

# **Egoism Vol. I. No. 1.**

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## Pointers.

Duty is, and ever has been, the cross of human spontaneity.

Enlightenment makes selfishness useful, and this usefulness popular.

Men and women not having learned those things which others know, naturally think they know all that is known; and therefore persist in the inconsistencies which this knowledge would remove.

If men applaud your self-sacrifice, it is because that sacrifice benefits them, and so little is their interest in you that they will not give you even the kicking you desire when you realize your stupidity.

Improve every opportunity for pleasure. Even though that pleasure consists of the least pain, it is a bargain compared with anything worse, which is the only thing that could be except something better.

“The Reasons Why,” on seventh page, by Victor Yarros, reprinted from “Liberty,” is his contribution to this paper on that subject. It was placed so far back because of the lateness of advice regarding its printing. We gladly avail ourselves of its clear-cut and condensed exposition of Egoism.

Surprises continue not to cease! Here comes the Denver “Individualist,”—our first X—under the new management, a plumb-liner and an Egoist. It now has the clear ring, and challenges EGOISM’s deepest appreciation. To support it, will reflect great credit on the radicals of the country.

“Fair Play,” of April 26<sup>th</sup>, in its hearty announcement of EGOISM’s coming, reaches the conclusion that its publishers could not produce the ring it discovered without outside help. If “Fair Play’s” editors have detected any real ring in our announcement of the new paper it refers to, the facts are against their conclusion, for the announcement was written by its publishers.

“The Hour and the Need,” on the third page, is the first of a series of articles which will appear in this paper from that able writer, Victor Yarros. Those who read attentively his exposure of authoritarian schemes of reform, will acquire that which will be of great service to them in the coming contest between the primitive impulse of authoritarianism and the evolved expediency of freedom.

We have been exceedingly fortunate in being favored with the promise of a series of articles on the central idea of this journal, the first of which appears on the fourth page, “The Egoistic Philosophy,” by Tak Kak. All who wish to become acquainted with this universally misunderstood and, all-important thought, will in this series get it from undoubtedly the ablest exponent of the subject on this continent, if not as able as any one who has ever written on it.

“The Economics of Anarchy; a Study of the Industrial Type,” is Dyer D. Lum’s latest work. This is a very valuable addition to industrial literature, being a complete and concise statement of the economics of Anarchy. Mr. Lum’s attractive style of writing makes clear even the most abstruse subjects. It will greatly aid the progress of economic thought for this book to have a wide circulation, as it will help to overcome the prejudices against the treatment of economics

from an anarchistic standpoint, and be of benefit to those who are studying in that line of thought. We will give it further notice in our next number, as it reached us late for this one. The pamphlet contains 59 pages, and considering the thought-matter is cheap at 25 cents. It can be obtained from Dyer D. Lum, 196 Washington street, Chicago, Ill.

The "Rag Picker of Paris," by Felix Pyat, translated from the French by Benjamin R. Tucker, will be concluded in the next number of "Liberty" (Boston). This novel is the most complete portrayal of human nature in every condition of life, that has been contributed to radical literature. Every line, every pause, has a fullness, a significance of thought, or a volcano of emotion seldom found anywhere singly, and not combined in the style of any other writer. It is probably the most vivid picture of the misery of poverty, the extravagance of wealth, the sympathy and forbearance of the poor and despised, the cruelty and aggressiveness of the aristocratic and respectable, the heartless greed of the middle class, the hollowness of charity, the cunning and hypocrisy of the priesthood, the corruption of constituted authority, the crushing power of privilege, and finally of the redeeming beauty of the idea of equality and liberty, that has ever been produced. If it is published in book form, as it should and probably will be, every radical can find great gratification in circulating it.

In its notice of "Monogamic Sex Relations," "Fair Play" claims that, while complex love relations are ably advocated by Ego, and monogamy earnestly defended by Marie Louise, the discussion is untimely and a misdirection of energy, because we cannot love in anyway without the consent of the State or Mother Grundy. Since monogamy is enforced by the State and Mother Grundy, and Ego, in giving the best of reasons why it should not exist at all, produces the strongest arguments against its being enforced by anything, it is difficult to see where the misdirection of energy comes in. Those who have extra good bargains in marriage can probably wait with more complacency while this generation fights to its grave for the overthrow of tyranny and invasive customs without misdirecting its energy in showing the evils of some of them, than can those who must choose between the ordinary monogamic tomb and no sex association at all. But EGOISM inclines to encourage this side-show for the purpose of augmenting that from which "Fair Play" in its "cool" calculation thinks it would detract, while the latter circulates the "Law of Population," in face of the fact that this same invasive law which this generation must overthrow, does not permit the means of regulating the number of children.

The "Beacon," published at San Diego until its suspension a few months ago, is revived in this city, at 319 Fifth street, and will be published weekly at \$1 per year. It will endeavor to weed out the superstition of government, and oppose majority rule, or rule of any kind, with such vehemence that if necessary it would insist on either using a majority of physical force to suppress it, or upon the expediency of being slain in a contest with a majority of such force. That the "Beacon" takes this position, Emma is very sorry; not that it believes there is the least danger of bloodshed, but because the thought has a tendency to prevent that part of the community which constitutes its intellectual backbone, from investigating and becoming imbued with the principles of Anarchism, as must be before it can supplant political direction. Aside from the sentiment of being brave there could be no expediency in a physical contest; for when there is a majority it can successfully hold its rights by force of that circumstance, and until then a contest would be sheer madness on the part of the minority, and then, it would not be needed. Not only all this, but also the hatreds, prejudices, and peril of living among men whose bodies have been subdued, but minds not convinced, and on the ruins of whose power must be another authoritarian institution to hold them down. EGOISM is not satisfied with a physical subjection, it must have its

man safe by the full conviction of his self-interest. The editor of the "Beacon" is a sympathetic and warm-hearted man, who is impelled to take such an attitude only through his sympathy for the sufferings of victims of the privilege which they sanction through the superstition of "duty," loyalty, and ideas of fixed institutions. The impulse of all is to hurry when a principle is perceived, but haste is often most successfully made by deliberation.

## The Name and Purpose of Egoism.

The word Egoism was chosen for the name of this paper because it expresses the conscious state of man as we find him and as he probably will always be found; because It is the last analysis of conscious action and all conduct comes from it and is accounted for by it. It thus furnishes the key to all human motives, and what comes from their normal exercise. Its philosophy so posits the mind that it is unawed by the fixed idea of any institution, belief, or custom. It holds nothing too sacred to be measured by its utility in attaining happiness, and to be dropped without regret, when found wanting. It acts on the impulse that if existence is not for man it is nothing to him; and that it may the more fully realize this ideal it no more allows itself to be , deprived of the advantage of resignation to the inevitable, than of the self-hood whose calm scrutiny dispels the delusions of unanalytic conception. It seeks pleasure for man, and admits without offering an apology therefor, that it, the Ego, is the man. It adapts means to ends with all the advantage experience affords, but keeps an eye on the end while manipulating the means.

EGOISM's purpose is the improvement of social existence from the standpoint of intelligent self-interest. To gain recognition of the fact, and popularize the idea, that self-pleasure can be the only motive of any act; that any attempt to ignore it must as necessarily be disastrous as an attempt to ignore any other part of the order of nature. Thus developing a principle for a basis of action, about which there can be no misunderstanding, and which will place every person squarely on the merit of his or her probable interests, divested of the opportunity to deceive through pretension, as under the dominance of altruistic ideas.

It finds that the delusion Altruism arises from taking the visible results of the giver's sympathy as an index to the motive of the act, while its invisible, but real cause is a subjective one, an attempt to escape the mental torture caused by a battle between the desire for placidity and the knowledge of the present suffering of others, stung by the memory of one's own past suffering.

It holds that, while wholly disinterested acts cannot be intentionally performed, they are continually being unintentionally so performed through the altruistic error of the duty of "duty"; resulting alike in the systematic robbery of its duped supporters and that of the more intelligent minority upon which it is forced. This "duty" fetich is the magical instrument of exploitation in every department of human association, from the general one of the religious and political delusion to the special one of lovers. It enables the manipulating cunning of the crafty to take advantage of the universal self-gratifying instinct by deceiving it with spiritual credit for "duty," in exchange for the material comforts and luxuries of life.

It will maintain that what is generally recognized as morality is nothing other than the expediency evolved from conflicting interests under competition. That it is a policy which, through the hereditary influence of ancestral experience, confirmed by personal experience, is found to pay better than any other known policy.

The belief that it is something other than a policy—a fixed and eternal obligation, outside of and superior to man, and may not be changed as utility indicates, makes it a superstition, in absurdity and effect like any other superstition. It causes its adherents to crystallize the forms

of expediency for one period into positive regulations for another in which they have no utility, but become tyrannical laws and customs, in the name of which persecution is justified, as in the fanaticism of any fixed idea.

Egoism seeks to impress the fact that there are only selfs enough in the world to go once around among its inhabitants, and that attempting to shift any part of the responsibility of one's happiness upon another, can gain nothing per' head in service. On the other hand, there is sure to be great loss in efficiency, as one person cannot know, and is less likely to care, what another needs or wants to make him most happy. It, therefore, insists that each assume the responsibility of his or her own happiness, and thus all: be secured against the exaction of "duty" and the uncertainty of dependence upon another. This does not deprive any of the opportunity for mutual exchange, and secures all against that which is not voluntary; thus leaving no; excuse for invasion either by direct obtrusion or obligation.

From this basic principle it will defend the individual against every phase of invasion, whether it be the exactions of authority-protected privilege or the decrees of superstition-influenced custom. It will defend every act of uninvading self-pleasure and mutual exchange, from the products of industry between continents to the magnetism of the nerves between individuals. This is almost the Opposite of existing conditions. The legal interference of political authority with free contract between individuals is a rule rather than an exception. Nothing is so private—so much one's own, that legal authority cannot assume the regulation and disposal thereof.

In industrial exchange its most disastrous prohibition is that of the making and use of free money, which would at one stroke abolish interest, and make it possible to capitalize all the unconsumed products of labor. Its next interference is its privileged paper titles in land, preventing the reasonable and just one of occupancy and use, that should prevail. Then follow its custom-house tribute and its patent privilege.

Quite as important, and more directly painful, is its tyrannical meddling and barbarous decrees in social affairs. There is its political disfranchisement of woman; its interference with the relations of the sexes; its property in wives; its mercenary alimony and breach-of—promise plundering; its heartless disposal of the children of divorced persons; its brutal policy of revenge, instead of restitution, in criminal offenses, and finally, its supreme power to violate the citizen, and its total irresponsibility for anything it does. It needs only to be understood to be boycotted to speedy death. To help get it so understood, and succeeded by protection in open market, for person and property, is part of the purpose of this journal.

## The Hour and the Need.

Is progress a myth?

Is liberty a failure?

Is individuality hostile to equality and social order?

Is Egoism a vice and an infirmity?

These are questions which the people of this country have to consider and answer in these times that “try men’s souls.” Their civilization is threatened with destruction, their freedom with invasion, and to avert ruin prompt and intelligent action is necessary.

This country began its independent existence with reasoned adherence to the principle of individual liberty—the principle that the government which interferes least is best, that liberty is the mother of order, and that enlightened self-interest, refined and intelligent Egoism is the basis of true harmony and general happiness.

We are now asked to repudiate these principles, cast them aside as worthless, and—revive the blind worship of authority. The coming slavery casts its shadow before it, and we find our horizon obscured by “Nationalism” and “Christian Socialism,” alias military despotism and the inquisition. We are brutally told that the majority has the right and the might to control the life of the individual citizen, and that the latter’s labor and earnings should belong to the former. In the name of long exploded superstitions, detected shams, and exposed frauds, a system is being forced upon us which in point of absurdity eclipses the invention of the most ignorant tyrannical mind. “The will of God,” the guidance of the power behind evolution.” the “demand of the social organism,” the “interests of morality and religion.”—these and other phrases of equal value, are constantly on the lips of the new crusaders, who promise to cure society by annihilating the individual.

Of course these apostles of darkness and dull uniformity are not at all formidable: they vanish before the light of reason and thought as all other ghosts do before the light of day. But certain serious evils in society, certain diseases and maladjustments, the nature as well as the cause of which the masses of the people do not comprehend, but from which they suffer intensely, prepare these masses to lend an attentive ear to all quacks and humbugs who claim to have a cheap and sure remedy for the ills. And as the blind generally prefer to be led by the blind, as the ignorant are always predisposed to become the victims of the cunning (though, in a higher sense, ignorant) adventurers, there is danger that the partisans of majority-despotism will gather around them an army of miserable and discontented elements powerful enough to make successful war upon freedom and the results of progress.

But what, then should be done to check the advance of the coming slavery; to protect the liberties we enjoy and foster the progressive tendencies and aspirations of the healthiest portion of the people? It is necessary to disprove the assertions and affirmations of the authoritarians, and to show that our principal social evils are the product, not of individualism and personal liberty, but of denials of liberty, of violations of the principle of individualism. It is necessary to point out how the evils may be eradicated by a further extension of liberty, and that they can be eradicated



only by a further extension of liberty. We must show that the struggle for existence is fierce and intense not because men are Egoistic, but because certain social institutions, traditions, and arrangements perpetuate inequalities and injustice. In a word, we must show that all the material, intellectual, and moral wealth and beauty which we possess are the direct results of liberty, while all the misery and poverty, in the lower as well as higher sense, that oppress us and darken our lives are the direct results of the lack of certain liberties.

Can we do all this? Are our contentions well-founded? We certainly think so; such is our conviction. We have carefully analyzed the nature of the disease; we have examined the proposals of our opponents; and we have come to the conclusion that liberty alone can solve our industrial, political, and social problems.

We hope to attract the attention and enlist the sympathy of critical readers, and we invite them to follow our arguments.

VICTOR YARROS.

## **Business Announcement.**

EGOISM will not be published oftener than once a month at the publishers' expense. If, however, it should retrograde so much as to become popular, and gather a large enough list of subscribers it will be proportionally enlarged in size and more frequently issued. Preparations for this are not among the publishers' plans at present. They will do what they can to defeat such an arrangement by making the paper approach as nearly as possible their ideal of advanced thought, which is not always popular.

Do not subscribe for it, unless you feel that you would rather read it a year than have the fifty cents required to pay for it. You are under no obligations to it. It assumes only its share of the world's "cause," and hopes for nothing, if not mutual advantage in exchanging its matter for your money.

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MOSES HARMAN's first trial is over, and he is convicted. It was found that E. C. Walker and George Harman were in no way responsible for the publication of the indicted articles, and they are free, which is as it should be. Through a web of unfortunate circumstances and some mismanagement, there was no defense of the liberty of the press made at the trial; and all the money contributed for that purpose is lost, so far as making an intelligent plea before the court for freedom in publishing is concerned. This is another object lesson in representation, and shows how well it pays to entrust any part of our work to others, even though they be partners and principals in it. A motion for a new trial was to be argued, from which nothing has been heard at this writing. Unless something comes of this, Mr. Harman, an old man and a cripple, will have to undergo the hardships and brutal treatment of a felon, with few chances to survive it all. Should he live through it he will be met at the prison door by the "protection" of the citizen's life and property and have it all to repeat. Yet he has neither injured nor attempted to injure any person living or dead. Thus the authority beast murders thousands, while its supporters writhe and worship at its feet.

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# The Egoistic Philosophy.

## I

We seek understanding of facts for guidance in action, for avoidance of mistake and suffering, and even for resignation to the inevitable. This statement may cover the chief aims of mankind in intellectual discussion, ignoring now that which is merely a scholastic exercise. I am not in favor of argument in the style of the debating school, merely to sharpen the wits. Sincerity is too precious to be tarnished by a practice which easily generates an evil habit, and there are, at least as yet, too many occasions in real life on which every person who loves to tell the truth and expose falsehood must consider time and circumstance lest he impale himself upon implacable prejudices. Consequently if duplicity have its uses there need be no fear that it will not be cultivated without concerted efforts thereto among those who are seeking intellectual light.

I have placed resignation last, though it may be first in importance for some individuals. I take it that the life forces are strong enough in most of my readers to exude in promptings to action which shall move things, in the liberal sympathy which would communicate to others any discoverable means to reach conditions of greater harmony.

Is it not a fact that there is a considerable amount of well wishing and at the same time an intricate series of reciprocal injuries practiced by mankind, such as is not discoverable in any other species on earth? Then, we may ask, what are the causes of evils in society, can they be generalized, and what is the nature or principle of an efficient remedy? If now the words *laissez faire* occur to the reader he will easily remember that all animals except man practice according to that principle. Do we hear of fanaticism among them, of fighting within the species except in defense of their persons and property or on a matter of rivalry between the males? But what do we read in the history of mankind except woes, wars, persecutions and catastrophes begging description, and all related in some way to the determination of mankind to interfere with each others' actions, thoughts and feelings for the purpose of making people think better and behave better as conceived?

The theological Liberal is never tired of affirming that the greatest cruelties have been perpetrated by bigots acting sincerely for religious right as they thought they understood it; yet among the theological Liberals may be found prohibitionists and taxationists manifesting a holy horror of a man or woman who simply wants to be let alone while he or she lets others alone, and who refuses to join in any scheme of coercion. They insist that he cannot enjoy such liberty without detriment to society, and their ire rises on thinking that he is insensible to a moral principle, as they view the matter. They are bigots unknowing.

But are there such people as I have alluded to, who practice the rule *laissez faire*? Certainly there are. (These words are French and mean "Let them do," or "Let other people alone as far as you can") Properly understood and carried out in political science, as by Proudhon, a rational system of Anarchy is evolved from the motto. Anarchy in its strict and proper philosophical sense means "no tyranny,"—the regulation of business altogether by voluntary and mutual contract.

With some readers the perception of these relations as regards religious belief and political institutions and this comparison of human intolerance with the better habit of other species, to mind their own business, will have suggested the fundamental thought to which I am coming. We are digging now for bottom facts; not trying to invent any artificial rule, but to find the wholesome reality in nature if there be any good there for us, and to find the mainspring of normal animal action at all events, leaving for after discussion if advisable whether or not any artificial substitute be possible or commendable.

Now it is not my purpose to suggest that men should pattern after any other species of animal. We find the other animals acting naturally, seeking their own good, going each his own way and letting each other alone except under certain conditions which have caused a momentary conflict of individual interests. We find human life full of artificiality, perversion, and misery, much of which can be directly traced to interference, the worst of this interference having no chance of perpetuation except through a certain belief in its social necessity, which belief arises from or is interlaced with beliefs as to details of conduct, such for example as that the propagation of the human species would not occur in good form unless officially supervised, and so forth. Drawing such comparisons the conclusion appears that man needs to become natural, not in the sense of abandoning the arts and material comforts of life, but in the treatment of individuals of the species by others and in their collective action.

I may here anticipate an objection. Someone will ask whether I pretend that Egoism means the same as *laissez faire*. To this I say no, but the prevalence of Egoism will reduce interference, even by the ignorant, to the dimensions of their more undeniable interest in others' affairs, eliminating every motive of a fanatical character. Invasive developments of Egoism, no longer re-enforced by the strength of the multitude under a spell of personal magnetism, will probably not be very hard to deal with; then for want of success such developments will be attenuated or abandoned within the species. Thus Egoism is demonstrably the seed-bed of the policy and habit of general tolerance. And if vigilance be the price of liberty, who will deny that the tendency, within Egoistic limits, to some invasion is the sure creator and sustenance of vigilance? The vaporizing, non-Egoistic philosophers would place tolerance upon a cloudbank foundation of sentiment and attempt to recompense with fine words of praise the men who can be persuaded to forego any advantage which they might take of others. Like the preachers who picture the pleasures of sin and urge people to refrain from it, their attempts are inevitably futile.

TAK KAK.

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To the non-exercise of the political prerogative is due what liberty we have, rather than to the discretion with which it is used. If the real sentiment of the majority was crystallized into legal regulation as would be consistent with majority rule, the intelligent would have nothing worth living for.

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## Selfishness versus Altruism.

The supreme desire of man is happiness. This is his motive to action. It is a delusion to talk of man doing this or that because of a sense of “duty” or because “morality” demands it, or because it is a “religious obligation.” No matter how fervently men may speak of duty, morality, or religion, it is safe to say that they always act with reference to their own happiness. Mankind as invariably seeks pleasure as the needle points to the pole. It is true that the inexperienced seek it often where it cannot be found, but the fact remains that the desire to lessen the ills of life and to increase its joys is the permanent effort of humanity.

This struggle to escape pain and to secure the pleasures of life is Egoism. “Is it not selfish?” Yes; but so are all human motives. Christianity is a system of selfishness—its spirit of Egoism is unenlightened, as it rejects reason and relies upon fear and credulity. Enlightened Egoism is man’s effort to attain the highest conditions, to possess those things that will make him most happy now; the Christian is also struggling selfishly to reach the highest position (heaven) and to rejoice in the unspeakable joys, but he is willing to wait for them until he reaches the sweet by and bye. His religion is all self-seeking. The motive that incites him is just as selfish as that of his more enlightened neighbor, the Egoist. Every incentive presented to man in the gospels is selfish. The importance of the human soul (?) is magnified to such an extent that the “believer” begins to reel under the hallucination that his soul is of more importance than the whole world. (So it would too, if he had one.) The command to lay up treasures in heaven is an appeal to man’s selfishness. The sermon on the mount and the incentives spread before the eyes of the disciples have always cultivated in them gross selfishness, by such assurances as this: “For great is your reward in heaven.” This yearning for happiness was so strong and so natural that it has never been suppressed. It has always asserted itself; but has done so ignorantly and blindly. Religion or mystery is the cheapest form of indemnifying man for the ills he suffers. Religion is the nepenthe that has soothed his troubled heart. We see, then, that the appeals made to man in the name of religion are selfish for the simple reason that man constantly demands to be assured of personal happiness, and that religion is nothing more than a blind explanation of how he may gain it.

Egoism is selfish, but it is in the very nature of human life to live for one’s highest happiness. Living for others is ideal, not; real, except in so far as living for others increases our own happiness. To love your neighbor as your self is impossible, and to talk about loving your enemies is foolishness.

“Whoever would be greatest among you, let him be your servant.” This is sometimes quoted as teaching Altruism, but the motive here is not an unselfish one. The desire to be “greatest among you” is selfish.

Enlightened selfishness will not lead one to be indifferent to the welfare of others. He will find a large share of his wellbeing to consist in promoting the wellbeing of others. In the possession of his individual freedom he will not need to bestow charity upon his neighbors, for they too possessed of their liberty will not need charity; hence this matter of Altruism will not be in demand. Equal opportunities will be all that one can need to put him into the highest-possible

conditions. Heretofore the world has been moved by sentiment. The sympathetic side of human nature has been worked upon continually. It has taken many centuries of experience to develop in man sufficient intelligence to enable him to see that it is not so important for him to love his neighbor as it is to let him alone. The advice, to "mind your own business," would, if closely observed, do more for our neighbors and ourselves than the observance of any gospel that was ever written. It is objected to liberty when thus explained that it is not liberty, but license. This is a mistake. Liberty cannot be given man, as it is his by his nature. License is liberty to act by permission. Liberty implies responsibility, while license implies the right of others to assume the responsibility of the act for which license is granted. If liberty says to one, act as you please, it also says, remember, that you act at your own cost. Enlightened selfishness, or Egoism, is the best regulator, therefore, of human conduct.

W. S. BELL.

## The Fiction of Natural Rights.

The very corner-stone of Anarchistic philosophy is often supposed to be a paraphrase of Herbert Spencer's "First Principle" of equal freedom, that: "Every person has a natural right to do what he wills, provided that in the doing thereof he infringes not the equal rights of any other person." Yet there lurks in the expression a fallacy that correct thought must repudiate, or we must carry with us a diagram explaining the meaning of the words we use.

What are "*natural* rights?" In the middle ages school-men believed that they had solved a problem in physics by asserting that "nature abhors a vacuum"; but a very little study sufficed to convince thinkers that "the web of events" we group as "nature" neither abhors nor likes. With the growth of the conception of law as a term descriptive of a mode of being rather than a fiat imposed upon events, the term "natural" has lost much of its old teleological meaning. Still it is often used in that sense and too often implies it.

Blackstone defined "the law of nature" as "the will of man's maker." Mackintosh calls it "a supreme, invariable and uncontrollable rule of conduct to all men." Sir Henry Maine also speaks of "a determinable law of nature" for the guidance of human conduct. Kent defines it as that "which the creator has prescribed to man." F. Q. Stuart, in his "Natural Rights," says expressly: "A natural right is a privilege vouchsafed by natural law to man to exercise his faculties," and his whole work teems with expressions implying the fixity of "real law."

The correct position is, I maintain, that what we term "natural rights" are *evolved*, not conferred, and if so they are not fixed and unalterable. Nature conferred no more "privilege" upon us than upon dogs to exercise our faculties or functions. In fact, to my mind, the very assumption of "natural rights" is at war with evolution. Even if we no longer personalize nature as their giver, the term still carries with it the implication of rigidity, when, in fact, not even that mythical "right reason" with which we are supposed to be endowed can prove them historically so characterized. Every man is supposed to have a "natural right" to life. Is this co-eternal with man? Did it exist, though unrecognized, among our prognathus ancestors? If the savage transcended "natural right" in disposing at will of the life of a captive, where was it inscribed? It was not incarnated in the semi-brute. If the Roman law was based upon "a type of perfect law" in nature, was the recognition of the "natural right" of a father over the lives of his family contrary to the "right reason" of the time? And to this query convictions founded upon nineteenth century convictions are not pertinent.

Is woman's "natural right" as a "person" the same in all countries under polyandry, polygamy, and monogamy? or are those relations of the sexes, so important to the "well-being and good conduct," ignored by beneficent nature? It has been conclusively shown by sociologists that human progress (and there is no other) consists in passing from the militant *régime* toward an industrial one. Yet the time was when the *lex talionis* sanctified revenge as the highest virtue. Time was when not a human being on the face of the earth differed from Aristotle's opinion of slavery as a natural condition. Where was this "privilege vouchsafed by natural law" then inscribed? The question whether society would not have been far more conducive to happiness if such right had

been recognized, is as idle as whether eyes behind our heads would not have been equally so. If the “Principle” was not discoverable then, but has been now, are we to conclude that it is the final synthesis of “right reason”? or that its Incarnation is only now visible?

Having thus shown a few of the queries which arise to puzzle one who seeks for evidence of the immutability of “natural rights,” let us examine closer into the nature of “rights” themselves. The human sphere is a province conquered from nature, and believe its relations cannot be termed “natural.” It would be equally as permissible to call them moral or religious, for the qualifying adjective being given to imply the highest validity, it would be so understood by all to whom either of these words conveyed such meaning. Equally permissible, but equally indefensible in evolutionary thought when implying fixity. But do there exist any such inherent predicates of *human* nature as “rights?” The same theological bias which characterized “rights” as “natural” also regards their assertion as positive. On the contrary, every assertion of a right purely human, paradoxical as it may seem, is negative. The assertion of a “right” is but a protest against iniquitous conditions. Social evolution ever tends to the equalization of the exercise of our faculties. That is, social intercourse has slowly evolved the Ideal that peace, happiness and security are best attained by equal freedom to each and all; consequently, I can lay no claim in equity to a privilege, for that which all alike may enjoy ceases to be privileged. The important deduction from social evolution is that as militancy has weakened and industrialism widened its boundaries, liberty has ever tended toward such equalization, Privilege finds sanction in equity as right, because it violates the ideal of social progress — equality of opportunities.

Therefore it is that, as social relations have become more complex and integrated, the Ideal of “a more perfect form of liberty” rises in the form of protest against what only then are discernible as socially wrong, though ostensibly as assertions, such as “rights of women,” “rights of labor,” “rights” of children and sailors against flogging, the right to the soil, etc. They are fierce and burning assertions just so far as they emphasize a growing protest against inequitable conditions. In this sense they are Anarchistic, inasmuch as only by the extension, in other words, the abolition of restrictions, is the wrong righted. Our specific “rights” are thus dependent upon our ability to discern wrongs, or the violation of the ever-evolving industrial ideal — equality of opportunities, and exist but as protests. Abolish vested wrongs, and there will be no vested rights, natural or otherwise. Precisely as water flows to a level when obstructions are removed, just so will social relations flow to equitable conditions when restrictions are swept away. And precisely also as liberty comes in does the assertion of “rights” go out.—Dyer D. Lum in Pittsburgh Truth.



## Mrs. Grundy's Kingdom.

Kings may come and kings may go, princes may die and heirs apparent be born like meaner folk, dynasties may fall, and ministries may change; but one thing goes on forever and one person is the true Immortal—the power of Mrs. Grundy never fails and Mrs. Grundy herself never dies. Twin sister to Mrs. Partington, but of a sterner type, Mrs. Grundy is the tutelary deity of opposition and negation. She is the culminating point in the conservative element and denies all good in change of any kind. The world as it was when she first took its impress, is the world as it ought always to remain; and the moral forces which moulded her were the last expression of the truth of things. To go back beyond her time and into that of her mother's, would be to lose by restriction; to go forward with her daughter's, is to lose still more by the looseness of expansion. A fossil represents the long past; corruption is the doom of the near future. That moment of experience when life was young and Plancus was consul, was the only time of perfect development. Hence, all new thoughts, all new views of human duties, all further enlargement of political bases, all change in religious sentiment by philosophic application or scientific discoveries are strictly tabooed by her as the very superfluity of naughtiness, and false from start to finish.

In the same way she taboos all new fashions in dress, household management, social arrangements. Being new, they are therefore abhorrent. When time has through familiarity effaced the impression of strangeness, and she has become tardily reconciled to the things she so fiercely denounced in their inception, she repeats the process and falls foul of the next change as she fell foul of the last. She never learns by experience; and of all the lessons of life taught by experience, to that of the necessity for change Mrs. Grundy gives least heed.

Mrs. Grundy is the impersonation of the higher morality—the impersonation and the guardian. No cat scents a mouse with more keenness of detection, no truffle-hunter unearths underground fungus with more precision, than the keenness and precision with which she finds out the hidden sin where others see only futility, or at the broadest, folly. 'All life is to her as it were embroidered over with secret designs whereof she knows the occult meaning; and a kind of diabolical telepathy is ever at work between young people, more especially between the sexes. Mrs. Grundy does not believe in innocence. To her mind, more nuts have maggots in the kernel than are whole and wholesome.....

She puts her crooked old fingers into every person's pie, and offers to pick in concert the bones she has no business to touch at all. She is the universal Mrs. Putter-to-rights, and no man's dog must bark out of tune with the sol-fa she has intoned. She regulates, or seeks to regulate all science, all art, all literature. She is the measure of truth, the standard of proficiency. If discoveries are made which shake old faiths in their simple integrity and give a new gloss to ancient readings, Mrs. Grundy flourishes the *san benito* of the defunct Inquisition, and only regrets that she cannot clap it on the shoulders of the heretics, with the fire and faggot to follow. She does what she can in the service of vested faiths and consecrated ignorance..... In art she will have nothing that is not nice, pretty, tame, and commonplace. She discountenances all but the merest superficiality of intention, and understands only things with the most trite and trivial meaning. The nude is,

as we know, her great *bete noire*, and she cannot understand the need of students drawing the human body from nature, or the obligation laid on women painters to know something about the bones, the muscles, or the outlines of the figures they represent... In the larger things of life she has been of incalculable mischief. Like the toad which squatted by the ear of Eve, she was the viewless influence that whispered Galileo's condemnation to the sacred jury appointed to try him and pronounce on his innocence or guilt, on the truth or falsehood of his theory. She burnt Giordano Bruno. The early experimental philosophers she accused of the black art, and dealings with the Devil. She hanged innocent men and women in batches as sorcerers and witches, because those who doubted were too much afraid of her to advocate openly or ridicule freely. She still seeks to discredit all modern philosophers by branding them as Infidels! And when Darwin broke loose from her school and scoured the wide plain of nature on his own account, she beat her shrill alarm and called on her faithful followers to denounce the audacious insurgent who presumed to discover a law she had not endorsed.—Eliza Lynn Linton in the February Forum.

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A NEW idea will look like a mistake to the man who is wedded to the old ones.—Sturdy Oak.

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## The Reasons Why.

I am an Egoist.

I recognize no authority save that of my own reason.

I regulate my life and my relations with the outside world in accordance with my understanding and natural instincts.

My sole object in life is to be happy,— I seek to avoid all pain and to gratify all my normal desires.

I cannot be happy unless I feel myself perfectly safe and secure in my possessions.

I can never be safe and free from fear of disturbance or injury until those around me are able to gratify all their normal desires, and they can never be completely happy without security.

Security can only be the result of perfect justice.

Justice consists in the recognition of equality and the rendering of equity.

Justice, thus defined, necessarily involves a condition of absolute liberty within its sphere.

Therefore, justice is *the* condition of my happiness as well as the happiness of all that are like me. That is to say, justice is the law of human society.

Thus I, an Egoist, recognizing no rights and no duties, become, solely and simply through prudence and a desire for security, a lover of equity, equality, and universal liberty.

But there is no credit due me for my policy. If I were strong, shrewd, and skilful enough to defy all danger; if my happiness could be achieved without the aid, cooperation, and respect of others,— I might have chosen to be a tyrant, and might have led a pleasant life, surrounded by two-legged beasts of burden. Not being superior to all creation, I involuntarily have to draw a line at men, and make terms with them.

Having wisely decided to be a modest member of society, I have by no means irrevocably surrendered my freedom. I stay in it because, all things considered, it is best for me to submit rather than rebel, but I can, at any time, reconsider my course and, risking the consequences, make war upon society. Who can say that I am under any obligation to be just? Obligation? To whom? To What? The individual, once having entered the social compact, finds himself in the presence and under the influence of new impulses, new aspirations, new yearnings. He is changed, transformed, revolutionized. Social life becomes a necessity to him, not as a condition, but as an element of happiness; not as a means, but as an appreciable and weighty constituent of the desired end. He learns to know new joys and pleasures; his wants multiply; his tastes change; and he comes to feel and realize that he would never, even if he could, isolate himself from his fellow-men or try to reduce them to slavery.

This process of adaptation, or socialization, of the individual, though largely unconscious, can, nevertheless, be theoretically and objectively conceived and analyzed. In thought man can separate his Ego from the mass of humanity and discuss the wants, interest, and advantages of his person apart from it. He may not be able to effect such a separation in reality, but the illusion is so thorough that it must be discussed as if it were real.

I *imagine* I can leave society; I *think* I am free; therefore I am free. I feel no obligation and no duties. I act for the sake of immediate or prospective personal benefits, and obey the voice of prudence.

Am I unreliable? Quite the contrary. There would have been no confusion in our modern social relations if all men possessed these ideas, just as an isolated community of desperados would present an example of peaceful and harmonious relations. The whole mischief arises from the fact that so many build their castles in the air. Once plant yourself on solid ground, grasp and admit these fundamental realities, and you will logically and intelligently develop a principle of conduct which will make it possible for you to pronounce judgment on all things without tracing them back to first and bottom truths.

As Danton loved peace, but not the peace of slavery, so I love justice, but not the justice of moralism and idealism.—V. Yarros in Liberty.

## The Ethics of Property in Wives.

The following appeared in the Oakland Evening Tribune of April 4<sup>th</sup>:

District Attorney Reed has issued a warrant for the arrest of Frank Olivera on a charge of an assault with a deadly weapon committed on the person of his wife at Pleasanton. The couple have seven children, and have resided at Pleasanton for a number of years. As soon as the husband learned that a warrant was out for his arrest, he left home, and has not been seen since.

A short time ago Olivera became suspicious of his wife, and in order to punish her threw her upon the floor, tied her hands, gagged her and then cruelly assaulted her in a way that cannot be fully related, with a coupling pin, inflicting painful injuries.

This was placed near the bottom of a middle column with a heading no more conspicuous than one just above it announcing the catching of an unusually large fish at Benicia; thus indicating the tenor of the public conscience on such outrages, when committed within the bonds of matrimony. If she had been the property of another man, or not legally transferred by her parents to some man, the entire population would have been frantic with indignation, and out in arms until the "fiend dangled from a tree." But she was a "suspected" woman and, while it was regarded as rather rough treatment, it was also regarded as partly deserved. The punishment was too severe, that is the complaint; but that she should be punished is not questioned; and that it was proper for her husband to administer the punishment, as the old English laws provided for. Why not? It is the intention, the ethics of ownership, that man shall dispose of his possessions at will, without condition or interference, without regard to the volition of the object possessed. Once acknowledged to belong to him, and no further attention is paid to the manner in which he disposes of it. If he owns a bushel of wheat the ethics of property permits him to retain that wheat, let the result be what it may to his fellow men. Although a man die for need of the wheat the owner is defended in his right to keep it from him, even though the wheat rot instead of being utilized for the benefit of the owner. His horses, and other beasts of burden, work when he wishes. If they are rested and in a condition to serve him, well and good, but it is not the pleasure or welfare of the animals that is considered, but the desires and happiness of the owner. In the regulation of these possessions he is made secure by the fiat of the public mind.

The ethics of property in wives is identical with that of property in any other "live stock," so far as regards the freedom of action of the wives. It is the surface idea or claim that man and wife are partners. But in a business partnership a man never thinks of "punishing" his partner if he does contrary to his wishes, but the partnership is dissolved and that ends it. But on the other hand, where the partners are man and wife, as soon as society gives him a "deed", for her, it acknowledges his right to regulate her conduct and tacitly sanctions the punishment he may see fit to give her for a violation, or suspected violation, of the duties prescribed for her by it. For instance, in the case above quoted no heed is given to the woman's wishes in the matter, or

whether she desired to be “faithful” to him. And if she had not been his woman, his property, the thought of punishing her would not have occurred to him. It was the ownership idea; it was because she belonged to him that he dared to “punish” her.

But the pulpit will ignore it, and the press will formally regret it—anything to keep the idea of property in wives intact.

G.R.

## Egographs.

“It is not wickedness that does the most harm, it is stupidity.”

Egoistic is whoever and whatever acts out the self.—Tak Kak.

“There is no blasphemy against nature comparable to the oath of fidelity earnestly taken.”

“It is impossible to reason about love with one who does not treat it as an hypothesis.”

“What distresses me is to see that human genius has limits and that human stupidity has none.”

“The need of liberty is much less keenly felt than the need of authority. Convicts choose chiefs.”

“The presentiment that man feels of eternity in another world arises from his despair at not being eternal in this.”

“Men are so cowardly and servile that, if their tyrants should order them to love each other, they would adore each other.”

“He who complains of the ingratitude of man is an imbecile; for it was necessary to be an imbecile in order to count on their gratitude.”

The great difficulty is always to open people’s eyes; to touch their feelings and break their hearts is easy; the difficulty is to break their heads—Ruskin.

The tendencies of the times favor the idea of self-government, and leave the individual, for all code, to the rewards and penalties of his own constitution, which work with more energy than we believe, whilst we depend on artificial restraints.—Emerson.

Out of all this hodge-podge I really have retained but one thing,—namely, that morality consists in doing as one likes; that to do as one likes, one must be free; and that consequently the man who is not free, being unable to do as he likes, is necessarily immoral.—Eugene Mouton.

In the rapidly gathering gloom of the nineteenth century we must see, if not totally blind, the giant and ghastly form of Privilege in shadowy outline behind the millionaire. Privilege it is that robs labor of his pittance and gives it to the fortunate pets of the State—Fair Play.

I have unbounded faith in what is called human selfishness. I know of no other foundation to build upon. When we cease quarrelling with this indestructible instinct of self-preservation and learn to use it as one of the greatest forces of nature, it will be found to work beneficently for all mankind, and “the stone which has been rejected by the builders will become the chief corner-stone.”—E. D. Linton.

All upholders of government are blinded by the curious error which is at the foundation of so much social misery,—the error, namely, which establishes one moral code for the individual and another for the institution called government. Thus government, which is supposed to be necessary to repress theft, violence, and murder, finds no other way of maintaining itself but by the committal of like acts; and the State Socialists go a step farther, and after fuming against the iniquity of rent and interest when levied by private individuals, propose as a remedy that government should undertake to levy the same—A. Tarn.

Those who cannot believe in themselves, unless they are believed in by others, have? never known what truth is. Those who I have found truth, know best how little it is their work, and how small the merit which they can claim for themselves. They were blind before, and now they can see. That is all.—Max Muller.

The instant formal government is abolished, society begins to act. A general association takes place, and the common interest at once produces common security. So far is it from being true, as has been pretended, that the abolition of any formal government is the dissolution of society, it acts by a contrary impulse, and brings the latter closer together.—Thomas Paine.

In modern society competition is far from occupying the sphere of its natural action. Our laws run counter to it; and when it is asked whether the inequality of conditions is owing to the presence or the absence of competition, it is sufficient to look at the men who make the greatest figure among us, and dazzle us by the display of their scandalous wealth, in order to assure ourselves that inequality, so far as it is artificial and unjust, has for foundation, conquests, monopolies, restrictions, privileged offices, functions, and places, ministerial trafficking, public borrowing,—all things with which competition has nothing to do.—Bastiat.

The genius performs his benefits for mankind because he is obliged to and cannot? do otherwise. It is an instinct organically inherent in him which he is obeying. He would suffer if he (lid not obey its impulse. That the average passes will benefit by it does not decide the matter for him. Men of genius must find their sole reward in the fact that thinking, acting, originating, they live out their higher qualities, and thus be come conscious of their originality, to the accompaniment of powerful sensations of pleasure. There is no other satisfaction for the most sublime genius, as well as the lowest living being swimming in its nourishing fluid, than the sensation, as intensive as possible, of its own Ego—Max Nordau.

In proportion as morality is emotional, i. e., has affinity with art—it will exhibit itself in direct sympathetic feeling and action, and not as the recognition of a rule. Love does not say, “I ought to love”; it loves. Pity does not say, “It is right to be pitiful”; it pities. Justice does not say, “I am bound to be just”; it feels justly. It is only where moral emotion is comparatively weak that the contemplation of a rule or theory mingles with its action, and in accordance with this we think experience, both in literature and life, has shown that the minds which are pre-eminently didactic, which insist on a “lesson,” and despise everything that will not convey a moral, are deficient in sympathetic emotion—George Eliot.

The progressive nature of man causes spoliation to develop resistance, which paralyzes its force, and knowledge, which unveils its impostures. But spoliation does not confess herself conquered; she only becomes more-crafty, and, developing herself in the forms of government, and in a system of checks and counterpoises, she gives birth to politics, long a prolific resource. We then see her usurping the liberty of citizens the better to get hold of their wealth, and draining away their wealth to possess herself more surely of their liberty. Private activity passes into the domain of public activity. Everything is transacted through functionaries and an unintelligent and meddling bureaucracy overspreads the land. The public treasury becomes a vast reservoir into which laborers pour their savings, to be immediately distributed among policemen. Transactions are no longer regulated by free bargaining and discussion, and the mutuality of services disappears. In this state of things the true notion of property is extinguished, and every one appeals to law to give his services a fictitious value—Bastiat.



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