

FREE SOCIETY

ENTERED AT SAN FRANCISCO POSTOFFICE AS SECOND-CLASS MATTER.

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.

VOL. VI. NO. 5.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL., SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1899.

WHOLE NO. 245.

BE BRAVE.

Arouse, ye men of brain and brawn,
Unnumbered hosts that toll:
Assert your manhood, break your chains:
Reclaim your own fair soil!
Too long beneath oppression's lash
Ye've slaved for robber knaves;
And gave your all to Church and State,
Contented to be slaves.
The day has come, your night is done.
If you but act as men.
Be bold, be brave—the world is yours,
March on and take it, then!
But no; you hesitate—and why?
Oh, Slaves! Why fear to die?
On! Do and dare! Be brave! Be free!

A day is come, a light hath dawned,
A tide in man's affairs;
A star like that of Bethlehem,
And a glorious hope it bears:
Let man be FREE! The message rings,
And an echo answers back:
Uncrown all kings, unrobe all priests,
And clothe the unclothed back!
Then stand up, men, and demand your dues,
And fear not the tyrants' frown,
And do not bow at the shrine of his law,
Or reverence his legal gown.
But strike—if you would be free,
Oh Slaves—if you would be free!
On! Do and dare! Be brave! Be FREE!

ROSS WINN.

WAR.

If new proof were wanted to show that wars, at the present time, are waged exclusively in the interest of capitalists, a better proof could not be given than the war which the British now wage against the Boers.

What quarrel has the British nation against the Dutch settlers in Africa? None whatever! The so-called "patriots"—who are as bad, by the way, as the French "patriots" whom we have seen lately at work in the Dreyfus affair—have told us, of course, that in waging a war against the Boers, they are promoting the interests of civilization. It is a lie. And they themselves know that it is a lie. The Boers have ill-treated the Black population of Africa? Undoubtedly so. But—did the British treat the Blacks any better?

The whole history of the conquest of the Black Continent by all Europeans without exception—British included—is a history of murder, poisoning, extermination, deceit, slave-buying and slave-making,—so much so that Africa may be described as a true school of barbarism, under all its possible aspects, for all European nations. It was so, and still is for the English, the French, the Germans, the Italians and the Dutch. So much so that even when workingmen of advanced opinions have gone to settle in Africa many of them have become there as complete brutes as any one of the capitalists, in their relations towards the natives. We will never forget the fury with which Malatesta, on his return from Egypt, told us of the treatment he saw inflicted there by Italian workingmen—more or less Socialists at home—upon Egyptian fellaheen.

Leaving aside individual cases, leaving aside the letters which were written by English adventurers during the Matabele uprising, and which have been circulated since then in the press—leaving aside such brutes as Stanley or Peters—what did the English do, as a nation, with the sanction of Parliament, in Matabele Land?

Take, for instance, the work of Mr. Selous—a man inspired by no party hatred, a hunter, who even will find excuses for the British policy; and you will simply be ashamed of belonging to the British nation. England, which likes so much to pose as a bearer of civilization, has introduced in

Matabele Land that very same serfdom which we, thirty years ago, considered as a blot upon civilization in Russia and Turkey. By law,—by Imperial law if you please,—every Matabele is bound to work three days in the week for every British farmer who will want to employ him on his farm for a salary which he himself will settle. The Matabele is now, by law, a serf, bound to work three days a week for the British settler. As to the pillage of the Negroes' cattle, it was simply taken by the British—not only during their military expeditions, but again in virtue of a law, an Imperial law, passed in all calm at home, a law which ordered merely and simply the seizure, the appropriation—that is, the robbery—of three-fourths of all the cattle of the natives.

The horrors which British and Dutch settlers have committed upon the Blacks in the Cape Colony at the beginning of this century were revolting. But these were accomplished by individual settlers; while now the policy of the British Empire, sanctioned by Parliament, is a policy of undisguised robbery, of serfdom, of enslavement. To this policy of enslavement, robbery, filibustering expeditions—of Imperialism in a word—the British nation has given its full sanction at the last elections. And the English Social Democrats have their full share of responsibility for that policy.

When we saw the Conservatives and the Unionists coming in a crushing majority to Parliament at the last elections; when we saw the triumph of land-grabbing, capitalism, priesthood and Imperialism,—we foretold in these pages that the unavoidable result of that victory would be—war. And since that time the British nation has continually lived under the menace of a war. War was very nearly breaking out for the Venezuelan gold mines, and it was only when it was ascertained that England cannot live as much as a few months without importing American wheat, that the provoking tone of the notes written by Salisbury's Cabinet was changed for one of humility towards the United States. War with Germany, and another with France were again on the point of breaking out; and war with Russia for the wilderness of Manchuria was only conjured by a formidable effort. Twice, in the course of these few years the navy has already been mobilized, and—who knows if this time the mobilization will not end in a real war.

For ten years the present rulers of Britain have made all their power to stimulate the warlike spirit of the overfed middle classes. In ten years the most vituperative language has been used—by Conservatives, Unionists, and their motley tails against those intelligent men of Britain who understood that Ireland must have Home Rule, that the Dutch in Africa are a rising nationality, that Crete must go to Greece, and that the country has everything to reform at home instead of waging wars all over the world. And the unavoidable, the necessary result of all that campaign, as well as of the protracted war into which the Conservative Unionists have now embarked the country, will be—fatally—the creation of a standing army capable of crushing the British workingmen the moment they revolt against the land and money grabbers.

This is where we are going to be landed next. For all this talk about the splendid effects of dumdum bullets and lyddite shells the British nation will have to pay—with the blood of her own workingmen. The beast is already well awake in a certain class of British society, and when there will be no more Boers to blow up—they will seek for ene-

mies at home, in the slums of their own big cities.—Freedom, London.

STATE SOCIALISM.

State Socialist journals point with pride to their numerous and constantly increasing adherents. Their remedy to cure humanity of all the ills it suffers from at present is so simple that many of the simple-minded, the mentally indolent ones gather around the standard unfurled by the self-appointed leaders. No thought, no exertion is needed, but at some future time, when the present conditions will have become unbearable, the government, the State, will step in, assume control of all the means of distribution and production, and the people will be happy forevermore.

While on the one hand the doctrine of the Statist appeals to the mentally indolent, as I said before, on the other hand a class of people are attracted who see an opportunity to become the leaders, the managers, the distributors of favors.

This opportunity is apt to become the switch which will in time side-track the labor movement and turn it from its present course of complete individual liberty into a new form of slavery, possibly like that of ancient Peru.

Whenever the discontent of the masses reaches such proportions that it cannot be suppressed any longer by bullets and bayonets; when the exploiters of the day will be in danger of losing all their privilege, then the wise and cunning among them will ally themselves with the revolutionary forces and help to establish a co-operative commonwealth on a State Socialistic basis. The majority of the people content that their material wants will now be satisfied, care not who directs and commands and their erstwhile enemies will have foxed themselves to the top and will form as of old a privileged class. Then history will have once more repeated itself, and a movement which tended to undermine and destroy all authority, will have become harmless and it will be more difficult than ever for the few, who love liberty, to arouse the people, since one of the main producers of discontent, the empty stomach, will not be epistled on their side any longer.

The position of the mail carrier is held up to the disinherited as the acme of human happiness. "Steady work, short hours, good pay,—what more can a man wish?" said a Statist to me lately. "What more do you need to be a perfect slave?" I was tempted to ask, but told him: "Liberty, freedom, my good friend, seem to be wanting entirely in your requisites of happiness. Not to acknowledge a superior, to work and cease working when I feel like it, to choose any kind of an occupation I happen to take a fancy to, to go where I please, to associate with whom I please, that, to me, makes life worth living and striving for."

The State, the government, Uncle Sam, should do this or that, is the burden of their cry. The 11th of November, Homestead, Cripple Creek, Hazleton, the Cour d'Alene bull pen—all of this has not been sufficient to awake them to the realization of the fact that government is an institution, a trust, the prototype of all other trusts, for the benefit of the few to the detriment of the many.

Who, if not government, trains men to be the butchers of their fellowmen? Who makes war upon a kind-hearted and peaceable people? Who is responsible for the murder of thousands of young men in the prime of life? Who causes sorrow, anguish and heart-breaking to the relatives of these young men? Who destroys the products of the labor of the industrious by the wholesale? Who, if not government, makes it possible for the cunning, the unscrupulous, the very dregs of humanity, to rule the land, exploit and browbeat the many without risking their lives? Who is it, ye upholders of "law and order," who carries the torch, the rifle, the cannon, the bomb, to kill, to murder, to mutilate, to destroy, who? Certainly not the much-reviled Anarchist, but the Archist, the defender of government.

CHAS. DORRING.

FREE SOCIETY.

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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.

NOTE AND COMMENT.

The recent disaster in a Washington coal mine, where 40 men were killed and several more maimed, has caused considerable comment in the daily press. The editors admit that greed was the direct cause of the terrible "accident," but none of them dares to charge the mine owners with manslaughter. Under the pretence of justice an investigation will be made in order to whitewash the mine owners before the eyes of the public, and greed will go on, as before, murdering men by the wholesale for gain and profit, until the workers themselves will put an end to it by appropriating all the natural resources and the means of production for their own benefit. As long as the tools of production and the natural opportunities are monopolized all laws to prevent such "accidents" are utterly futile.

"The Russians are certainly much behind in civilization," says the *S. F. Tageblatt*. "The minister of finance of that country—Witte—has lately been subjected to a most humiliating examination by his government, for the purpose of ascertaining whether he had taken advantage of his position for his own personal gain through news received by him at the stock exchange. In this country such unpleasant investigations are never made. With us it is a matter of course that everybody makes all he can. Fat Cleveland saved millions out of an annual salary of \$50,000; and thus they all do it, down to the coroner who sells the corpses of unidentified dead, as has lately been proven at St. Louis, where the Memphis coroner was arrested for such a deed. Everybody here makes hay while the sun shines. That is the only plausible explanation for the desperate office seeking during elections. In Russia minister Witte will probably be sent to prison for a term of years; in this country he would be congratulated upon his stock jobbing success and envied as a d—d smart fellow."

THE INTERESTS OF LABOR.

For more than thirty days the following advertisement has appeared in the San Francisco *Examiner* and other newspapers, and still Levi Strauss & Co., we are informed, are unable to secure anything like the operators that they need:

Levi Strauss & Co., at 32½ Fremont street, are putting in the very best sewing machines and will take on several hundred more operators; good wages. Apply to Mr. Davis.

We learn that they are unable to fill orders for the special goods they manufacture for lack of this labor. We are informed that Levi Strauss & Co. pay good wages to the girls in their employ, work them under pleasant conditions and treat them well.

Levi Strauss & Co. is an old firm and a rich firm. The loss of prospective profits by its inability to fill orders probably does not amount to more than a matter of bookkeeping with any member of the firm. They will not drive slower horses, wear smaller diamonds, live in smaller houses or place a more stringent limit on the ante in the evening's amusement. They are not entitled to any particular sympathy, and would doubtless resent the idea that any one should sympathize with them.

On the other hand, we are delighted to find that there is a scarcity of this sort of labor in San Francisco. It means that conditions are improving. A couple of years ago San Francisco girls were willing to work all day in a cannery for 80 or 90 cents, doing the hardest kind of labor under the most uncongenial conditions. That was bad for the girls, bad for the city, and no particular good to anybody, for a business which will not properly support its employees is, in our judgment, hardly worth while bothering about. Now, our girls are so free from the necessity of rough cannery work that they can afford to decline pleasant sewing-machine employment at fairly remunerative wages. We hope this state of things will continue indefinitely. Its cause is the war with Spain, which created a demand for

sewing work, and by taking 100,000 men out of the country to serve as soldiers relieved the labor market of its glut.

This is a condition we would like to see always exist, but, unfortunately, it won't.—*Examiner*.

The foregoing editorial, doubtless paid for by the men of fast horses and large diamonds, is from the *Monarch of the Fakirs*, a paper that gives full details of the latest prize fight and a bible lesson in the same issue, and will reply to any question asked about back prize fights.

The writer of the editorial is a fool or a knave, or both compounded. The facts are: the ad has been running for months; when persons apply who can work the machines, they are not wanted; when those who have to learn apply, they are taken and charged for the teaching, and when it comes to receiving any pay, it is so small, and then reduced by numbers of petty fines that, of course, the fast horses and large diamonds are most easily accounted for.

You brutal editor, you hope men will continue to be killed so that girls may get such work as described, and you "hope this state of things will continue indefinitely." You unmitigated fool, do you know these very girls have to pay for the soldiers' food, clothing, guns, powder and burial? If you don't, I'll forgive you; but you do! and I spit at you metaphorically.

In the "interests of Labor"!!! Damn you!!!

JAMES ALFRED KINGHORN-JONES.
22½ Geary St., room 48, San Francisco.

HAS BYINGTON SET HIMSELF RIGHT?

Our friend complains that I did not reply to what he said, but banged at a straw man of my own making. I have not his article at hand and may not get his words exact. He said, "Anarchism is a theory of political science and is opposed to government in a political sense." Now, I may be lacking in "political sense"; many good Christian friends claim we Anarchists have no "moral sense" and would call to their aid "courts, police and jails" to protect society from this obnoxious theory. Again he said: "The essential principle of government," to which Anarchism is opposed, "is the use of force to prevent a man from doing as he pleases." But he said, "people will be violent," hence Anarchists must organize and adopt this "essential principle of government," not only this but must "retain the ordinary machinery of government." He also said "many Anarchists approve of this machinery."

He did not go as far as some, and deny the Communists the right to be known as Anarchists. Perhaps his article did not contain "a good deal of advocacy of courts, police and jails," but if any one can read his article without being impressed that he advocated it just the same, their "political sense" differs a good deal from mine. If he did not say "that courts, police and jails" were part of Anarchism, if I remember right he said "the triumph of Anarchism might be in the retaining this machinery of government." No one could imagine that he "acknowledged them to be contrary to Anarchism." Now, what was the "straw man" I was banging at? And what was our friend driving at in his article entitled "What is Anarchism?"

East Elma, N. Y.

A. L. BALLOU.

A FAIR FAULT.

The *Commercial Tribune* of Cincinnati, Ohio, gives its readers the quintessence of one of John Most's speeches made in that city, as follows:

Herr Most said a free country is one in which there is no ruler or superior. America, he found, is not that kind of a country.

The forefathers who made its government had good intentions, but they made the mistake of not wanting to do away with private property or religious superstition. So-called foreigners like himself, Herr Most said, coming to this country to flee from the power of emperors and kings, find America a great country in extent, wealth and riches heaped up by nature and intended for man, but held absolutely by trusts and

monopolies. The kings are here just as in Europe, only they go by another name, and they are as supreme as their like in Russia, Austria and Prussia. The difference is that while there are a few over there, there are from 500 to 10,000 of them here. The politics of the country, he declared, is worse than in Europe. The speaker thought that free press, free speech and free assembly were largely a sham. He alluded to the Chicago Anarchists of twelve years ago and declared they were clubbed, shot down and hanged by a capitalistic police; there was no bomb throwing, he said, but the men were revolutionists, that was all. Capitalism, he thought, was the same in this country as in Europe, only here it went ahead faster and did in fifty years what it took Europe to reach in 500. Seven-eighths of the wealth of the United States, he asserted, belonged to one-tenth of the population. "What is the boasted liberty of the American under the present system?" he asked; "the liberty to sell himself, and he has to do it or face beggary, theft, workhouse or suicide."

Even then, he continued, the capitalists are not satisfied. They have bought 8,000,000 Filipinos for \$20,000,000, so that they might bring over cheaper labor to this country. They were going headlong, he claimed, into militarism and imperialism, to wind up with a czar. Only the man and a few more circumstances were needed, he said, and the country would have it.

"Don't you believe it?" he cried. "Didn't they make a god out of Dewey? The Americans will want to look out sharp if they escape it."

Society at present he summed up as consisting of poor devils on one side and robbers on the other. He himself had been chased out of every country in Europe, he said. He wished to become a citizen here, but was refused. He was more—he is a citizen of the world. He denounced the police as going around with clubs, like savages, and as being nothing but ruffians. No country had so many laws as America—made by lawyers for the benefit of capitalists. In no country had he seen so many churches; in no other had he met so much narrow-minded superstition. Sunday laws he declared barbarous. He had been told to go to Europe if he didn't like it; they called him a foreigner.

"Who is not a foreigner here?" he asked. The only genuine American is the Indian, and he is killed off like the buffalo.

The existing social system is that of the lunatic asylum, he said. People have to starve periodically just because they have too much.

What Herr Most wanted himself instead of this arrangement was a Communistic Anarchism, equal chances for all, brotherhood, and harmony, and ability for each one to satisfy his wants. To get that he favored revolution—not that he wanted bloodshed, but only because the aristocracy of wealth was prepared to fight and left no other choice for those against it. He didn't want State Communism; crime is due only to private property, and only cranks would want to be lazy in the new condition of no State and no law. The new arrangement necessitated atheism, too, so that there would be no superstition.

After Herr Most finished, listeners popped questions at him on his plan of operations. One wanted to know how he meant to bring about his scheme, by the ballot box or by pistol and shotgun.

"Most likely," was the quick rejoinder of Herr Most to the latter suggestions. He ridiculed the ballot box mode.

NOTES.

A local paper of this city says the Anarchists have not put themselves in evidence of late, and intimates that undoubtedly some atrocious deed will be committed at some future time which will again shock the whole civilized world. Our plutocratic friends have become so accustomed of late to the destruction of life and property in the Philippines and South Africa, under the name of benevolent assimilation and civilization, that they really crave for something else to tickle their nerves with. But let them not worry; the Anarchists are still here in spite of their detectives and hangmen, and perhaps sooner than they expect, someone may consider the time favorable to offset the wanton murder of many innocent people for the benefit of a few, by the killing of a few guilty ones for the benefit of the many.

The gospel sharks, the Revs. D. D. (doubly damned) have started on their annual advertising crusade.

Every fall they manage to secure a large amount of free advertising for themselves and their churches by attacking the saloons, gambling dens and brothels. After having seen their names in print as reformers, progressive preachers, etc., they generally subside till the vacant pews call them out again. Suppression is their only remedy, but since the revenue which the city officials derive from these sources is too large to be relinquished, all the labors of these self-appointed guardians of public morals are futile.

Some of these preachers make a speciality of investigating the so-called houses of ill-fame. These good shepherds evidently like to have their morals tempted by a lot of fair damsels who, of course, fill their ears with horrible tales of their downfall. They were all good, pure and virtuous according to the orthodox standard, until some vile brute of a man accomplished their ruin, and then being cast out by friends and society, they were forced to take refuge in their present abode. This is an old standby tale and serves as an excuse for their position towards society, which would be horrified if told that most of these so-called fallen women deliberately choose the life they lead, and that they prefer a gay life of "men, wine and song" for a few years, to one of drudgery for many. The idea that a poor young woman should prefer such a life to that of their from god appointed lot, as servants to the cranky wife of some bloated plute, and serve incidentally as concubine for the latter, is quite incomprehensible to the highly moral people, which make up the exploiting classes. Even some radicals affect to pity these women; they do not need and do not care for pity, for they evidently enjoy life better than the majority of women who obey the behests of Mother Grundy.

The advice of Kinghorn-Jones not to pay rent is excellent. To never pay for the permission to live on this earth, if I can get out of it, has been my doctrine since my boyhood, when I read some pamphlets advocating "free land." I was so thoroughly convinced of the justice of these theories that ever since I have tried to live up to them. Being gifted with a fair amount of nerve, I generally take possession of a vacant house, when in need of one, without asking anybody's permission. When the owner or agent turns up, I manage to prove to them, for the time being anyway, the advantage which they derive from having someone occupy their property who takes care of it. If the owner cannot be convinced that he ought to be thankful that his property is being looked after free of charge, then either compromise by paying a small percentage of the rent he demands, or wait till the sheriff and his deputies help you move your stove and other heavy furniture out of the house, load it on an express wagon and make a fee line for the next vacant house which suits you.

Of course circumstances very often prevent us from carrying out in practice our theories, but whenever possible we should do so and help the cause by this less dangerous propaganda of deed. C. DORRING.
Portland, Or.

REFUSED TO SERVE A JURY.

Dear Friends of *Free Society*:—You will see by the enclosed that I have had a slight brush with the law; and I think the representatives of the law will admit that I did not come out second best, especially as I have heard nothing further from them since sending in my report, a copy of which I hereby enclose.

You are at liberty to make such use of the papers as you think best. I wish our people could be induced to refuse everywhere to take any part in the worse than farce that is constantly carried on under the forms of the law. W. H. VAN ORNUM.

(COPY.)

Jury Commissioners.

Sirs: Yours of this date, notifying me that I am liable to be drawn for jury duty and commanding me to report within five days whether eligible for duty or not, is received. In reply, I will say, that I do not fall within any of the classes named as exempt; and yet, I think you will admit that I must be excused, for the following reasons, viz.,

I believe that government derives its just powers from the consent of the governed; and, as I do not consent, it has no authority over me.

I deny the right of the law to interfere in the disputes between individuals without the consent of all the parties, or to coerce any of them; and, were I to become a party to such coercion, I should violate their

rights and should be doing to others what I object to their doing to me. This I shall not do.

But, most of all, I protest against the monstrous wrong which is constantly enacted against what are called criminals, by means of your laws. The law assumes to act in the name of, and by the authority of society; but it is notoriously wielded in the interest of a minority, which, in one way or another, is in the enjoyment of special privileges. It is by reason of these privileges that poverty, crime and all manner of violence prevail. In other words, society, by means of the law, is making men criminals and then punishing them for being what it has made them. I protest against it. I refuse to be a party to the wrong any further than I can help; and, for this reason, I notify you that I would refuse to convict any man of anything no matter what the evidence and no matter what the circumstances.

Hoping that you will see the error of your ways and cease to do evil and learn to do good, I remain,
Yours very truly,

Chicago, Nov. 23, 1899. W. H. VAN ORNUM.

SILVER DOLLAR VS. SILVER PUNCH-BOWL.

S. T. Byington requests me "to explain how Anarchism shows a silver dollar to be any less wealth than a silver punch-bowl." Well sir, you have asked too much, for Anarchism does not show nor attempt to show a silver dollar to be any less wealth than a silver punch-bowl. As I understand it, Anarchism does not consider either the dollar or the punch-bowl wealth, nor that either is productive of wealth. One is, perhaps, a convenient national token, redeemable in the products of labor, the other a relic of barbarism, something to please the fancy, a kind of keep-sake or fancy article of use.

I stand corrected and start with: "Nothing but labor produces or aids in producing." A person may have bags of silver or gold dollars, but without labor (either his own or that of his slave's) to produce for him food and clothing he must go naked and hungry. By legislative enactments money is given an unnatural power to monopolize the good things of this earth, which makes it appear to be wealth and productive of more wealth, but it only produces by its power of monopoly, its power over the slaves who are compelled to labor and produce for it the things needful for the welfare and happiness of mankind—things I call wealth, that is, food, clothing and shelter, necessities of life and for the comforts of life.

I look upon money as a convenient acknowledgment, under present conditions, of the indebtedness of the person who gives it, to the person who receives it; in short a note, as for instance: I have rendered you service, I have produced something which you desire for your comfort and which I am willing to exchange with you for some of the products of your labor. Now, if you have not the things I desire in exchange, you hand me the dollar as an acknowledgment that you owe me that service. It saves writing a note besides: being currency it passes current, which makes it an indebtedness the "nation" owes me instead of the individual—it makes no difference who pays it.

If you follow my idea, necessarily very imperfectly expressed in so short an article, you will see that the person who gets the dollar without laboring and producing for the benefit of mankind, whether he steals it or takes it in profits off the laboringman's products, holds it as an indebtedness which the world owes him, the same as if he had rendered service for it. He holds false evidence of having rendered society service for which society owes him service in return.

What I am trying to say is: money does nothing; it builds no mills, weaves no fabrics; all is done by labor at the command of money, as the consequence of legislation. Money, protected by law, implies power and command of wealth, and, therefore, is capable of much harm in the hands of the money-changer. Abolish the law and it has no power and consequently no value—it is not wealth. Money does not pay debts; the person is not paid until he receives such products of labor as he desires in exchange.

Now you will see that the person who consumes all he produces—spends all his money in consuming—leaves the world provided with none of the wealth he has produced, whilst the person who hoards his earnings—his money—retains evidence of the world's indebtedness to him; evidence that he has produced more than he has consumed, and that he has benefited the world to the amount of his hoarding.

Rutland, Vt.

A. A. ORCUTT.

TO KEEP OFF THE STREETS.

Des Moines, Iowa, Nov. 17.—The city council has passed an ordinance prohibiting all persons from walking the streets after 11 p. m. unless they can give satisfactory reasons therefore relating to business or some other necessary occupation. The penalty is a \$10 fine, and it applies to adults as well as children. The ordinance is not taken seriously.

I am inclined to smile and wonder if Comstock is the father of such a measure. In slavery days the slaves were forbidden to leave the masters' premises after sun down. We fought to free those poor devils; I wonder who will fight to free us.

It seems to me that even the Anarchistic idea of passive resistance is not adequate to combat such outrageous invasions of human liberty. I think an organized resistance would eventually be successful in this instance. Some years ago there was an ordinance passed here (in Denver) making the riding of wheelmen without bells a misdemeanor. The wheelmen here then numbered about 28,000. They organized in open revolt, but their revolt was on the parody order. Hardly a wheelman appeared on the street without a horn, or a cowbell or an engine bell. Tin cans were made into bells; in fact anything that was noisy was used. The first policeman seen was always the signal for noise, and the poor lackeys of misinterpreted good were driven to some place of retreat to escape the awful noise. That procedure eventually caused a repeal of the obnoxious ordinance.

The poor Des Moines people should try the same method of active resistance the Denver wheelmen used so successfully.

Of course this is only a wail of a "new Anarchist light," who wants "equal slavery," as A. I. terms it. Yet we accidentally stumble onto the right kind of an idea of slavery. MISS B. F. BRUKK.

LIBERTY.

In reviewing "An Open Letter to William Jennings Bryan" by W. E. Nevill, the S. F. CLASS STRUGGLE says: "The book should find a resting place in the hands of Anarchist readers, for it has all the cry for 'liberty' that is common to Anarchist publications, and also in common with Anarchist publications makes no offering of any method of obtaining the smallest additional freedom."

Bro. Benham speaks of liberty with that flippancy which one is used to hearing from the lips of monopolists or occasionally from a raw, shallow Socialist agitator, but of which one would not deem an editor of a progressive journal guilty.

Liberty carries with it the solution of the social question because it presupposes the cessation of government which is throttling the independence of the individual and protecting monopolies—principally the monopoly of land and the medium of exchange—which are thus the source of social iniquity and misery.

Liberty—that is the cessation of government—then means: No profits, no rents, no interest, no taxes. If Bro. Benham can point out anything on the governmental Socialist program to effect a more thorough revolution in society and bring about a more satisfactory condition of affairs it would indeed be worth knowing.

The "methods" of obtaining it are a matter of secondary consideration. The first requirement is the lodgment in the minds of the people of the principle and importance of liberty and the realization of the economic and political results to flow therefrom. "Correct ideas must precede successful action." Once the importance of liberty is grasped by the people and takes the place of its thoughtless flippant use, they will find means of realizing the same. Such knowledge is to be imparted to the people by literature—by education and agitation generally.

We have no "parties," it is true, that spring into existence like mushrooms and go out of it likewise or split up into factions by internal strife doing no earthly good except to give the masses a chance to become confused and in their blind worship of leaders lose sight of principles.

When society is rid of its present incubus of government and its resultant monopolies it will enter upon its normal business of the voluntary association and co-operation of its industrial forces and bring about the regeneration of the human race with plenty and contentment in its wake by the very methods Bro. Benham so carelessly chooses to sneer at—Liberty. S. D.

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ALL ABOUT MORALITY.

The nation is at present convulsed over the Roberts case. Whether he can seat himself is a question of importance and doubt; whether he should be seated, is to a thinking mind one of importance, but not doubt. Roberts made the mistake of having a small harem, and supporting it openly, and not denying his position. If he were like his colleagues, he would have had his harem, just the same, but would have had it secluded.

There is but one crime in the universe, and that is, of being found out.

Nothing counts against that: Roberts should have had all the women he wanted and could support, but he should have faced the decent (?) world with one wife, one home, etc., and not shocked the modesty of the Senate and its incumbents by doing squarely what they sneak around dark corners to do.

I tell you immorality is what ails us. We want to ruin one man for being honest in his beliefs, and living up to his religion, be it social or orthodox, and another man doing the same thing in a cowardly manner is feted and dined and held up as an ideal of morality by the ignorant and moral people.

Morality is the cure all. Men like Roberts are beasts, so they say, but men like Breckenridge are sympathized with—it's all in the way you do a thing.

Get these morals, ye sinners, and then have your harems galore, but have 'em in a whisper.

We encourage you to rob every one else, but not us; we will keep you, but don't be honest about your gain. And above all: Don't get found out.

Denver. Miss B. F. BRUKK.

COURTS.

- Q. What are courts?
A. Legal tribunals.
Q. Why do they exist?
A. For the benefit of the property owner.
Q. Anyone else?
A. The lawyer.
Q. What do courts have?
A. Authority.
Q. For what purpose?
A. To send the poor to prison.
Q. Do the courts send the poor to prison?
A. Yes.
Q. Why?
A. Because they have no influence.
Q. What do the courts do to the rich?
A. Keep them from going to prison?
Q. How do they do this?
A. By pronouncing unconstitutional all laws that are likely to give to rich any trouble.
Q. Are not the courts ashamed of themselves?
A. No.
Q. What do they say?
A. They say they exist to administer the law.
Q. What does that mean?
A. It is all humbug.
Q. Then what do the courts amount to?
A. They are merely institutions for oppressing the poor and protecting the rich.
Q. Is there no help for this?
A. Not while the system of humbug and fraud upon which the courts rest is maintained.
Q. Who makes the laws?
A. The corporations.

- Q. How?
A. By owning the law-making bodies.
Q. Then do not the people make the laws?
A. Of course not.
Q. But why are we told that they do?
A. Because that is a part of the humbug we tolerate.
Q. Is this humbug believed?
A. No.
Q. Then why is it taken so seriously?
A. Because everybody pretends to believe it.
Q. What becomes of the laws after they are made?
A. They are interpreted.
Q. By whom?
A. The judges.
Q. In what way?
A. That depends upon the corporation that made them.
Q. Then the corporations make the judges as well as the laws?
A. Yes.
Q. What else do the corporations make?
A. Money. Ex.

IS MARRIAGE A FAILURE?

The following figures taken from Coghlan's Statistics for New South Wales for the six years between 1893 and 1898 are calculated to make the judicious griever, the philosopher and jurist revise his theories of marriage as the foundation of society, and the polygamist chuckle.

In this period 56,163 women gave birth to their first child. Of these 14,779 were illegitimate.

In 13 366 cases, less than the respectable nine months elapsed between marriage and birth. Only 28,108 (not one half) were born in the purple of respectable legitimacy.

What does it all mean? Is it a question of degrees of latitude? Is it a degrading of the moral fibre of the nation? Is it an evidence of the approaching ruin of civilization and death of christianity and its moral code? Or is it the unconscious silent protest of nature, deeply rooted, type-preserving human nature, against an unnatural social institution, good perhaps in its day, but now "on trial," and shaping badly? It's no good being hypocrites in the face of facts like above. Despise as we may the doctrines of the Free Lovers, minimize as we may their importance, we have to fit in with our own theories the fact that in 1898 there were, at bedrock figures, 30,000 fruitful Free Lover women, and presumably as many men, in one Australian colony.—*The Tocsin.*

The Letter-Box.

F. M. D., Bay City, Mich.—Subscription received. We hope you will be successful in forming a club for the sake of spreading Anarchism. Greetings.

M. M., Chicago.—Your name did appear in the "receipts," and the number on the wrapper has been advanced to 414, as you will have noticed.

C. J. M., Smithville, O.—Glad you are willing to study Anarchism. It is not "gross selfishness" nor "carnal mindedness" that prevents people from realizing freedom, but ignorance. Selfishness is the main spring of action and, once we are free from government and monopoly, will accomplish great things. Morbid sensuality is the result of restraint and perverted morality.

A. S. Cleveland, O.—"Truth" in the abstract is but a relative term and none of us can be positive whether he has found the truth or not. What was considered truth a few years ago is a superstition today, or as Ibsen says, people accept the truth when it has become a lie. Yet if we persistently search for the truth and be consistent in the pursuit of the course we consider true and right,

we shall free ourselves to that extent, and taken the term in this sense, I admit that "the truth will make us free."

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