

Anarchy

John Arthur Andrews

1894

You do me the honor of, without particular occasion, quoting a passage from one of my writings in the course of your leading sub-sermon on the 'Mission of Anarchy' and at the same time complain that the sentence is not sufficiently lucid. If you want to know the views which I am doing my best to propagate among the Australian people I can tell you in very few words.

I never authorised anyone to tell me what I am to do or not to do, and I object to any such dictation, whether proceeding from the landlord, the employer, the merchant, or the Government, and I do not intend to respect their dictates any longer than I can help. Might is right, and those who treat each other as comrades spend their might in only two ways, viz, overcoming natural difficulties and overcoming those who want to rule over them, while the latter spend theirs in a third way, also, namely in trying to rob and rule each other; they must therefore go under, other things being equal, and I have enough confidence in humanity to believe that it is only the pressure of social conditions dependent on the temporary ignorance and consequent acquiescence of mankind, that causes people to engage in mutual hostility as at present. Fix social forms and you fix all possible abuses of them, the effects being cumulative, leave the individual free, and the forms adjust themselves to shut out abuse. No amount of 'permission' from a source to which obedience is recognised can constitute freedom; the only permission the free man can submit to is that of his own strength. There can be no social union of antagonistic interests, while such exist the only issue is "To the victor the spoils." Law, property, religion, government, must be destroyed in people's minds and in the concrete. There must be no other consideration whatever to regulate matters of possession, use, conduct, etc than the natural common sense and goodwill of those whose natures and circumstances make their interests strictly harmonious, and the natural commonsense and might of those whose natures and circumstances place their interests in antagonism. Authority and traditional law are superfluous between those whose interests are naturally and circumstantially united, and as between those who are otherwise situated they mean simply that one or the other party is to give way by rule of thumb.

The way in which I imagine that Anarchy will come about is this — you profit-mongers and speculators will not employ the people or permit the lands to be used except on condition that you can see a money profit coming in. Let the products of the people be divided thus — x = consumption of the producers, y = consumption of the classes who live by ownership etc, and z = the reserve or accumulated profit of these classes. So long as there are outside markets and differen-

tial exchange values, a country may keep on transforming these into the monetary equivalents, a, net wages, b, personal expenses of capitalists etc, c, fortune.

But as the progress of civilisation continues and the world becomes essentially one country, z is no longer convertible into c but accumulates in the form of unsold goods and conveniences. Then workers are thrown out of employment still further reducing the purchasing and profit-yielding capacity of the population, and causing in turn a further depression. Liquidations allow of a partial accommodation to circumstances by the appreciation of the circulating medium; 're-constructions' delay it by enforced parity; but later in the former case, sooner in the latter — the tickets of leave to consume are completely withdrawn from the masses, by the excess of prices paid by them for their past products over the wages received for fresh production. Then no more employment is given because there are no more metal or paper tickets of leave to consume afloat to be attracted to the middlemen and the system is limited by ticket; no more money, no more operations. Then your newspaper plant becomes of no more service except for direct and un-commercial purposes, like that great hotel at Marulan which is tenanted by the fowls of the air and the tramps of the earth; nobody can get any money out of anyone for permission to make use of it, consequently it ceases to be treated as property, and needs instead of vested tommyrot regulate its destiny, only more so in your case because the same conditions are everywhere.

Then you come along, and reckon that it isn't a question of making money, but of living so you join in with some of my comrades whom you meet on the swag track, and gather in some stray cattle, regardless of the fact that in the dead past they were sacred to the pecuniary profit of say Winger Abbot, and in all honest labor and good fellowship, without any commercialism, start trying to build up conveniences and organise co-operative works for direct advantage of the task to be accomplished till the bush smiles with true civilisation; while I on my part, having done so long ago at the cost perhaps of some individuals who were foolish enough to enlist in the hopeless task of perpetuating the effete by force, and as I now want to disseminate my knowledge as to how people may proceed in the path of material advancement, come to Sydney and find your office empty, and accordingly use a case or two of type and your galley press.

After we get settled and recover from the effects of the disturbance new combinations spring up to suit, not commercial exigencies, but the convenience of those who associate towards a common purpose, and the old mechanical appliances are modified and new ones developed accordingly.

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