, and proposes the purchase of liberty by the revolutionists. How the patriotic citizens of this “land of liberty” must swell with pride at such a proposition from their chief! How well it harmonizes with such utterances as “Give me liberty or give me death!” and “Millions for defense, but not one cent for tribute!” utterances that we hear repeated in schoolboy recitations and fourth-of-July orations. When we understand what such a proposition really means, it would seem sufficient to forever close the mouths of these praters; but since ignorance or villainy is the source of their loud acclamations, no result is to be expected. What could the Cuban people do toward the purchase of the island? Their fields are devastated and their property destroyed by war. They could simply bond themselves for the payment of the purchase price—the most effectual form of slavery ever yet invented. They could bond the island and set up by their own votes a government to compel them to pay tribute for the next hundred years. It is said that a revolutionary leader suggested this mode of settlement.

Now beyond a doubt, since the Cubans are winning victory after victory and ultimate triumph is conceded on every hand, there is a scheme on foot to cheat them out of freedom in the end, and the “grandest government on earth” is to be accessory to the crime. Every true friend of freedom in every land will earnestly wish success to the Cubans and death to the plotters.

THE “Society of Popular Publications and Periodicals”, Paris, propose to begin the publication of an Anarchist daily paper, “La Clameur” [“The Clamor”] in a short time. The address is F. Peloutier, 80 Rue de Bondy.

In Austria, Belgium and Spain, the May-day demonstrations was the occasion of calling out the entire police and military forces. Ninety thousand workmen paraded the streets of Vienna, and in the conflict with the police 100 men were wounded.

## A Raffle.

The Labor Educating Society in Allegheny City Pa., has arranged a raffle of a “fine Gold Watch, Lamp, Clock and several other articles,” for the benefit of “The Firebrand”. Tickets 10c., for sale by A. Frey, 78 Pike street, Allegheny City, Pa.

The Rebel, Liberty Library, and The Firebrand have decided to offer the three publications at \$1.00 per year. No subscriptions taken for less than one year. Application may be made to the office of either of the papers.

## AGENTS FOR THE FIREBRAND.

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SOCIETY FREEDOM meets every Sunday 3 P. M. at the Labor Temple, 6th floor, SW corner 15th and Forum Sts.

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