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WHOLE No. 470.

"We see dimly in the present what is small and what is great,

Slow of faith, how weak a hand may turn the iron helm of fate."

Lowell.

By the Wayside.

The blackmailing suit of John Platt, the millionaire, against the Negress, Hannah Elias, took the veil off of present Christian morality. District-Attorney Jerome, the ardent guardian of morality, implored the court to take notice of the fact that a "very grave crime had been committed. . . . amounting to almost \$700,000" The gravity of the "crime" he found in the large sum of money and not in the supposed blackmail. Not a word of reprobation had the guardian of public morals to say against the "illicit intimacy" for which Platt had paid the money. And when the Negress threatened to reveal also the filthiness of other "prominent and respectable citizens," the "unpleasant affair" came abruptly to an end.

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The Socialists are gradually recovering from the affliction of the "materialist conception of history." Most of them still hug the delusion that Socialism—State Socialism, certainly—is coming as a matter of course in the next step of social evolution. But A. Simons, editor of the *International Socialist Review*, begins to question such fatalism, in spite of discontent and moribund society. "Unless this discontent can be met and assimilated," he says, "one of two things will happen, either of which means disaster to Socialism—either the Socialist movement will itself be overwhelmed by this confused discontent, and turned aside from the path of intelligent revolutionary action, or else it will remain apart from the great current of revolutionary thought, and degenerate into a more closed sect, while the actual proletarian revolt goes on perhaps to confusion and defeat." This is encouraging indeed, and it is to be hoped that the editor will now frankly admit that the revolution of society must come from within rather than from without.

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The pernicious effects of the war make itself felt both in Russia and Japan. The daily press being in sympathy with the Japanese government, reports in detail the distress now prevailing among the Russian workers, but has no intelligence of the condition among the poor of Japan. D. Kotoku, editor of *Heimin Shimbun*, a Socialist periodical in the Japanese empire, gives some light on the affairs in the *International Socialist Review* (June). Instead of "recognizing that war always brings with it general misery, the burdens of heavy taxation, moral degradation, and the supremacy of militarism," says the editor, the "workers dreamed that in some way their con-

dition might be bettered." Already the families of the soldiers "are suffering for want of the necessities of life," production and consumption have decreased, and "numerous factories are closed and manufacturers bankrupted. Hundreds of thousands of workmen have been thrown out of work and are living thru the scanty gifts of charity." . . . "The poorest quarters of Tokio exhibit the most deplorable increasing day by day." The subscriptions for the war loan were more or less compulsory. The authorities visited every house, and those who refused to subscribe for the war fund were denounced as unpatriotic. When the Socialist periodical opposed the war and the increasing of taxes, all copies of that issue were confiscated, and one of the editors imprisoned. All Socialist meetings are under close supervision of the police. The utterance of the words, "revolution," "democracy," "organization," or "strike" by any of the speakers is a penal offense. "The ruling power of Japan is," concludes Kotoku, "on this point at least, no less barbarous than that of Russia. The czar is merely the head of the religious organization of this country, but the mikado pretends to be God himself. Every school in Japan is a church in which the picture of the mikado is worshipped, and the religion of so-called 'patriotism' preached."

* * *

If the "signs of the times" are not altogether deceptive, we are on the eve of great social upheaval in Europe as well as in this country. The "prosperity" which the Spanish-American and English-Boer wars created has come to an end, indisposition occasioned by the intoxication of "prosperity" has set in, and all along the line the "captains of industry" are preparing to make the workers suffer for the "loss in trade." "Cheap labor" is hailed as the savior of trade and commerce, and whenever the workers show a spirit of resistance, they are immediately decried as "Anarchists" who must be "crushed at any cost." Brute force is the last argument of the tyrant. Of late it is the striking workman who is especially dreaded. The "powers that be" have found out long ago that the ballot is a harmless toy in the hands of the toilers. They can easily cope with the "representatives of labor" in office. If here and there one of them is still tinged with radical ideas, he is made to "resign," as the sovereign voters can now witness in Colorado. But when thousands of workers refuse to work, the "law-abiding citizens" get into a frenzy, and their tranquility is not restored until the toilers are "persuaded," either by starvation or by the police club, to submit to the skinning process. Yet the idea of the efficiency of the general strike is growing, and with it the rage of the exploiters. In Spain, where the Socialist politicians have little or no influence the great peasants' strike has ended with the complete satisfaction of all their demands, a victory which will not fail to encourage the factory workers of this priest-ridden monarchy. "Thruout industrial France strikes are still the order of the day," says *Freedom*, "but while sundry, owing to interference of

political leaders, end in nothing, the majority win or force concessions from the masters, success being always heralded by a march of strikers beneath the folds of the red flag." In Germany, however, with its three million of Socialist voters, of the 1,405 strikes during the last year only 300 were successful.

* * *

Hence the renewed persecution of the Anarchists all over the so-called civilized world. In this country the anti-Anarchist immigration law was the first expression of fear of those who appeal to the intelligence and strength of the united workers; and in Europe a "stamping-out" process of the Anarchists has been inaugurated by the Russian inquisitor Von Plehve, who has suggested that the powers of Europe combine against the "Anarchists" by handing over such as are foreigners in every country to the police of their own nation. So great is the dread, says *Freedom*, of London, "that even such peaceful States as Norway and Denmark have subscribed their adhesion to Von Plehve's document." So far England, France, and Italy have ignored the circular, and "the Swedes have even protested indignantly against such further outrages against inoffensive persons, with the result that their government now disclaims any intention of bringing new laws against the Anarchists." But the German government has not been slow in seizing the opportunity offered to crush the Anarchist propaganda. Suspects are closely watched, correspondents tampered with and strangers liable to arrest at any moment. "As in Russia," says our valiant contemporary, "the police have become omniscient. For example, three men, a Belgian and two Dutchmen, were living quietly at Bonn, when without warning their rooms were raided during their absence at work, themselves thrown into prison on leaving the factory and their papers and books seized, the latter being only what are openly sold in every book store. After three weeks' imprisonment the Belgian was conducted to the frontier, no charge whatever being made against him; the Dutchmen (each married and with a family) remain in prison. This is not an isolated case; it is the growing frequency of such attacks on the liberty of the individual that has roused the rhetoric of the German Socialist and the indignation of every right-minded citizen." Switzerland, "the most democratic republic on earth," tries to please the monarchies by extraditing "suspicious characters," and otherwise annoying the refugees from the different countries. And Spain does not lag behind in its policy of persecution. "Since the so-called attempt on Maura's life the police have been busy drawing up lists of revolutionary suspects (they will be lengthy!) with a view, it is supposed, to further repression, it having been ascertained that Maura's visit to Andalusia was really for the purpose of inaugurating such by getting the king to sign a new decree against the Anarchists, in which it was stated that not only militant Anarchists, but *Anarchist thinkers*, will in future be punished with utmost severity."

INTERLOPER.

FREE SOCIETY

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A. ISAAK.....Editor.

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470.

If these figures correspond with the number printed on the wrapper of your FREE SOCIETY, your subscription expires with this number

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.

ATTENTION.

All delinquent subscribers are earnestly requested to renew their subscriptions if they wish to receive the paper. It is due to the negligence of the delinquents that we are forced to issue only four pages.

In New York City Mrs. ANNIE EDELSTADT will visit the negligent subscribers, and we hope she will not spend carfare in vain.

* * *

For the benefit of FREE SOCIETY a pleasant afternoon and evening outing will take place Sunday, July 3, 1904, at Smith's Wald Hotel, near Glendale Schuetzenpark. Section 13. Transfers from all Brooklyn cars to Richmond Hill cars.

A Talk With Our Readers.

Since FREE SOCIETY moved to New York we have received many inquiries as to the reasons of the removal, and we feel that we owe our readers an explanation. For several years the work on the paper has been done by the Isaak family. A year or so ago Abe Isaak Jr., having worked for the paper from the age of thirteen, concluded that, as long as he was connected with FREE SOCIETY, he would neither be able to become efficient in his trade as a printer, nor find enough leisure for study, and he went out to "paddle his own canoe." This necessitated the hiring of help, which proved to be too great a strain on the income of the paper, and the publishers went into debt.

When the "Turner case" agitated the minds of the New York comrades, some comrades in this city thought to be able to promote the propaganda if they had a periodical right here on the spot, and proposed to publish a new Anarchist weekly. Comrade Isaak offered them FREE SOCIETY, its outfit and subscription list, if they were willing to pay the debts, which amounted to \$150. He was then induced to come to New York with the paper. The debt, the cost of removal and the expense of establishing the paper in its new quarters were paid by the New York comrades.

But, being taxed with the "Turner Case," their resources for providing funds were soon exhausted. Besides, when we applied for the

FREE SOCIETY

second-class mail matter privileges, there were over four hundred delinquent subscribers on the FREE SOCIETY mailing list. The post office questioned the "genuineness" of those in arrears, and in order to avoid the danger of being denied the second-class mail matter rates the delinquent subscribers were taken from the subscription list. Many took offense at this procedure, and did not renew their subscription. Add to this the dulness of the summer time, the present "prosperity" of the workers, and the indifference and negligence of many of our subscribers, and you will easily guess why FREE SOCIETY was reduced to four pages last week.

Yet in spite of all the unfavorable conditions, FREE SOCIETY would not have to make appeals if the readers were more prompt in paying their subscriptions, and we hope they will keep in mind that the publishers of FREE SOCIETY are neither blessed with riches nor credit. Meanwhile we are compelled to appeal for aid to those who can afford to do so. One comrade has already deposited a check for one hundred dollars as a starter for a sustaining fund, provided that two or three hundred dollars more can be collected from those who have the propaganda at heart. A "poor worker" has added twenty dollars to the fund, borrowing the money from a friend. Now let us hear from the rest of those who are aware of the necessity of a vigorous propaganda in a time when the enemies are preparing themselves to crush free speech, free press and trade unionism by means of the bludgeon and imprisonment.

But we are opposed to donations; we want to see efforts and activity. Instead of sending us donations, order books or papers for distribution. The papers for distribution we offer to mail for fifty cents a hundred, and the books and pamphlets published by FREE SOCIETY will be mailed for one half of the price given in the book list.

FREE SOCIETY GROUP.

Club-Law Reigns in Colorado.

For several months military despotism and club-law reign supreme in the Colorado mining districts, the capitalist and Socialist press notwithstanding. The former insists that "lawlessness and Anarchy reign in Colorado, while the latter joins the chorus by a stern declaration that "capitalist despotism has led to Anarchy." But such malicious perversion of facts need not worry the Anarchists, for infamy has the tendency to recoil upon the perpetrators of the infamy. Both the capitalist and Socialist scribes lie with a purpose: the capitalist hireling endeavors to justify the outrages perpetrated upon the miners by the civil and military authorities, and the Socialist tool of the party machine caters to the prejudices of the toiling masses, which are expected to transform society into a State Socialist paradise by the ballot-box.

The facts are, however, that murder and tyranny are rampant in Colorado, instigated by God and Governor Peabody, according to Colonel Verdeckberg. "We are under orders only from God and Governor Peabody," this professional murderer declared, which is sufficient to prove that it is not "Anarchy" that reigns in Colorado, for neither God nor Peabody have ever been accused of being Anarchists. Neither can General Bell be classified among the Anarchists, for the New York Sun asserts that Sherman Bell "represents the modern type of the man-killing sheriff of the last generation"—a man "who has mur-

der in his eye." These are the men who at present "reign supreme" in Colorado. They are ex-"tough-riders," intimate friends of President Roosevelt.

A reader of FREE SOCIETY in Cripple Creek, who quietly follows the vocation of a business man, and therefore has no reason to misrepresent either side, writes us:

"Dear Comrades:—Hell has broken loose in the Cripple Creek district again. Russia never in its history has been guilty of greater outrages than have been perpetrated in Colorado. It beggars description. You have read, of course, in the press of the dynamite explosion at Independence that killed twelve non-union miners. The Citizens' Alliance and mine owners have taken advantage of the situation to commit all kinds of depredations, destroying all the union stores and the Victor Record.

"The dynamite outrage was condemned by everybody—either union or non-union men, and no fair-minded man or woman believes that the strikers, as a body, were cognizant of the deed. But the so-called Citizens' Alliance and mine owners saw their opportunity to rid themselves of the union. Even sympathizers dare not express their views without being arrested. Civil officers who were disposed to be fair to union men, have been deposed from office and Alliance men put in their places. A reign of terror is rampant. Armed deputies and the militia hunt down union men, and their sympathizers and old-timers—the peaceable men—are being driven from their homes and families.

"A mob of over one hundred men and boys, headed by a hair-brained kid, took the train yesterday (June 8) to go to a little camp of about twenty union men. General Bell was in command at the scene of the wonderful 'battle,' in which one poor miner was killed. These peaceable miners were rounded up and brought in with all the pomp of a victorious army.

"To express sympathy for the poor strikers, or to say one word derogatory of the outrageous acts perpetrated by the officials, is *lese-majesty*, and sufficient to send one to the bull-pen, and if a prisoner lags or looks crooked he is jabbed with a bayonet.

"The mine owners and 'Citizens' Alliance' are responsible for the late troubles. Many believe they perpetrated the dynamite outrage. Detectives who put up the train derailing job and tried to fasten it upon the strikers by committing perjury are also capable of dynamiting non-union miners in order to break up the union. I myself am inclined to believe that this was the case in this instance."

That the miners after continuous provocation have here and there resorted to violence may be freely admitted, for if men are dragged out of their beds in cold winter nights, driven from their homes barefooted to the trains, and are told never to return, simply because they are members of a union, the result must be either retaliation or abject servitude. And the troops came out not merely to prevent the "violence" and "lawlessness," as it is claimed, but to *break up the strike*, "to do up this anarchistic federation," according to General Bell's own words.

"When I first reached Colorado," says R. S. Baker in *McClure's Magazine*, "I was surprised to find so little violence, so little apparent cause for this display of force. Viciousness existed, but not to be compared in extent with that of the anthracite coal strike in 1902, nothing like the riots which the writer saw in Chicago in 1894, and there was certainly not so much 'slugging' as there was in New York under the Parks' régime." From this it can be easily guessed who precipitated the outrages and the shedding of blood in Colorado. Already in 1894 the mine owners intended to break up the union by force of arms. They sent eight hundred armed toughs (deputy sheriffs) to Cripple Creek. The strikers quickly armed and forti-

fied themselves on Bull Hill, even taking control of certain mines. But the governor—Waite—sent troops to protect the strikers, and the strike was quickly settled in favor of the miners without bloodshed.

In short, there is no doubt the miners are being outraged, and that brute force triumphs in Colorado. But it seems to me that the miners were in need of the lesson in order to awaken to the real situation. In their constitution they emphasize in every paragraph that they are law-abiding, and are trying to better their condition by lawful means. Yet in the *Miners' Magazine* they declare, and rightly so, that "Labor produces all wealth: wealth belongs to the producer thereof," or "The robber exploiters take the wealth that we have produced by the toil of our hands and the sweat of our brows. Before the warfare comes to an end, labor must be given all, capital must be destroyed, and Socialism must take its place."

Very well. But do the miners expect that the mine owners will fold their hands and look on quietly while they are threatened to be dispossessed of the source of their wealth? Do they really believe that society can be completely revolutionized by "lawful means"? If so, they have yet to learn that not the "upholders of law" but the "law-breakers" have ever been the "saviors" of society. The cannon has always been the final argument of the ruling and propertied classes, and in this country the "robber exploiters" have shown more than once that they "abide by the decision of the voters" only so long as it does not materially injure their interests. Even the ultra-conservative *Volkszeitung* (Socialist) now admits that events in this country do not justify the claims of the Socialists that society can be revolutionized thru the ballot-box. Neither will violence transform society. But men and women conscious of their slavery and degrading condition, anxious to break the fetters that cripple their body and souls, are stronger than cannon and bayonets, and it is for this reason that we urge our Socialist friends to devote their energy to the dissemination of advanced thought rather than lull the toiling masses to sleep by making them believe that the millennium can be inaugurated by putting a slip of paper into a box occasionally. Many Socialists are inclined to sneer at Ferdinand Lasalle's prophecy, that 500,000 Socialists would bring about the downfall of the German Empire. Yet events will vindicate Lasalle's prophecy. So far Germany has three million Socialist voters, but, as Bebel admitted, not twenty per cent. of them are conscious Socialists.

INTERLOPER.

Concerning Respectability. — An Inquiry.

III.

As the priestly office has many specialized functions, so has that of the soldier. Government officials and professional politicians are vicarious soldiers. A politician is a civilized savage. A few years ago he would have swooped down and seized the thing. Now the opposition of forces forbids and he has to do by legal means what the savage chief did by violence. His business is to convince, wheedle and cajole the people into voting for him. That in many instances he thinks he is sincere there is no doubt; but the fact remains that the "ward boss" or the "district boss" is a man who studies the penal code closely, so as to keep out of jail. He is a bashibazouk posing as the people's friend. His motto is, "To the victors belong the spoils," which he may announce as did Andrew Jackson, or deny as did R. B. Hayes—the fact remains the same.

As the first practical and useful work was done by women, outside of killing things, the soldier lived on the labor of women. So the priest and all those who make up the superior class are still supported by the industrial com-

munity. At the last, everything comes out of the ground and somebody has to dig for it. This superior class lives by acquisition, rather than by production. The propensity to annex is strong in the soldier class, the predaceous instinct never relaxes, and exemption from manual labor is still the certificate of character.

But the politician is not really respectable until he is able to have his family indulge in conspicuous waste. Read the dispatches from Washington and you will be confused to know whether the men or women are the most important. Usually there is one column of the doings of Congress, and two columns concerning receptions, fetes, soirees, dinners and teas, with all the data relating to gowns, brooches, bays and cross matches. By the side of the great man is a picture of his wife—seldom his intellectual mate—but the one who advertises his status by her conspicuous waste.

The doings of the president's wife and daughter are cabled to the ends of the earth; their comings and goings, with minutiae as to their attire, and all that relates to cards, curds, and custards are spread before us each morning at breakfast. And when the "First Lady of the Land" fainted and fell prostrate thru an excess of social duties, we telegraphed condolences, and nobody smiled excepting a mulatto in Tuskegee.

Politically, we live in the age of snobbery. That is to say, the social period of imitation and uncertainty. Socially, the city of Washington is imitating the Old World nobility, and out-heroding Herod. Washington society is clutching for respectability thru strenuous, conspicuous waste of time and material. And that it is succeeding in its complete devotion to futility, none can deny.

The objection can be made that Washington society is only a small number, and if they alone form the superior class are really not worth considering. The point is worth considering. Washington society is a grade below Biltmore, partaking of strenuousity and uncertainty: Washington society is not quite sure that it is respectable, while Biltmore and Shelburne never doubt. These people, it is true, are of not much consequence, excepting to themselves, and are mentioned merely as an extreme type. They are like a picture painted with a broom, very much in evidence. The fact is that every city, town and village has its self-appointed superior class, and this class gets its tone and takes its fashions from the extreme types just mentioned.

That these people in the smaller towns actually do work with their hands, and help carry the burdens of the world is true, yet on Sundays and other holidays they delight in parading themselves in a dress which seems to advertise that they do not work. Their raiment, when they can afford it, is the dress of those who habitually indulge in conspicuous waste. And almost without exception they look forward to a time when they will not have to work. And those who do have to work unremittently here, are offered an equivalent thru a promise of a mansion in the skies. No heaven has yet been pictured excepting as a place of idleness and conspicuous waste. Your country merchant, if he prospers straightway advertises his prosperity in conspicuous waste. He builds a house five times as big as he needs. One might at first suppose that the size of a house would give the beholder some idea of the number of people who live in it, and this is true; excepting that small families live in big houses and big families in small houses. Indeed, the number in any given family is usually in inverse ratio to the size of the house. If prosperity smiles, the wife has two servants, and the daughter ceases to work, in order to advertise the father's prosperity. The mother will tell you her servant-girl woes, and of all she suffers, but what can she do? She was far happier when they lived in a cottage and she did her

work, but now there are all these things to care for, and the social duties besides. Yet she is very happy in her misery. They are respectable and must advertise the fact, so the fashion in dress is followed that Paris prescribes, as it filters thru New York, Chicago, Galesburg, and Des Moines, Iowa, as the case may be. And this fashion is always with a design of conspicuous waste. Thus the starched shirt, high stiff collar and white cuffs come straight from men who did no work, and dressed so they could not. Formerly the "biled shirt" was worn only by preachers, doctors and lawyers—it was the badge of exemption from manual labor. But now every farm-hand on Sunday will get into this uncouth and uncomfortable apparel and go to church. He endures the discomfort and he goes to church because these things lend him eclat—he is respectable. In truth, in rural communities this is the test, "Does he go to church?" If he does not, he is not respectable. And if he goes to church, he must dress like the others. So his clothes take on the priestly touch; for the collar, cuffs and shirt bosom all trace a direct pedigree to the vestments of the priest, who wore his robes to prove to everybody that he was different, set apart, peculiar, and had no place in the plain industrial life of the community.

Woman's dress reveals more than man's in the reaching out for conspicuous waste. The bracelets on her wrists, and the gold chain about her neck, go back to the time when these things had a positive use. The chain at her neck became gold instead of iron, when she became the pride and pet of her owner. So jewels now advertise that the woman is favored by a man. The fashionable woman's hat, skirt, corset and shoes advertise her inability for useful effort. Rawlins says that in Abyssinia free women wore trousers while slave women were compelled to wear a skirt. The skirt means servility—it hampers the wearer at every step, and if the dress be really fashionable, the owner has to lift the skirt in her hands; while in the courts of Europe boys and girls are set apart to follow and carry this cumbersome train. And as for the woman's hats and bonnets, they no longer pretend to be for protection or service—the head-gear is purely for display. And the bonnet that is a "dream of loveliness" to-day is considered a "fright" tomorrow. For conspicuous waste demands that you shall discard things before they are worn out, hence the changes in fashion.

Corsets unfit the wearer for useful effort, and were used first to bring about a becoming delicacy and deformity. The French heel is not really French but Parisian, and advertises that the wearer is not a peasant who carries burdens on her head. To carry a burden you must have your foot squarely on the ground, but to even walk at all with a French heel is a difficult performance. A case in point may not be out of place: A woman came up from New York to visit the Roycroft shop. She wore very high French heels, and got along all right on the sidewalk or on the floor. But once she started to take a short cut across the lawn. There had been a rain the night before and while the sod looked smooth and pretty, it was very soft, so our good woman's heels went right down into the ground. I watched the lady from a safe distance and noticed her flounder. I have always been somewhat interested in dynamics and I feared she would fall forward, and as she weighed a hundred and seventy, there might be a "silver fork fracture." She did fall, but she did not fall forward as I had expected. She fell backward and made her impress on the turf. She lost her center of gravity, and so did everybody who saw the operation! She was absolutely powerless to recover herself, and it took the combined efforts of Ali Baba and Deacon Buffum to carry her to a place of safety.

I mention this seemingly irrelevant incident

to prove the effectiveness of a form of dress that was designed to reveal the disability of the wearer. The woman did not work and could not—in those clothes. This woman also wore the long skirt and the straight front corset, which further advertised her unfitness. Can one imagine a mother wearing such garments? Motherhood, and the signs of motherhood, are sacred to all good men, but here was a woman wearing garments that exaggerated her hips and bust, proved an alibi for other parts of her anatomy, and shoes that rendered her an easy prey for any predaceous Roman in search of female Sabines! Yet, she was a worthy wife and mother, and her attire was only a histrionic make-believe.

But conspicuous waste having completed the circle, comes back, and we find the extreme type of fashion's devotee, dressing and acting with a most becoming modesty. Thus we have the well-bred girl who wears a thick soled, flat-heeled shoe, who discards corsets and the long skirt, and can ride a cross saddle like a man. In this type of Wadsworthi we get a gentleness of voice and behavior in both men and women that is pleasing. Some of these women work at trades—book-binding or wood-carving. The men pose as stock raisers or farmers, or write books. And for a time the prophet of the better day thinks the cycle is complete and we have come back to simplicity.

But alas! be not deceived—it is all a make-believe, a mere refinement of conspicuous waste, just to catch the admiration of the more subtle and refined. They have cut the vulgar peoples out of their lives absolutely; they take no note of them; they eliminate the doer and the worker; they eradicate the promoter and the man of enterprise, and they live in an aesthetic heaven, four times removed from the man of prowess and power, but still cling to the honorific rewards that are due to conspicuous waste and exemption from the world of useful effort. It is the same old ideal of warrior and priest—the simplicity is a costly pretense, and many servants are required to carry it out. And if we are subtle enough to appreciate it, we bend the knee and bow before the extreme type of aesthetic futility. It is smugness and self-complacency polished and refined until it looks like genuine merit. It is similar to that peculiar type of the demi-monde in Philadelphia that passes for Quakers, and sometimes deceives even members of the Clover Club.—*The Philistine*.

Literature.

GOVERNMENT. *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Functions of the State*. By John Sherwin Crosby. Peter Eckler, 35 Fulton street, New York.

The study of this book may be recommended to Anticrats. It starts out with their premises. No man has "a right" to coerce another except in self-defence. Every man has "a right" (therefore) to coerce another in self-defence. No two, three, twenty or ninety million men have a right to coerce others except in self-defence. Two, three, twenty or ninety million men, voluntarily combining to coerce others in self-defence, would not be a government, but an Anticracy, because they would not, if that were all, compel anyone to take part in the self-defence (p. 12). Unlike the Anticrats, however, Mr. Crosby perceives the sublime truth that this would hardly work in practise. The voluntary societies for self-defence would knock their heads together, until the strongest compelled all the others to assist (pp. 16-18). "The warrant for such interference with the right of self-defence is founded on the very right itself." Volunteer exercise of the right would inspire and disturb others besides those against whom it was directly exercised; and this they have "a right" to resist, thus substituting "equal" liberty for absolute (p. 18). Having reached this *reductio ad absurdum*, Mr. Crosby might have been expected to perceive that he did not

know what he was talking about, any more than other metaphysicians and instead of dogmatizing on rights to settle down into an inquiry whether experience teaches that organizations for self-defence are practically conducive to their professed end. The reason he was not so wise, he has himself happily stated. "Born into government, and ever surrounded by its all-pervading influence, man is prone to regard its power as no less natural than the forces of inanimate nature."

... or he confounds the state with society, not realizing that while the latter is a natural organism subject to the universal law of evolution, the former is an artificial mechanism constructed by man for the accomplishment of definite ends—therefore to be discarded if it does not serve them (p. 10). Still laboring under the influence of this superstition Mr. Crosby, like a good Anticrat, proceeds, in the usual manner, to deduce from his suicidal theory of self-defence, the "right" of government to compel all people to contribute to its support (p. 20), and draws the ordinary consequences, some of which, I think, must startle Anticrats, the more because they are so logically drawn from anticratic premises. Government, e.g., has a "right" to "prevent language that, altho expressing 'not unmerited' censure, would disturb the public peace" (p. 29). It has "a right" to prevent combats by mutual consent (prize-fights—ib.), to establish and maintain highways (p. 36), to take order that the peace is not disturbed by hungry men (p. 45); to find employment for those unable to find it (p. 49); "to compel those occupying valuable lands to account to the public for their annual rental value" (p. 67); to control, e.g., "railroads, telegraphs and other natural 'monopolies'" (p. 85, but this is weakly put, for he says "any enterprise so necessary to the public welfare as to warrant its promotion by the government," p. 84); to issue cheap legal tender paper money, regardless of Gresham's Law (p. 94, seq.); to "take possession of gold and silver-bearing lands, develop the mines, and pay out its own gold and silver" (p. 98). This hodge-podge of Georgism, green backism, State-Socialism, new-poor-lawism, and all the other crankisms which the common sense of the multitude, ignorant and superstitious as the multitude is, has rejected whenever they came to a direct vote, together with those schemes for keeping things quiet, whereby the multitude has been more successfully gulled, does not impose on Mr. Crosby because he lacks horse-sense, or dialectical ability, or really liberal sympathies, for he has more of all three than most Anticrats, but solely because he starts with the Spencerian formula, and because the Spencerian formula leads nowhere in particular. We proceed to prove this association of cause and effect.

On all the actual questions of today's legislation—the tariff (p. 105); marriage and divorce (p. 108); woman suffrage (ib.), public education (p. 109), Sunday Laws (p. 42), penology (p. 106), the patent laws (p. 103), Mr. Crosby's trumpet gives an uncertain sound. He does not quite know where he is. And why not? Evidently because there is nothing in the Spencerian formula to guide him. Well, then! of what use is it?

The book abounds in anarchistic passages. And they are the valuable part of it. The function of all such literature is to disseminate discontent. He perceives that the pernicious powers of corporations are wholly derived from government (p. 76, seq.). He perceived, tho only thru a glass dimly, that the corporations own the government (p. 83). He is inclined to oppose all patent laws. The tone of his peroration, tho too qualified, is altogether anarchistic, so far as it has any tone at all. The book is quite well-written; and

*I should have thought myself that railroads and telegraphs were artificial.

tho the conclusions abound in contradiction and absurdity, they are drawn with syllogistic severity from the premises. Of course, it follows that the contradiction must be in the premises.

What robs the author's brain of all the advantage belonging to his frequent sound intuition and his logical acumen, is simply the false, unverified, superstitious assumption that permanent combination against petty offenders is necessary. Not only would he, in defiance of that first principle which, under the nightmare of this assumption, immediately cuts its own throat, entrust government with all the most abused of its present powers; but he entertains the most extravagant idea of its capacities. He wants it to repeal or abolish any law or custom not necessary to the discharge of what he considers its proper functions (p. 40). Poor thing! It deserves that sort of pity which the psalmist bestowed upon the dumb idols, when we find it required to repeal or abolish customs. In another place (p. 64) he wants government to make possible for every man the occupation of land; which, in connection with his remarks on marriage and divorce, would suggest that he had never heard of Malthus.

But the last feather, which must, I think, break the Anticratic back, is found on p. 22, where we are informed that the first function of government is self-preservation! Remember, we have been told (p. 10) that government is "an artificial mechanism constructed by man for the accomplishment of definite ends." What sort of a mechanism would that be whose first function was self-preservation? It would be the Mephistopheles of fable; an organism, not a mechanism; the curse of its employer, forever requiring him to find work on penalty of being torn to pieces! And such a demon the most superficial acquaintance with history teaches that government always has been. Even the bourgeois writers of England, such writers as Macaulay, (see his essay on Machiaveli) have now for some centuries been aware that "necessity" is "the tyrant's plea"; and self-preservation the incentive to all the crimes of government. They have aimed consistently, like the Anticrats, whose ideas are but their's befogged, at reducing it to a manageable mechanism. Mr. Crosby's book is recommended especially to Anticrats because his dialectical subtlety has demonstrated (unwittingly) the impossibility of the problem, in showing that what they would make for a tool is a Frankenstein, charged with antipathy to the life of its creator.

C. L. JAMES.

Letter-Box.

H. C. R., Bennington, Kas.—Extra copies of the issue containing "A History of Government" have been sent. Of course, the article "ought to have been published in pamphlet form for propaganda purposes," but so long as so many of our subscribers seem to think that the publishers of FREE SOCIETY can live on air and rain-water, we cannot think of publishing pamphlets. The negligence of a great many of our readers makes it almost impossible for us to keep the paper afloat. They pay cash down for any capitalist sheet, but Anarchist papers they read without paying for them.

Francis Livesay.—We knew nothing about Mr. S.'s case until the arrival of your letter, which we cannot publish unless we know something definite about the nature of the "impropriety" the teacher was "guilty" of.

M. F. City.—Of course it should read "marital bonds" instead of "martial bonds" in Esther Minikin's article, altho there is not much difference between these "bonds."

"Government is the great blackmailer.... No good ever came from the law. All reforms have been the offspring of Revolution."
—BUCKLE.