

The Firebrand.

FOR THE SMOTHERING OF THE CORNERS OF IGNORANCE AND SUPERSTITION.

An Exponent of Anarchist-Communism: Holding that Equality of Opportunity alone Constitutes Liberty, that in the Absence of Monopoly Price and Competition Cannot Exist, and that Communism is an Inevitable Consequence.

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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.

Revolution.

[AIR: TEUFELSMARSCH.]

Into a world with woes waned dim,
Into its night of spectres grim,
Speeds forth the message of the Coming Day,
Bidding the people sweep the wrong away.
Into the midst of woes and tears,
Breaking the fetter links of slavish fears,
Courage, springing,
Wakes the Revolt of man!

Everywhere slaves are rising to reject the yoke of masters;
The system of fraud is shaken down in hurricanes of disasters;
The bondage of rule is shattered by might of manly deed,
And privilege, now grown desperate, brings armies to fight for Greed,
And revels in blood across the land—but its crimes new rebels breed!

Wild Revolution far and wide
Kindless above the bloody tide,
Flames, that point on beyond the war-cloud's veil
To that bright future when the hosts prevail
Who, for their Freedom's keen desire,
Brave for awhile the tyrants' sword and fire.
Freedom's winning!
Hinder her march who can!

Law, and rule, and wage, and price
Shall cease to bind our hands and hearts!

Hail! the strife, the blood, the groaning of the men
who fall, who fall!

Hail! the pealing
Thunder of the bombs, the cannon, and the crashing
wreck of All,

Now revealing
Liberty in might creating worlds anew, where no more
crawl
Reptiles, stealing.

Life from death of captives fettered;
But the weal of all is bettered
By the brother help of freemen,
Heeding neither god nor demon,
King, nor law, nor property,
But strong in friendly Liberty—
So, lawless, fearless, battle on
For victory and Anarchy!
The Wrong is dying—
Tyrant bands are flying—
And we win for the cause of the Free—
Anarchy!

Out of a world with woes waned dim,
Out of the midst of spectres grim,
Freedom and happiness in triumph rise,—
Shout forth the tidings to the echoing skies!
Into a world from woe set free,
Joyful, to a never-ending peace go we!

J. A. ANDREWS.

Where Competition Ends.

It is a leading principle of modern philosophy that in its process of development each institution tends to cancel itself. This principle is the basis of the Hegelian philosophy, which so largely influenced the thought of both Proudhon and Karl Marx. Bakounine also, who is regarded, I believe, as the father of Anarchist-Communism, reasons from this principle, and advances as a fundamental truth the statement that "every development necessarily implies a negation of its base or point of departure." Hegel's concept is that of a universal form which characterizes the process both of exist-

ence and of thought. This universal form is the process of becoming, or the union of position and negation. All that becomes at once posits, and, by passing into something else, removes itself. Every thought, for instance, involves its contradictory. But the contradictory is not a mere negation: it is in itself as positive as the thought. The thought, "competition," e. g., is not more positive than is its contradictory, "monopoly." Every thought, therefore, as it involves its contradictory, adds to its own content, and by a combination of the two contradictories we rise to a new thought, and ultimately to absolute knowledge. Stated in another way: Every thesis involves its antithesis; but the antithesis merely adds to the content of the thesis without destroying it, and by the union of the two theses we arrive at a new synthesis which destroys both.

Now, we are taught that free competition (and, remember that I am speaking from the Anarchist standpoint, and so use the word "free" in its literal and absolute sense) is an absolute good; that it is a form which must be preserved if the race is to be saved from retrogression and decay. Up to a certain point this teaching is undoubtedly correct; but beyond that point it is erroneous and absurd. Competition is very beneficial, because its tendency is to at once cheapen the price of commodities and improve their quality, but competition is neither more nor less than a force applied to the attainment of an end, which end is the satisfaction of human wants with the least possible effort, and, like every other form, when it has reached a certain point in development it cancels itself and can no longer aid men to reach that end: it must be cast aside to make room for a new and higher form. Now, this process of negation of form by development is universal throughout nature. It is a law of progress. There is a constant striving of the human mind for something better. Man constantly endeavors to adapt his instruments to the end that they shall add to the content of his happiness, and old forms are continually being replaced by new ones. In the domain of physical activity this process may be very readily traced. An inventor conceives an idea which is of vast benefit to social well being. He embodies his idea in a mechanism. At first his machine is crude and fulfills his conception but poorly. But instantly, especially if the conception is one which has to do with a function of vital importance to social well being, the whole inventive faculty of the community is concentrated on this new form in the endeavor to improve and perfect it; and this concentration of inventive energy continues until it finally brings about such improvement that the form is perfected. There it stands, a finished and perfected machine, a triumph of man's ingenuity and skill; try as he may, he can improve his instrument no further. Now, observe: when this point is reached the specific form perishes; it is cast aside to make way for a newer and improved form which promises to fulfill the conception more fully.

Perfection of form means annihilation.

All human institutions must be regarded merely as adaptations of means to ends, the final end being, of course, the most perfect happiness and greatest good of the entire race; and if men were relieved from the pressure of unnatural restrictions which an ignorant and selfish conservatism has piled upon them, if they were allowed to develop themselves and their institutions naturally and freely, human progress would present the spectacle of an orderly and congruous movement from lower to higher forms of life. But, as it is—and this is especially true when we confine our view to matters of social and economic organization—the evolution and annihilation of form which constitutes the dynamic side of human progress is never allowed to proceed regularly. Counter forces, which restrict and hinder the natural course of events, make their appearance. (Classes and cliques come to be formed, which, losing sight of the great final end, or having never perfectly conceived it, conceive ends of their own which they assume to be final, and which are fully satisfied by existing forms. Thus is set up an intense opposition to change of form. Thus is developed a well organized force which arrays itself in opposition to the regular course of nature, and which is aptly termed "conservatism". The exaggeration of this sentiment is a great evil, because it inevitably produces conflict and bloodshed, and destroys the uniformity of natural processes by introducing catastrophic changes, which are to be avoided if possible.

"Fools only wander from the broad highway,
So spake the multitude, whose beaten track
Some lone soul's patient labor, ages back,
Hewed from the living rock that therein they—
The children's children—might walk free today;—
Some poor, unhonored sage, with brain on rack
And heart on fire, through nights that slumber lack,
Hearing strange voices that he must obey.
Heavily burdened, on from steep to steep
To far off wisdom the slow centuries creep;
Yet shall be reached that ultimate table-land
Where, high above the creeds, all men shall stand
And clear discern that, over them and their wild earth
Doth sweep the Shadow of a Hand."

Now, let us glance at the thesis of the Individualist-Anarchist with respect to competition. Mr. Tucker says: "The supposition that competition means war rests upon old notions and false phrases that have been long current, but are rapidly passing into the limbo of exploded fallacies. Competition means war only when it is in some way restricted, either in scope or intensity,—that is, when it is not perfectly free competition; for then its benefits are won by one class at the expense of another, instead of by all at the expense of nature's forces. When universal and unrestricted, competition means the most perfect peace and the truest co-operation; for then it becomes merely a test of forces resulting in their most advantageous utilization. As soon as the demand for labor begins to exceed the supply, making it an easy matter for everyone to get work at wages equal to his product, it is for the interest of all that the best man should win; which is another way of saying that, where freedom prevails, competition and co-operation are identical." It is proposed to reach this ideal con-

dition by means of competition, through the mutual credit system. Says Mr. A. B. Westrup, in his "New Philosophy of Money:" "The Mutual Credit System will destroy the speculative part of interest, reducing it to the cost of providing the paper money. With the cessation of interest will disappear dividends and rent: profit being also reduced to wages for superintendence. This will bring us to the competitive system."

Very well. Competition has been used to destroy monopoly. We are in shape to, or have abolished the state. Privilege, and so property, has disappeared. Each man stands on his own bottom and holds his possessions free. The motives which gave strength and life to the competitive principle no longer exist. The price form of apportionment encounters a new and incongruous basis. We are on the very threshold of Anarchy. What then? Shall competition continue, or will it be something else?

W. P. BORLAND.

Anarchist Organization.

JEAN GRAVE'S OPINION.

[Translated from "La Societe au Lendemain de la Revolution (Society on the Morrow of the Revolution) by J. A. A.]

SOME reactionaries hold that Anarchy would be a return to the savage condition, that it would be the death of society. Nothing more false. We recognize that association alone enables man to avail himself of the mechanical equipment which science and industry place at his service; we recognize that it is by associating their efforts that individuals will enhance their welfare and develop their independence. We are, then, partisans of association; but, we repeat, because we consider it a means to the welfare of the individual, and not under the abstract form in which it has been presented to us up till now, and which made it a sort of divinity in which those who compose it must be annihilated. . . . If we wish to effect a revolution answering to our ideal, we must, to prepare this revolution, organize ourselves on the lines of our principles, accustom ourselves to act individually, and guard well against introducing into our organization the institutions which we are attacking in the present society—otherwise we should fall into the same difficulties.

The Anarchists ought to be more practical than those they are combating. They should be inspired by the faults committed, to avoid them. We appeal to all those who wish to destroy the existing society: instead of losing our time in arguing the usefulness of such or such a means, let us group ourselves for the immediate application of this means without having to concern ourselves on account of those who do not favor it, in the same way that the partisans of another means will group themselves for the putting in practice of this other means.

What we wish for, before everything, is the destruction of the present society; it is evident that experience will guide us in the choice of means. But in thus acting we shall be doing practical work, instead of losing our time in barren meetings where each one seeks to carry his own idea; where, very often, people separate without having decided anything, which has nearly always the result of creating as many dissenting factions as there are ideas present—factions which, becoming enemies, lose sight of the common enemy, capitalistic society, and make war upon each other.

Individuals, grouping themselves on the lines of their own ideas, will accustom themselves to think and act of themselves, without authority among them, without the discipline which consists in annihilating the efforts of one group or of isolated individuals because others are of a different opinion. . . . Small differences will disappear in the discussions which may take place on the subject, leaving only those divergences too accentuated to be brought into accord: then, each one will group himself to work out the plan which he believes will best answer the purpose. . . . If man is forced to live in society this society has no other reason for existence than the advantage which the individuals can find in it; the social condition is for man only a means of freeing himself of natural obstacles, enlarging the scope of his activity and developing his independence, ac-

quiring the strength to overcome obstacles.

That is to say that society—that abstract entity created by sociologists and politicians to absorb human individuality into an "all" which they have been able to exploit for their profit—has no right, no power over the individual, and that in any case he can not be sacrificed to its needs. For society can have no need proper to itself, no interest of its own; its needs are only the sum of the needs of the individuals composing it, and consequently the social interest and the individual interest can never be found antagonistic to each other in a well balanced society: when this occurs, as in the existing society, it is because that society is established on false bases, and only serves to mask the exploitation of part of its members for the advantage of another part who have been able to turn the association to their profit.

If for the sake of his welfare man is forced to live in society, that is not to say he must, for that, renounce his individuality: it is to give oneself a strange idea to believe that he will have lessened his independence, alienated his liberty, because he will have united his powers with those of other individuals to make the best of the resources which his industry has opened up to him.

To effect a transformation as deep as we wish for, all the different directions of ability and devotion are not too many, no matter in what form they appear, from the moment that their object is to destroy a prejudice, the elucidation of a truth. This natural and spontaneous division of work it is, which, giving scope for every initiative, will facilitate for us the destruction of existing society by putting us in a position to attack it from all sides at once.

It is evident that every group formed must be associated on bases agreed upon in advance, which every individual who enters the group engages by that very fact to respect. (But nobody can without committing himself to an absurdity agree to respect what has not yet been determined, as in those groups where new purposes are brought forward "for the collective action of all assembled.")—J. A. A.) . . . Why, from this union of forces which is only made in the view of ameliorating the welfare of the individual, should there result the contrary, the loss of individuality and independence? . . . Develop the scope of the evolution of individuality, and there will result a good social evolution. If it is desired that the working of this association of forces, which we recognize as indispensable, be not hampered, the individual in this association must not be crippled in any of his aspirations, hampered in any of his movements.

Loveridge's Biblical Criticism.

COMRADE LOVERIDGE, thinks I don't know much about historical science as applied to the Bible. The proof of my ignorance is clear in his last article, if we accept all his statements without inquiring into their truth. But I am skeptic enough to believe very little in controversial literature till I know what the authority is.

So, first, will he kindly tell me in what book, chapter and verse of the Talmud I am to look for his version of the Lord's Prayer? for I don't believe there is any such thing in the Talmud. I can back my opinion if desired, and tell where Comrade Loveridge's quotation probably does come from; but it is his business first to tell where he professes to get it.

I hope, though, that he remembers the undisputed fact that the Gospels are older than the Talmud. Yet he hardly can have remembered it when he wrote, "The Gospels fairly bristle with beatitudes, and ethical maxims stolen from the Talmud."

He says the early Christian church believed in the miraculous reproduction of the older books by Ezra. Suppose they did, who cares? Does he mean to cite the fathers as decisive historic evidence for such a story, or does he know of any set of Christians who think themselves bound to agree with the fathers in such matters? One of his authorities is Tertullian, the author of "I believe because it is impossible," who became a noted heretic. It will be hard to find anyone who will accept Tertullian as authority.

Then he quotes W. Stewart Ross, who must be a wonderful scholar by this quotation. He starts with the assertion that Hebrew was a dead language in

Ezra's time. How is it, then, that the history of Ezra's own time is written in Hebrew, not only by the scholar Ezra, but by the business man and politician Nehemiah, that the popular prophets of that day (Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi) spoke to the people in Hebrew, and that modern scholarship, to the great disgust of old-fashioned orthodoxy, dates half the psalms (popular songs) in Ezra's time or later? Fifty or a hundred years ago people used to imagine that the Jews did not usually speak Hebrew in the time of Ezra; the origin of this belief in a mere blunder, and its utter worthlessness, are now well known. But the idea that Hebrew was altogether dead among them is Mr. Ross's own invention. For a nation's language to die out during a captivity of only seventy years, while some of the old men who returned at the end of the captivity remembered how splendid the temple used to look before they were carried away, would be a miracle about equal to Ezra's reproducing the books.

Then he goes on to say that Hebrew letters had been forgotten, and so Ezra wrote in Chaldean characters—in the face of the fact that all the remains we have of Hebrew writing on coins and other inscriptions for hundreds of years after Ezra is in the old Hebrew character. Any one who has access to a moderate public library may test Ross's scholarship for himself. Get the Standard Dictionary (the latest English dictionary) and see, at the word "alphabet," in the column "Semitic," the Hebrew letters from the oldest known Hebrew inscription, 400 years before Ezra; then, at the word "coin," in the photograph of coin No. 30, the Hebrew letters are stamped on that coin 300 years after Ezra—just the same—and compare the "Chaldean" or modern Hebrew letters, utterly different, in the description of coin No. 30 or in the column "Hebrew," at the word "alphabet." Then think of W. Stewart Ross saying that the old Hebrew letters had been forgotten by Ezra's time. I was going to ask for chapter and verse of his reference to Grotius, but after these samples Ross's statements are not worth investigating.

Then he says he is sure that a stenographer could not read vowelless notes centuries after they were written; so he is assured that the Hebrew manuscripts of Ezra's day cannot have been understood. He neglects my other instance, that I myself am in the habit of reading the "Arabian Nights," a book centuries old, in an edition without vowels and without division between words, and get on well with it. And this in Arabic, a language much more foreign to me than Hebrew can have been to anybody in southwestern Asia, where all the languages closely resembled it. I have done the same in Hebrew and Syriac; only there there were divisions between the words. The nature of these languages makes this much more easy than it would be in English; but it is also commonly done in Persian, where everything but the alphabet is on the same principles as the English. Indeed, doesn't Comrade Loveridge know that the Talmud is in unpointed (that is, vowelless) Hebrew, and has never had the vowels written to it at all? so that if unpointed Hebrew cannot be reliably read, all his quotations from the Talmud must be imaginary.

When Comrade Loveridge called the reported darkness at Christ's death an eclipse, I supposed he meant to use the word in a loose sense; therefore, I followed him in using it. The Gospels cannot have meant this as an astronomical eclipse, for they agree that Jesus was crucified at full moon, and it was as well known then as now that natural eclipses of the sun occur at new moon. But I see now that my comrade wants me to talk of an astronomical eclipse at full moon. I won't do it. All that the Bible or I have anything to say about is "darkness over all the land," and there is no absurdity in supposing this was local in Judea.

Loveridge in FIREBRAND of June 7: "Josephus don't mention Jesus' reputation and, in all probability, never mentioned him at all." Loveridge's authority as quoted by him in the issue of March 1: "In the twentieth book of the 'Antiquities' . . . we have 'James, the brother of Jesus, called the Christ.' And this allusion, though afterward tampered with, appears to be genuine." I need add nothing, except that Niese, the latest and most thorough critical editor of Josephus, who prints the long paragraph

about Jesus with a mark of doubt, prints the above passage without a mark of doubt.

I am glad to see that the Hindoo Adam and Eve have disappeared and left no trace except a few flings about my way of arguing the matter. I can afford to let my comrade laugh at my style of argument if it proved the point to his satisfaction.

STEPHEN T. BYINGTON.

"Greenish."

In your issue of June 14, W. P. Borland asks me if I "believe that under free production men would be able to consume as much as they would naturally produce?" I must confess I don't know. If I knew what "free production" was I might make an intelligent answer. I might have also enjoyed reading his article and the conclusions he derived from his own assumptions. It was precisely to ascertain what free production may be (and its contingent, free consumption) that I broke in upon your beatitudes. If one only knew what free production really was, one might form some intelligent conception of what one would produce and consume.

I admit that I conceive of some values as natural. There are others which I conceive of as unnatural, and these latter I would like to see abolished. They are comprised in the word "profit", or perhaps I should say that profit comprises them.

If Brother Borland will kindly state, however, just how we are to rid ourselves of such "arbitrary restrictions" as labor, I can follow him with ease and felicity. As long as we are committed to something beyond an herbivorous diet, to say nothing of our foolish habit of wearing clothes and living in houses, and feel compelled to exchange our products one with another, I fear we shall also be compelled to place a value, or price, upon the result of our toil. We might, it is true, refuse to recognize price and fade away into some other sphere of experience and development, but, if our spiritualist friends are correct, we should only find ourselves face to face with other "arbitrary restrictions."

Freedom is a very pretty word, makes a most excellent noun, looks well on a battle flag, origin "propaganda," but I fear it is a sad myth. The truth is said to make one free, but it is evident we are a long way from our destination. Fortunately, freedom is subject to degrees of modification so we "keep a move on" and save ourselves from rotting away.

JAS. T. R. GREEN.

I once heard a man use the expression, "clotted nonsense," and I have never been able to find out just exactly what he meant by it. But I know now. The above is "clotted nonsense." If my friend Green knows not what free production is I must say that he is very poorly equipped to maintain any position in opposition to the postulates of Anarchy, and his better plan would be to study up a little before entering the arena of debate; I do not feel at liberty to load down the columns of THE FIRE-BRAND with restatements of fundamental propositions, which ought to be familiar and intelligible to those persons who attempt to criticize from the standpoint assumed by him. I have made no "assumption" whatever (save the very erroneous one of some little knowledge of the subject on the part of my critic)—I have not made the slightest "assumption" as a basis of argument; I have merely stated a logical deduction from an incontrovertible scientific fact. If my critic will confine himself to the material point, and advance some scientific reason tending to show that my deduction is unsound, I shall be pleased to accommodate him with all the controversy he desires, but have neither time nor inclination to discuss "clotted nonsense." W. P. B.

Reflections on Government.

The more the individuals look after their own interests, the less the hold of the national phantom on prejudiced minds.

There is no longer a national question to intelligent minds. If we observe present tendencies we see the struggle going on between the Future and the Past: equality against privilege, right against force, voluntary association against authority. This struggle exists, openly or latent, in every individual in any geographic latitude on this globe, no matter what the form of government—empire, monarchy, republic, personal or parliamentary authority.

These names are but the different signs on the same curiosity shop.

The merchant buys goods where he can get them cheapest and sells them where he finds the best market; the scientist gathers knowledge from all over the world in the furtherance of his special study; the mechanic travels from land to land in the effort to better his insupportable condition under wage slavery.

If the Tsar of Russia says, "I am the State, the supreme authority," all the American politicians become indignant. When the modern government says, "We represent the United States," and act in accordance, what difference do you see in that? Nevertheless the government is right. You give it everything; it is the strongest, it is the almighty.

You may answer that "we are the people," I, you and all law-abiding citizens; that "we are the rulers of this country"; all these men that govern me and ration my liberty, existence and comfort, and make laws against everything in general and me in particular, get their power from me.

But don't they have the power, nevertheless?

I am the one who selects them!

Very true, but you are governed, just the same.

I have the ballot—I can change them.

Yes, and the oftener you change them the oftener is the same old story repeated. For you change them at the time fixed by the officials themselves, under conditions shaped and prepared by them, in such a way that it is impossible to check the wrong action before it is already done. It is a mistake to believe that because you change the individuals of the government you can change its coercive and despotic nature. Whether sanctioned by the holy sacrament, the powder of the canon or the ballot box is a matter of indifference to government; whether the State is represented by one man or an assembly of men, the almightiness is a natural consequence.

Nobody can represent the people, because no one knows all the necessities of his neighbors. There can be represented only defined and limited interests, and not an abstraction. The State authorities do not represent me or you; they represent only themselves. The State and you are two, and two never can become one in arithmetic.

What would you think of a man who had tooth-ache and wanted to change hats in the hope of alleviating the pain? This tooth-ache is the State, and the governments are the hats we are continually changing.

The only way to come down to our natural rights is to abolish private property, which is supported by wage slavery under the supervision of the State.

Not to do what the masses are clamoring for, and to promise to execute their will after the next election—that is what the political economist calls the "science of government". In other words, it is to rob us of the opportunity to work and be happy, and make us believe this an essential condition for evolution to a higher plane. Do you believe it?

A. KLEMENCIC.

An Island Diana.

The Princess glanced at me shyly, with velvety black eyes.

"I cannot stay; I must go back now," she said in broken English and soft, liquid accents.

Then she looked down modestly.

The adjective would seem inappropriate to people who associate modesty less with glance than with garment. Of the latter the Princess had as little as can be discreetly mentioned, almost as little as Mother Eve before the Fall. At first sight she shocked my civilized susceptibilities with her beautiful brown bust, bare to the sun, and the well-defined line of the hip under the thin, tight covering.

I naturally agreed with the missionaries and other devout and delicate minded people that she was a bold, bad miss, who had to be taught modesty.

Then I fell to considering the beautiful dark face above the bust, and a new reading dawned upon me.

I remembered that Eve, in her days of innocence, "was not ashamed."

The Princess was not ashamed.

She moved like an animated bronze statue.

The curve of her hips undulated gracefully as she swung over the ground with firm, untrammelled ease.

The poise of her head was artistic as she raised the bundle of washing she did not disdain to carry. But of none of these was she conscious. If she moved with an air of statuesque pride it was from the innate consciousness of her dignity as a Princess, a maid in whose veins flowed pure, untainted blood, a Taupo maid to boot, the set apart virgin of the village, with whom none dared to meddle, and whom it behooved to walk about guarded and attended.

But she was dimly conscious that my ways were not as her ways, and with puzzled courtesy she tried to consider my feelings. When I drew near she donned a loose, décolleté bodice, or a dark scarf wound round her neck and falling over her bosom. They belonged to her full-dress wardrobe, and she was quite willing to wear them as a concession to my civilized weakness.

I felt the courtesy and the concession. I also felt humiliated thereby. The humiliation was good for my soul.

I had been preparing a monograph for the Virtuous Literature Society on "The Influence of Civilization in the Development of Modesty and Decency," and I had come to reside among nonvirtuous savages for purely literary ends.

I thought I would allow that monograph to stand over for the present. It struck me that I had fallen into linguistic error, and confounded Drapery with Decency.

My Princess has other ideas.

To her drapery is a question of dress in the sense of adornment; but decency has no part therein.

It is also a question of class, not sex distinction.

It is finally a question of satisfying innate artistic instincts, unspoiled as yet by thirst for admiration.

In short, my Princess has her own ethics of dress, but they are not to be found in the fashion books.

When she winds a fresh lava-lava round her beautiful limbs, she chooses it of a bright tartan pattern to contrast with her brown skin, or a rich blue to blend therewith; but so also do her father and brother. When she passes a fragrant white frangipanni, a scarlet hibiscus, or a yellow fau blossom, she gathers and places it in the fluffy black locks which she has dexterously pinned up, prompted by the same love of coloring that brings her brother leaping from the bush with a necklace of scarlet berries and a wreath or kirtle of green leaves.

But she no more looks in the mirror than yonder orange-red, black-winged bird, twittering in the bread-fruit tree, looks in the stream. The only mirrors she reckons of are certain minute ones which will be piled high on her enormous wig when she is suitably attired to dance at the coming Siva.

For she is the Village Virgin, queen of the festivities by right of birth, beauty and virtue, and this it is which makes her at once so pure and so proud in her savage innocence.

In that other world, the world of civilization from which I come, we do not as a general thing credit the belle of the season with a retiring disposition. Neither do we associate high kicking and serpentine dancing with modesty and deportment.

My princess is a high-kicker, a serpentine dancer and society belle, in the native acceptance of the terms. But her ideas strike me as terribly inconsistent with her position. For instance, when in full dress she covers up more of her person than when in ordinary plain—particularly plain—costume. Also, when at home among her own people she walks about in serene unconsciousness of her Eve-like appearance. But if she sees it attracting the roving eye of a cranky foreigner, like myself, she seeks a light covering which shall conceal her outlines.

The society belle of my acquaintance proceeds in an opposite direction; the more strangers she expects to meet the more décolleté she is. As to the high kicker . . .

I privately fancy the Princess would take exceptions to the general appearance of the high kicker. For, as I remarked before, she has her own dress ethics, dimly perceived by me, but not analyzed. In proof thereof, she eyes with stern disfavor my print of Leighton's "Psyche Unveiled," which hangs on the wall. The young lady is a great deal too discreet to give it any further notice than that of a startled glance; but her attendant duenna was more explicit, and inquired, with an expression of disgust curling her thick upper lip, what has happened to Psyche's lava-lava.

Now Duenna was, "in her figure," a very passeé objectionable figure. But she also had her ethics as well as her dingy-white lava-lava. I must distinctly mention that Psyche's sex has "nothing to do with the case." Cupid, without the inevitable lava-lava or a

leaf kilt, would be just as scandalous. The question of Decency versus Drapery becomes daily more complicated.

On one occasion the Princess had a tiff with the Protestant missionaries. She looks too placid to have a tiff with anyone, but this was a serious occasion. It was a question of dress ethics.

The Princess wanted to go to the mission school; the missionaries were nothing loth; but the matter of attire had to be primarily settled, and, in matters of attire, Protestant missionaries are stiff.

They are indifferent as to color, but rigid as to covering. Their pupils must all be dressed in a loose gown which they originally introduced, but which, by some strange mistake, is habitually styled "native dress." The term is preposterous. No native would ever have invented anything so unbecoming to a fully developed figure; out of ten native women who wear it eight look clumsy and slipshod. But it suited alike the properties of Christianity and civilization—i. e., it hid the human form and suggested that there was something to conceal.

The Princess' artistic instinct and her pride of place alike rebelled. Her soul revolted still more at a civilized uniform which would bring her to the level of the common herd. She was quite willing to appear always in her short, loose, sleeveless decollete blouse, or in a long neck scarf. But to cover herself up to the throat and down to the wrist and hide her lava-lava! she, the beautiful Taupo, the Village Virgin, as if she had some blemish to conceal—the notion was preposterous, not to say shocking. The missionaries were inflexible. The Princess was likewise inflexible. So she went to the nuns, and the good sisters did not clothe her, but took her in.

The nuns, who are the most covered-up ladies of my acquaintance, seem less prejudiced on this point than their sister missionaries of the rival faith. If you except the hands, no artist can make a possible guess at a nun's figure, or even assert with positive certainty that she has a figure at all. Yet in this part of the world the sisterhood accept with philosophy native views on the subject of dress. Possibly their own superfluity of raiment in a tropical clime makes them sympathize with the desire for Mother Eve's freedom. Anyhow, though they drew the line at appearance "in her figure," they allowed the Princess to drape that figure as slightly as she pleased.

Still more remarkable, they seem not to have given her any civilized reasons for draping the figure. Consequently she left the convent with her curious code of ethics unaltered. I am not at all obliged to the nuns, for they might have saved me a great deal of unsatisfactory cogitation.

Some day my Princess will resign her position as Virgin of the Village to become the wife of a great chief. She will be draped in stiff rich mats so heavily that she can scarcely walk—not for decency, but for display; the clan on each side will come laden with presents for general distribution; and feasting and speech-making and gift-giving will run riot. Then her days of dancing and daintiness and picturesque attire will be over. She will grow fat and lazy and degenerate into one of the sloppy, jolly native women who slouch about the place. Her artistic perception will dwindle; she will take to the loose wrapper and to a larrikiness hat imported by the island trader. But her moral tone will be thereby unaltered; she will still, on wash day, or at tub hour, cast aside the gown, appear in the lava-lava, and be not ashamed.

Or she will perchance marry a white man who will instill some white notions into her dark head. She will wear her loose gown with a conscious air, add stockings and French shoes to her wardrobe, acquire a notion of the improprieties and the art of blushing—though I believe the latter is out of date.

I had serious thoughts of being that white man. I had serious thoughts of falling in love with the Princess. She is quite charming enough. And then there would be all the romance of rescuing her from her present semi-barbarous condition and surrounding her with the refinements of enlightened conventionalism. It was a very pretty frame for a romance; but one thing disturbed me. I could not sketch in my Princess satisfactorily as central figure. It was out of the question to introduce her in her lava-lava, and I fear her loose bodice or neck scarf would not find favor even on the most full-dress night of the "circle." There would be nothing for it but civilized attire, and my heart quailed at the visions this evoked. I remembered divers fat Jewesses in gala array who were my pet aversion. Could I insure my Princess against becoming a second edition

of these? And could any romance hold out against the appearance of a dark, much spread out young person in the silk and furbelows and buckrammed waist of fashion? True, my Princess would learn the art of draping—the ethics of decency. I paused and again bethought me of a full-dress night in the circle and "living models" on the stage. With the art of draping, my Princess might also acquire the arts of immodesty. She might perchance learn to be ashamed.

I refrained from falling in love. The Virtuous Literature Society is still waiting for that monograph.—(Rose de Boheme in Sydney Bulletin.)

Note and Comment.

We learn from "La Voce del Popolo" (The Voice of the People), San Francisco, that the Italian group of that city propose to give an opera in burlesque of Crispi and cabinet in the near future, and intend to set aside a fund for the benefit of THE FIREBRAND. The enterprise of this group is worthy of emulation. THE FIREBRAND's prospects for becoming an eight-page paper is encouraging.

After the above was written we received a letter (and a contribution) from "Alleonza Socialista Anarchista", the group referred to. The letter manifests a splendid spirit to THE FIREBRAND and the English movement, and speaks in warm terms of Comrade Gori's recent work in that city.

We must ask the indulgence of correspondents for a couple of weeks. Comrade Addis is in San Francisco, propagandizing, Comrade Isaac is making hay for the Firebrand cow (too bad she isn't in the group photo!), so as to help out in living expenses. The rest of us will do our best to attend to all urgent business, though not thoroughly acquainted with the business end of the institution.

The first and second numbers of "Age of Thought", published at Columbus Junction, Iowa, by E. H. Fulton, who recently announced in THE FIREBRAND his conversion from Communism to Individualism, have been received. It presents a very neat appearance and is, of course, devoted to the Individualist philosophy.

The "land plank" in Mr. Fulton's "statement of principles" is worthy of some attention as a sample error. Individualist land tenure is to be occupancy and use, with private ownership of products. This system, it is evident, takes no heed of the rights and needs of any individuals except those who are born in time to corner all the land they want to use. Something of this kind seems to have occurred to Comrade Fulton, for in the first number of "Age of Thought" he provides that the holding of one individual shall not exclude another from possession of an equal area. In No. 2 the idea seems to have entered the editor's head that different areas might differ in productiveness, and still the man who chose to be born first would have an advantage over those who delayed that important event. So again he "provides" that these areas shall be of "approximately equal value". Possibly this may be regarded as progress toward equality of opportunity, but Mr. Fulton's "Justice" still stands, as represented of old, with bandaged eyes, unable to see the varying wants, needs and abilities of individuals. Instead of liberty, he proposes rigidity. Such a system of appraisal and allotment can never be self-adjusting, but will require administration—authority. Yet some such system is necessary to the realization of the Individualist's ideal, which, Mr. Byington tells us, necessitates private property.

J. H. M.

The Letter-Box.

J. C., Cleveland, O.—We welcome Comrade Turner's convert most heartily. The pamphlets have been sent.

L. C. P., City.—The charges you prefer against our principles as a reason for ordering your paper discontinued, i. e., "Unamerican and against good citizenship," is a "corker". We offer no defense whatever. Guilty!

L. M., Jacksonville, Ill.—It appears that you are looking too far away from home to find "the Absolute"—you might have found it (absolute nonsense) in the mass of stuff you sent us. The first workman you meet will answer the question, What is liberty? which appears to bother a "lecturer and author" who goes about thrashing the atmosphere in search of "the unconditioned, unrelated, uncontrolled Absolute". If you "have no need of the discussions" found in our columns, we will try to get along without your metaphysical abstractions. Since this Absolute (something or nothing,

as it may prove to be when you find it) is "unrelated", it can have no bearing upon the question of liberty—nor any other question, for that matter—and we have no time or space to waste in hunting for something (or nothing) for which we can have no possible use.

Receipts.

Alleonza Socialista Anarchista, San Francisco, \$2.00. Kreiger, \$1.00. Reisinger, Shillan, Bauer, each 75c. Isaacson, Radich, each 50c. Smith, an unknown Philadelphian, each 25c. Loveridge, 10c.

The "Age of Thought", published by E. H. Fulton, Columbus Junction, Iowa, in an advocate of individual liberty; of the free use of land and other natural resources; of free banking and is an unalterable opponent of arbitrary authority and special privileges. It is eight 9x13 pages in size and printed on fine book paper. Send 2 cents for sample copy, with terms and premium offer.

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E. G.