

Egoism Vol. II. No. 8.

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Pointers.

Since last issue we have received “Holiday Stories,” by Stephen Fiske; “The Quintessence of Ibsenism,” by G. Bernard Shaw, and “The Duchess of Powysland,” by Grant Allen, all published by Benj. R. Tucker, Box 3366, Boston, Mass. And from London comes “The Individual and the State,” a 10-page leaflet by Albert Tarn.

The “Examiner,” of this city, printed at the first of the year a list of communications from prominent citizens suggesting desired changes in affairs generally. Most of them appealed, of course, to the authority machine. But the one more loudly emphasizing the destructive tendency of that fetich, was the recommendation of Chief of Police Crowley to deprive persons arrested for vagrancy of the right of a jury trial. Inconvenience to citizens in serving on the jury is the bait set for facilitating the industry of vagrant fishing. Of all the outrages of this country’s political superstition, none is so stinging as persecution for unfortunate circumstances. First privilege legislation to plunder the weak, then legislation for convenient suppression to prevent squealing from the victim. No wonder hearty and smooth-handed beneficiaries so devoutly manipulate a superstition so convenient as the idea that the community needs watching.

Nothing so thoroughly attests popular stupidity as the assurance with which the press can reveal the transparency of the governing prerogative without danger of injuring its influence. The capitalistic papers nonchalantly admit that the Mexican government is persecuting the priests, that the president rules more like an emperor than a president, that the government’s deafness to the appeals of the starving is giving, cause for revolution, and that the masses need only an able general to inaugurate it. But they say “all the governors and generals are well paid and rich, and have all to lose and nothing to gain” by a revolution. Aiter thus admitting that governing and wealth is only a matter of holding the gun, these weather vanes hope for Garza’s summary suppression, which means no disturbance of riches and good pay for governing, and starvation for being governed. And these moulders of popular mental dough can do this with safety, for who has the intellectual persistence to work out the same conclusion from the game of plundering at home.

When “Liberty” gave its reason why female printers could not command as much wages as male, it replied to EGOISM’s citation that some women in this city are getting as much, by declaring that an isolated fact seldom proves anything; that if the death rate in San Francisco were decreasing, it would not follow that the death rate in the United States was not increasing. The illustration is certainly incomplex enough. However, EGOISM did not deduce its conclusion quite as that answer implies. Mr. Tucker does not dogmatically assert that women compositors cannot acquire the qualities for which he claims men’s superiority, and carrying the same idea still further we believed that the cited case of one-tenth of the working union printers of this city receiving equal wages was strong evidence that at least that fraction of the sex had practically mastered the accomplishment. San Francisco is not alone in this—every union town on the Coast makes similar showing; in one case a woman held the foremanship, and in another the advertising cases. Of course loose business management, sentimentalism, and other causes might account for

the whole. But so far as personal observation goes, the women seem as useful as the men. They work as steadily, as fast, require no different accommodations, and their product sells for the same price in the market. However, "Liberty" is as willing as EGOISM that women shall get equal pay for really equal work, and it was the incomprehensible seeming contrary of this that raised the question.

We have read "The Anarchists," by John Henry Mackay, translated from the German by George Schumm, and published by Benj. R. Tucker. It is the pioneer of avowed Anarchistic propaganda in story, and espouses with deep earnestness and irresistible logic, the cause of Egoistic Anarchism, both in fine reasoning and through stinging exposure of the vagaries of Communism and the folly of force. It is not-fiction spun from the imagination, with putty characters performing impossible functions, but an accurate description of the lives of real leaders of social agitation, surrounded as they were by the wretchedness and horrors of London poverty and the tyranny of that city's organized imperialism. The principal character of the story is Carrard Auban, an educated young man of keen sensibility, wiry temperament, relentless logic, and invincible determination, whose experience, thoughts, emotions, and mental agonies in the growth from Communism to Egoistic Anarchism are described in the delineating, artistic, and powerful language of the admirable poet-author. The book consists of eleven chapters, painting with stereoscopic effect the world-metropolis—a veritable great beast stretched over the face of the country, alluring and devouring human beings by the million and converting the fire and strength of their youth into its arterial blood, while it throws off their weakness and misery through reeking eruptions on its flat, vascular body. The reader plunges into its midst, and views with electric vividness the "The Empire of Hunger" where, in the words of the author: "The enormous debasement of life makes of one a butcher of another a victim! The one like the other overcome by illusion... And nowhere any escape for either! Both obeying the idol of duty created by men." Here, in the desperation of hunger, men make a blind struggle for relief, and are beaten down by the hand of constituted power to sink through mental and physical weakness into death and oblivion. Then in painful reminiscence the libertarian rehearses with the author those gloomy days of hope and fear when the executioner's sword was suspended by the thread of pretended deliberation over the heads of the Chicago martyrs, and anew the choking horror and crushing despair of November 11, '87, seizes one as he reads of the nerve-rending agony and depression of London sympathizers who also could scarcely believe their own senses when they saw the thread of the fatal weapon parted by the cleaving superstition, submission to the form of law. Then to illustrate the folly of collectivism, the reader is carried from these scenes to the propaganda of Communism where, in spite of the example of useless sacrifice at Chicago, the victims' comrades in London declaimed madly on, declaring themselves for the deed of the bomb thrower as well as the murdered men's opinions—Communism, the doctrine of sacrifice, which, with the muteness of primitive self-assertion, fanatically lays its lambs on the altar as long as power cares to wallow in the gore. Resolutely, though calmly, Auban points out the way, illustrates, argues, defeats the grounds of the Opposition and makes a momentary impression, only to lose it at the first appeal from an emotionalist to the vagaries of a childish impulse that hopes to grow a ripened garden in a day; they spring to their feet, speechify, gesticulate, consecrate themselves once more to humanity, and like a group of pettish school girls pace away arm in arm to pout at the rude critic, leaving the power that crushes without the hindrance of a single thought that tends to dissolve it. Auban is more and more alone, and from the touch of all the years finally finds a single man who understands; and one mutually eloquent look and the pressure of the hand constitute the

pledges of alliance that unite them in the work of a common cause. We heartily recommend this book above any novel in our list, and urge our readers to buy and circulate it. It contains 315 pages. We keep it constantly in stock, and sell it at 50 cents in paper cover, and for \$1.00 in cloth.

The Philosophy of Egoism.

XV

The supposed inward monitor which warns the Moralist against breaking the sacred law of Right, as it admonishes the believer against offending God, is that which “doth make cowards of us all,” in the language of the dramatist. That is conscience. One thinks he knows his Duty and with this thought comes vague fear and self-reproach for not having obeyed the Moral law; not simple fear in the Moralist, rather a confused feeling, but a feeling as clearly distinguishable from the simple fear of consequences as Moralism is distinguishable from a calculation of interest. The dread is as undefined as the authority or the reach of consequences, or both, are indefinite and dimly apprehended.

The fact that the dictates of conscience are the result of so-called “education” (really indoctrination) is established by the strongest proof on every hand. Every religion has its commandments and however absurd they may appear to others than the believers, conscience enforces their observance. Moralism continues in a general way the religious terror, making humanity or it may be more broadly animal life the sacred object.

Egoism, on the contrary, regards conscience as superstition. It is true that by simple analysis of the word, which yields con, with, and science, knowledge, we can have the definition : the sensation, sentiment or reflection regarding ourselves which accompanies knowledge of our voluntary action. But as an Egoist has simply either satisfaction or regret and does not judge himself by reference to any standard of Duty, he cannot have a guilty conscience.

It is most to the purpose, therefore, of Egoistic philosophy to look into the means of destroying the superstitious habit, for it is a notorious fact that self-condemnation continues somewhat after reason has assured the subject of the error of the doctrine which claimed his allegiance.

A silly conscience is to be extinguished, like other inconvenient habits, by resolute action. I have known a compositor who seemingly could not place a letter in line without first making an unnecessary motion with it against the side of his composing stick; a statesman who could not or dared not go to bed without first placing his boots as he wore them; a youth whose reason rejected the orthodox Christian doctrines in which he had been reared but who had qualms, which surprised him, about studying on Sunday; an infidel who had killed a man but had nothing to fear from the law, who nevertheless had the horrors in his dreams, and several persons with freeloze ideas but inconsistent in practice in a way that showed the rule of their old conscience. Some of these things will strike everyone as being ridiculous. Of the instances cited only one did not admit of correction by Emerson’s rule of doing the thing you fear to do. I firmly believe that if the man who had a life on his conscience had taken the rational method of doing all else which he knew to be sensible his mind would have been much strengthened to overcome his trouble of blood-guiltiness. The Sunday school young man realized that his conscience was awry, or the habit of a superstitious belief, and in a moderate time he overcame it. Others have had similar experiences as to books and conversation of a “blasphemous” character and breaches of

the so-called law of morality in the sexual relation. Reasoning is well in its place, but action is necessary to make a freeman or woman when one has been trained to have a conscience in any particular. I mean only action which combines pleasure with safety. It is no part of philosophic Egoism to pay more for advancement than it is worth.

TAK KAK.

Beauty of Motive?

One of EGOISM's subscribers writes:

I am not yet satisfied that all your principles are perfectly sound. They can be and are apt to be interpreted and applied too selfishly. But it is better to have people act from and intelligent self-interest than not at all. But I cannot help admiring acts of goodness without any thought of self, but merely from the love of doing them. The quality of an act is determined by the motive that inspires it. A good act performed specially in reference to self is not as beautiful as a similar act performed chiefly in reference to others. Yet self-interest is subscribed equally well in both cases.

The beauty of motive depends upon the standpoint from which we view it. And this standpoint depends upon how closely we analyze acts to determine the motives that prompt them. Aside from the physical impossibility for a separate consciousness to act with ultimate reference to anything but self, the bitterness of our hatred for selfishness in others is the only thing that more vividly portrays the selfy motive than does the delight with which we witness generosity. Do we hate selfishness in others because of our unselfishness. Indeed we do not, but on the contrary, because we are as anxious to gratify our desire as they are to gratify theirs. If we did not have our contrary wish to please ourselves we would not notice the opposing selfishness of theirs. It is an extension of the same principle if we desire the benefit for another from some one else. If that one complies we are delighted because our desire is gratified. If he does not we are indignant at his selfishness as we think toward the object of our sympathy, but really it is his defeating of our desire that we deprecate. We are not the object, and a refusal to relieve it cannot affect us, but we have through a knowledge of the fact, appropriated a sense of its condition, and seek relief from that consciousness by a knowledge of the removal of that condition.

There are no motives except selfy ones. The difference in acts is due to varying degrees of impressibility and reflecting powers. One person may choose to gratify his consciousness through the emotions that the possession of property affords, and conserve all his energy to that end. Another more impressible and less calculating may choose cash satisfaction, and the moment anything crosses his desires be ready to do everything in his power on the spot to gratify his present emotion by attempting to reduce things to a normal or usual state. A third, as impressible as the second, and perhaps more calculating than the first, will try to sense the merits of the case and take such action as he thinks will in the long run prove most satisfactory. We call the first selfish because we do not so fully share in his material reward as we do in the emotional reward of the second one's generosity to an object of our sympathy. The act of the second seems more beautiful if the relieving of his sympathy seems to be the impelling motive, because the relieving of sympathy is our only interest. We easily think others fine when we believe they exactly agree with us. If in addition to sympathy with the sufferer we were also occupied with a keen regard for equal freedom, we should in sympathy with the giver's interests be as glad to realize that he would be repaid as to see the other relieved.

Equal freedom cannot admit of obligation to sacrifice for another, for that denies equal freedom, and since all motives are selfward it follows that Egoistic principles cannot be interpreted and applied too selfishly except it be in the sense that the actor injures his own interests, and that is nobody else's business. Besides, men will find their own interests much more readily than others can for them, once equal freedom is thoroughly enough understood to free them from the ghost of an unanalyzed emotion. When they learn that there is no defensible claim for sacrifice, and that their hatred of what they deem selfishness in others rests on their own, they will no longer be found in the ridiculous attitude of begging justice as a charity by pleading for an idea that would make it a gift commanding gratitude instead of an expedient of self-interest. Then bombastic prating about generosity will be regarded with contempt, as attempted flattery from a charlatan, or with pity as the disconnected vaporings of primitive mentality. Let us get the start of this growing critic by analyzing every act, impulse, and proposition to the utmost depth of our penetration, deducing therefrom the dispassionate conclusion which is impregnable.

H.

Monogamic Tomcats.

When winter comes on and speckled chills commence to drift up the spine and men get into the house by the fire and feel hoverish, then the old tomcats of monogamy, rolled in the furs of direct privilege or the miserable subsidy of domestic slavery, begin growling and wouling against the factors that threaten the institution on which rests their sinecure. The Church and Freethinkers have both tried their hands at it lately. Colonel Ingersoll gave the crank a turn at Chicago recently, and the preachers of San Francisco have given it another. There is so little difference between the two that the words “God” and “Church” alone distinguish one from the other. I quote from the church representative first:

The study of the family is the key to the knowledge of sociology and the family must be preserved. The family is one of God’s fundamental arrangements for the government of the world and existence of the church of Christ. Marriage is the one foundation of the family. It is the warrant, the basis and the bond which holds the family together..... Individual ownership of property is a tremendous disintegrating social force in some directions. The postponement of marriage, the avoidance of parentage—the crimson crime of our period—the towering iniquity of our own city, the surrender of the home to the boarding-house and apartments, the ambitions of gain and social fashions are all greatly augmented by our material tendencies and produce divorces..... What is to stay this fearful plague that virtually means destruction of the family, and concedes to be true what God never ordained to be so —that marriage is a failure 9 Incompatibility is the flimsy excuse of thousands, while the real reason is gross licentiousness and unwillingness to abide by a covenant made in the name of God..... The reform will come—it must come, and agitation will hasten its birth here, and deliverance will be achieved to save the nation and the Church by saving the family. The remedy for this alarming evil is: Stringent divorce laws; uniform laws in all the states; prohibition of the guilty party remarrying; a higher moral sentiment as to the nature and sanctity of marriage; a firm, rigorous administration of the laws in our courts, and of discipline in all our churches..... Let it thunder forth from press and platform and pulpit, all over the land—the imperative and immediate demand never to be silenced until this crying iniquity be abolished. The family must and shall be preserved.

The above is the spirit of the Church; the following that of the average Freethinker. The italics are the emphasis which the editor of the “Truth Seeker” gives Ingersoll’s sentiment:

Let me say right here tonight, *I regard marriage as the holiest institution among men.* Without the fireside there is no human advancement; without the family there is no life worth living. Every good government is made up of good families. The unit of government is the family; *anything that tends to destroy the family is perfectly devilish and infamous.* I believe in marriage, and I hold in utter contempt the opinions of long-haired men and shorthaired women who denounce the institution of marriage..... I say it took millions of years to come from the condition of abject slavery up to the condition of marriage. Woman is the equal of the man. She has all the rights I have

and one more, and that is the right to be protected. That's my doctrine..... There is only one way to be happy and that is to make somebody else so, and *you can't be happy cross-lots; you have got to go the regular turnpike road.*

That the Church should be the enemy of liberty and progress is not remarkable, but when Freethinkers set about prescribing as loudly as the Church what advancement is, and what may and may not be done, and denouncing all other conduct as devilish and infamous, one is tempted to call the attention of grown up people to the absurdity of their position. With Colonel Ingersoll liberty is the best thing he knows of with some exception, and that is an institution or two of his choice. What church bigot cannot say as much. He would have "liberty for man, woman, and child," but only so much as the marriage *institution* affords. He is loud in his defense of individuality, but if the restraint of the mutual slavery of his little republic, the family, is galling to the individual and he secedes, he is devilish and infamous. If some social arrangement other than marriage is required to complete his happiness he may go without, no matter if his ideal can be mutually arranged with others. A person may be happy without bowing to the abstraction, God, but if he be happy without bowing to the abstraction, marriage, he is not happy. The caress is pleasanter if some disinterested party has consented, or if it is bestowed always by the same person. Men will not look after their preservation and interests in society unless they are married. Equal freedom is not so good as privilege in the hands of the other sex. Since it has taken millions of years to acquire marriage, there is nothing better adapted to happiness. Variation must cease at this particular departure. This is the logic of prejudice. When Ingersoll criticises the superstitions of the Church he argues, but when his own superstition is threatened, like the Church, he appeals, denounces, and slanders the cut of his opponents' hair.

H.

Another Collective Bubble Burst.

The Kaweah colony has collapsed. A number of private fortunes have been swallowed up and in some cases have left old people helpless, yet nothing has been learned by the sufferers. They do not for a moment blame the collective method—only the selfishness and wickedness of individuals. It is conceded that the industrial feature failed through a lack of efficient management and the competitive spur, and yet the incessant chorus of the colonists has been and will be the “destruction of competition.” It is admitted that an emotion-swayed laity constantly recalling and electing new leaders kept incompetence at the head of affairs where it could do the most harm. And it is mourned that failure socially, was due to everybody meddling in everybody else’s business. There was an intense jealousy of the man who “held down the soft job,” and the “general meeting” was an easy means of leveling him to the pick and shovel whenever he displeased some one, no matter what his capacity might be. There was trouble also in regard to those who pleaded sickness and claimed exemption from duty, when their neighbors had no way of determining the truthfulness of the allegation. In the management of the work, a ditch was surveyed and made, and then the water would not run in it; a planing mill foundation was cut out of granite at a place where power could not be got to the machines; a sawmill with a capacity of 3000 feet a day averaged but 193 feet a day during a three-months’ run, and it cost \$18 to \$20 a thousand while competitive production costs but \$10.

Anarchists have again and again pointed all this out as inherent in a political system of production; incompetency cannot select competency, and if competency should happen even to get the management it cannot plan and execute without supreme control of each individual, and this enslaves him; he cannot choose his course even at his own expense. Since society consists of individual consciousnesses, full liberty and full competition are the essential factors of social existence—liberty to act, competition to determine reward. Give men liberty to produce by removing paper monopolies of land and thought, and permit them to exchange products freely without first having to exchange for a limited kind, and all this “duty”—blubbering, chaotic hotchpotch is at an end, and equity will organize itself as water seeks a level. If we were permitted to provide means of exchanging our products without paying the toll which can be collected when we must exchange them for a particular kind before we can get the kind we want, we would get full return for all the product we market; and if we could use the means which we must pay for idle land to buy tools and build houses, we could escape the toll of the landlord and of the employer; and if we were allowed to do all the kinds of things we can learn to do, we would escape the toll of patentees and thought compilers; and if the effort of each were rewarded by the sale of his product in open market, no question could be raised regarding his work or his pay. Incompetence would experiment at its own expense, and merit would elect itself with no responsibility to the community save to note its existence. Competition would cause both the greatest production and lowest prices and create such an abundance that art and social life would shoot forth in such extravagance as to make the present appear like the hard-shelled seed sticking neglectedly in the winter’s chilly mud waiting for the warm sunshine of spring time. This is what Anarchism offers

and has accurately and patiently expounded for years amid the ridicule or indifference of the authority-ridden populace, peeling its shins over facts as it gapingly stumbles after the political elephant till he disappears in the big tent at Washington. But neither logic nor experience can reach a generation of emotionalists; they have got to die off.

H.

The Secularists' Prize Manual.

I suppose that most readers of current radical literature have read something about the \$1000 prize offered by a number of Secularists two years ago for a manual adapted to the use of teachers in public schools for teaching *morality*.

The prize was awarded to two Christian writers; namely, Nicholas Paine Gilman, and Edward Payson Jackson, both of Boston.

The former wrote "The Laws of Daily Conduct," a book of 149 pages, and the latter a treatise on "Character Building," comprising 230 pages, and both books are bound in one volume.

These gentlemen are, if my memory serves me correctly, ex-preachers. Both confess themselves friends of religion, and give unmistakable evidence of the fact.

The work these writers set out to do, was to present a book such as would enable the teacher to teach *morality* in the public schools. Of course religion was to have nothing to do with the method of presentation, or the incentives that should be set before the mind of the scholar. The pupil was to be taught the art of right living, or "conduct as a fine art" and the proper method of "character building." In other words "the laws of daily conduct" and those governing "character building" were to be found in an appeal to a rational interpretation of life.

The writers have tried to do what they aimed at, and have succeeded as far as the length of their rope would admit of. If, however, you will only forget the few things they said about being "friends of religion" and of "rendering unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," "duty," etc., you will find that they have builded on the solid ground of Egoism. Both writers constantly keep in view, happiness as the supreme aim of life.

Mr. Gilman lays down what seems to him a very broad foundation. He says: "*All our human life is lived under laws.*" He then proceeds to show that we must obey the laws under which we live, or *take the consequences*. Just so. This is Egoism pure and simple, and beyond this foundation rock, neither Mr. Gilman nor Mr. Jackson is able to budge. Looking ahead for consequences is what every intelligent being does or tries to do. This is the motive that is always in harmony with reason. There is therefore no moral code, no moral standard, and neither of these writers professes to give any other incentive to conduct than the consideration of the consequences—the pains and penalties that follow upon the heels of the violation of a law. Manifestly then, this is the test that curbs and controls the world at large. Man looks out as intently for happiness as the needle points to the pole. Selfishness is the motive that moves man. Let him have more head and more heart, and intelligent selfishness will identify his happiness with the happiness of his fellows. We may introduce the ghost dance of "duty," "spirituality," etc., but after it is all over we shall conclude that happiness is the end we have in view. Blind selfishness has reposed all its hopes in heaven, but with heaven out of sight we must rest with Mr. Gilman on "self-control by reason." He did not say *self-reliance*, but what he did say if freely interpreted means as much.

As an Egoist the prize manual pleases me. The superstructure is of ancient type in some points, but the foundation is modern. At times the writers loudly call for duty, but as "duty" does not materialize in answer to the call then the writer submits: "Well then let us take policy." When

the writer sets up Joe Cook's "oughtness of the ought," and it evaporates he cries out "give us expediency." In substance these morality writers say, "You had better not do that or you will get hurt." They have not been able to set up sign boards along the highway of life to guide the pilgrim. Man must guide himself—must trust his reason, rather than trust the reasoning of others, and thus become a law unto himself.

There are some lapses in the book which, as I have said, have to be laid aside. Mr. Jackson all through his "Character Building" holds up pains and penalties as guides to right conduct. But this brings him to the consideration of selfishness. He does not want to indorse such a motive, and attempts to repudiate it. I will let the reader see how he does it.

Mr. Jackson's teachings are through the media of Dr. Dix, a teacher, and his scholars:

Dr. Dix—So you think all good acts have at bottom some selfish motive?

Thomas Dunn, a pupil—It seems to me that it must be so.

Dr. Dix—Do you think the good Samaritan was selfish?

Thomas Dunn—He *might* have been purely so. He couldn't help pitying the man he saw suffering. Pity is no more truly an act of will I suppose, than surprise, or any other sudden emotion. His pity caused him a kind of suffering, and he took the most direct and effectual way of relieving it.....

Dr. Dix—I am surprised that such fully-developed cynicism could come from such young lips!

Thomas Dunn—I merely repeated what I had heard from older lips. But I only said it might be *possible*.

Dr. Dix (more graciously)—But what you felt in your heart is not probable. That is not the way you ordinarily judge your fellow-beings. Only those who are without virtue themselves disbelieve in its existence in others; only those without benevolence themselves believe others destitute of that virtue.

This is the very point where Mr. Jackson should have made his moral test of conduct appear in full force, but instead of reasoning with some show of science, he falls to preaching, and gives his pupils some exceedingly poor preaching at that. A few lines further on the preacher breaks out with saintly fervor, as he did not have any strong reasons to break out with, and "thanks heaven," that "not all are selfish, nor nearly all."

And this is the \$1000 Prize Manual Built by two preachers who while building strongly and yet blindly, like Samson groping for the pillars of the temple, they fain would destroy all the good they had done.

They have plainly made it clear that there is no moral law, no standard, no test; but that on all questions of conduct man is to use his reason, and restrain himself from that which would bring him evil, and seek that which he thinks would bring him happiness. That is Egoism. So far as the Prize Manual establishes anything, it establishes this philosophy.

W. S. BELL.

Our Funny Farmer.

DEAR EGOISM: I feel somewhat ashamed of my procrastination at taking the “shot at the enemy” which I so long ago promised to take through EGOISM. After so long a wait you will be justified in considering my shot a blank cartridge, and that I have fallen into the habits of the Moralists and deliberately violate a mutual contract with impunity and a lazy pen. After obtaining your consent to “pull the trigger” (as you aptly put it) I was under obligation to send along my shot. To be under obligation is to be in a sense and in some degree a slave; and as an Egoist I desire freedom from all obligations, I must therefore fulfill my self-imposed promise and obligation, and thus achieve my liberty. My excuse for the continued delay is that I have been driven about to death with work in consequence of having “bitten off” a larger piece of this glittering golden West than I “can chew,” and with no Mutual Bank funds in the surplus with which to employ a Chinese substitute I have been compelled to do my own work, and thus conform to the popular and ridiculous fad, “white labor only.” I have been so busy pushing the pick and shovel, saw and hammer, that I have not had time to push the pen. Figuratively speaking, I have sentenced myself for life to hard labor. If you could see my haggard, flea-bitten, fly-blown expression you would not only take me for a typical Californian, but would extend the “right hand of friendship” and your heartfelt sympathy—although Egoists are supposed to be as destitute of feeling as that unsympathetic and dispassionate animal, the ox. Yet I think I can rely upon that “fellow feeling which makes us wondrous kind,” as the poet says; especially that flea-bitten “kind” of feeling in California which makes us wondrous mad, and takes the sentiment all out of poetry and makes it the blankest of blank verse. I hope you will accept this excuse as my apology and believe me to have let go only to get a better hold.

Speaking of Egoism reminds me of the late discussion upon that subject in “Liberty” between Benj. R. Tucker and Victor Yarros. What is the matter with our mutual friend, Victor? has he fallen into the trap of Moralistic respectability laid by the intellectual and classical Herbert Spencer and his followers? I have held several arguments with students of Herbert Spencer, and usually found them to be the most difficult of persons to get to grasp a clear conception of the principle of liberty. I can make more headway with a democratic politician! The Spencerians, to my mind appear to prefer a circuitous, serpentine march toward liberty rather than a plumb-line rapid transit cross-lots cut.

Mr. Yarros’s recent controversy with our Uncle Benj. R. Tucker in which Egoism came in for its share of discussion, inclines me to the melancholy opinion that he is only a half-baked Egoist, “rapidly turning to dough,” especially after reading (sometime ago) his “Reasons Why” he was an Egoist (than which for condensed clearness and clear-cut Egoism nothing better has been written by any Egoistic writer).

In his last intellectual battle with Mr. Tucker he forcibly reminds me of the darky boy who used to get down on all fours and buck heads with a pet male sheep—classically called a ram. His trick to avoid being hit by the ram was to suddenly duck his head when the ram came on head down to deliver his usual straightforward blow. This little trick was successful for a time, until

one day the darky in ducking his head run a stubble into his nose which caused him to raise his head suddenly and just in time to receive a terrific blow from his rambunctious adversary which knocked the darky flat, and thus ended the ramification on the spot. The stubble which Mr. Tucker thrust under Mr. Yarros's nose, was "Reason's Why," and caused him to receive the former's straightforward blow, knocking our V. Y. out *hors or ram de combat* and ending his Egoistic ramification.

I am optimist enough to hope that neither of these intellectual athletes will be very angry with me for comparing one with a foolish darky boy, and the other with a ram, but—well I always admire the *straightforwardness* of a ram.

I have been a reader of Tucker's "Liberty" for nearly ten years, and paid fairly close attention to the arguments and debates between its logical editor and his opponents, and I have come to the conclusion that his intense directness of purpose and detestation of hypocrisy even though (as is often the case) it be unconscious hypocrisy, has caused him to be among many of his disputants the most misunderstood man in the (Anarchistic) world. His evident hatred of hypocrisy (conscious or unconscious), reminds me of old Ben Wade (a shrewd politician), who once said upon the subject of hypocrisy, "That a man who would think damn it, and not say damn it, was a damned hypocrite."

Mr. Tucker's straightforward course in argument has no doubt caused some of his readers to think him discourteous and lacking in linguistic polish. However this may be, his sharp angles and rugged corners oftentimes serve the good purpose of polishing and rounding the corners of his overconfident antagonists. I like our Uncle Benjamin's battering-ram propensities. May his horns ever be *straight* and never grow shorter.

PARSE.

Managerial Experience.

I have got something now that I don't want, and I've got it bad. It is a regret on the inside of my breastbone. I am the scene for a good bargain, I am willing to swap this fresh-laid, sickle-edged regret for the aroma of a shadow or the unselfishness of an Altruist. Heretofore I have been able to exchange work for the raw material consumed in the Experiences for these columns, but this one cost me \$20 in cash—worse than cash—borrowed money. Since I found my railroad unpatentable I have not had much confidence in my mental capacities, and have held my body in rags and readiness for manual exploits if any should fly. EGOISM was getting unusually hard up and I was getting just as unusually ready to turn in some wherewith. Suddenly there came a letter from one of our subscribers who has charge of one of the roundhouses of a railroad. He had room for a man and could pay \$65 per month.

Now this struck me in more ways than one. Among machines, I am literally stuck on railroad engines, and they come about fourth in the list of my choice of the good things of *life*. I regard baked raspberry cobbler with unscalped Jersey milk as the best thing in the world. Next comes a big subscription list, then beautiful and intelligent women, and following these, slowly, locomotives. The first, we cannot afford, the second we cannot capture, and the third do not fool around goose pasture. Under these circumstances the engines became the first choice and I would have the pleasure of putting sand in their craws and cleaning their tired "slippers," smooth arms, and warm chests. In addition to this, I was overjoyed and the German cigar store at the thought of earning as much as my, now at parting, adored wife. But she suggested that we sit down with deliberation and a pencil and calculate what it would cost to hire the paper done, as would be necessary in my absence. My head was so crowded with the \$65 and engines that there hadn't been even standing room for the paper's mechanical work. We found, however, that it would take \$25 to replace my mechanical work on the paper, and \$25 for board, which left only \$15 and a freezing vacuum in my enthusiasm. For \$515 in my inside pocket, my wife would have the responsibility of the paper with its vexatious details in strange hands, and would have to be jarred out of bed forty minutes earlier in the morning by the parrot-fighting uproar of our fussy little alarm clock, and worse than all she must perform my shiver-tremens every time also while wading and splashing around building fire in the wet air that drifts into the kitchen at night. This seemed too much goods, or Dads rather, for the money. But jobs were scarce, and there was trouble in the union camp, and the \$15 a month would help us to a \$100 or more that we want to buy type that we may become our own employers. Besides I meant to do most of the necessary writing evenings, and communicate the details of management from day to day, and thus in the rear end of a somewhat unpleasant suspense help us out of a dependency which is irksome in struggling for existence. With this idea of assuming responsibility and achieving a result, I concluded to try it. So I bought a blue flannel shirt that fits me like a circus tent, and a pair of yellow gloves and blue overalls with a suggestive scent—more, seventy-five cents. My wife also made me take our apoplectic old umbrella to keep me dry when parading from the engine-house to my room and meals. With these clothes in my wife's little niece's little satchel,

and a mellow appreciation of everything about home that had previously seemed monotonous under my collar bone, I bravely rode elegant passenger coaches for ten hours and seven dollars. Then I was there, so was my friend and my job—what more did I want? I wanted a roundhouse and a square one; the former was not built yet, and the latter does not thrive in that section. It was on the plains in the midst of an ocean of sage brush. This was the sagest-looking brush that I ever saw, and however much he may love pointedness and penetration, I cannot believe that a sane sage would brush himself with such a whisk. Perhaps they use them to brush an ignorant and stupid populace. I saw indications of such a populace and heard it pop at some places along the line.

The umbrella was a piece of misplaced wire and spraddle; while there would be a sufficiency of rain and plenty of room to walk in, there was none to walk from nor engine-house to arrive at. The engines were just turned in the yard, so to speak, and the men slept in a tourists' back-number sleeping car. I take it that it is a cataleptic sleep that the car is afflicted with and that the tourists had to abandon it and take a smoker. Ordinary sleeping cars are somewhat somnambulistic and can run about as well in their sleep as any way.

The men worked in twelve-hour shifts at shoveling coal from the ground, week days and Sundays, and in emergencies added six hours more. There was no escape from the rain, for when the engines come they must be coaled to keep them from getting cold, no matter who gets wet. Neither would I have the pleasure of polishing their slippers, arms, and palpitating bosoms, for they take only some coal lunch and a game of poker, as it were, and put off to town for toilet, while the men have to toil it where they are. Being the subject of rheumatism in the possessive case, I dared not expose myself to the rain as would be necessary, and there would be no opportunity to do the writing I had planned. This would cause my wife more trouble and loss of time than my surplus would cover, so the only thing left was myself for home, where I arrived in time to assume the first responsibility, which my wife was shouldering with all her might.

My friend was in no way to blame, for he had no way of knowing that I must keep out of the rain and work at home evenings. It was not altogether my fault either, for there was no time to inquire into particulars, and I could not afford to miss an opportunity to boost the home struggle. The culpable parties are those millions of unfortunates who try to drag through life without the paper. For had there been even a thousand of them chucking in a four-bit piece each year, I would not have thought of attempting such a wild goose chase. But they didn't and I did, and here I am in all my gawky stupidity innocently waiting to do some other fool thing, I suppose.

When I stated the amount of money required to put EGOISM on a steam press, I believed that we would have to raise it ourselves, so I named a finely-calculated figure. The amount allotted to new type furnishes just enough to fill the columns and little left to vary on. This is all right for naturally great and systematic writers, a fact which I learned from setting David Hume's and my own productions. We run a case out evenly, so that all the letters are exhausted at the same time and have to be propped up to keep them from falling. Now some of our contributors often write so one-ideally that a letter will run out when most of the boxes are still one-third full, and as the full avoirdupois of type must go in to fill the space, I am obliged to boycott in my editorials all words containing the wearied letter, which often produces an extraordinary style. In this respect I am ahead of my esteemed pretemporary, Mr. Hume. However, I charitably attribute this to a lack

of opportunity on his part. He never attempted to run a paper on an all-around limited capital, so failed to acquire the letter boycotting accomplishment. I deeply sympathize with all otherwise great characters who are deprived of my opportunities, and shall as soon as practicable cut off the uneven exercise of at least one by getting more type. This statement is made under an impulse to fairness toward worthy contemporaries who may be struggling to duplicate my twisted style.

When one wakes up to a new idea it surprises him to see what a set of clams we human beasts are. I have been extant for thirty-four years now, and have repeatedly seen the sun shining through clouds of dust, volumes of sewer gas, the stench from marshes and from inhabited dead animals, also into columns of pied and smudgy smoke, and upon miles of the sloppiest of mud, but in spite of this it never occurred to me that its beams might become soiled and dirty until lately when one day I stumbled onto a “sunbeam washer” in front of a store. With that suggestion these things flashed upon me like a pain from too many green apples. I was provoked that I hadn’t caught on and monopolized the credit myself of conferring upon an appreciative world the possibility of fresh and exquisitely-laundried sunbeams as good as new except for the wear from washing. My wife says it was a clothes washer that I saw. Now I do not pretend, regardless of diet, to be always very astute, but when I see on a machine in big black letters the words, “Sunbeam Washer,” it is very hard to make me believe that they are “Clothes Washer.”

I have been harrowed by, and have plowed here some fogs that were very thick—twenty miles I should say, but London has recently taken the fog cake or a cake of fog so dense that people not only lost their way but even their lives in it. I am glad we do not live in London, for my wife would lose her life the first time she went out with it. For not long ago she lost her last year’s umbrella on the local train when there was not a speck of fog, but a bright moonlight. She says there is no other kind of moonlight besides the bright variety. I admit it, but as much cannot be said of those who lose their umbrellas.

THE MANAGER.

Straws in the Breeze.

For my part, I do not know what, under all circumstances, is right or wrong.—Bierce.

In the matter of the men buried by a landslide on the line of the Northern Pacific railroad at Canton the local coroner has decided that no inquest is necessary, for there is no doubt of the cause of death and no charge of criminal negligence. That may be very true, but are there no fees for an inquest in that country? And is there no allowance for an autopsy? The gentlemen's reasons for inaction are incompetent, irrelevant and immaterial; in violating the sacredest traditions of his high office, as they are understood here, he should have the decency to explain that it would not pay him to observe them.—Examiner.

Mr. Wanamaker is still enthusiastic for a postal telegraph and would even add to it a postal telephone. We fail to see wherein lies the gain. We do not believe that the service would be better and we dread the rule of a bureaucracy. It would seem that there are already political machines more than enough in this country, and we can see no reason for the creation of a new one. The argument from the success of the postoffice department is fallacious. The work of that department could and would be done better and done cheaper by private enterprise, as the success of Wells, Fargo & Co.'s postal service in competition with the government very clearly demonstrates.—Oakland Daily Tribune.

Public sentiment is all powerful. Public sentiment should make land free. It should encourage men to go upon land wherever found vacant, to build homes thereon and improve it by their labor, and should protect them in its possession so long as they occupy and use it. Public sentiment should refuse to respect or protect possession without use. When this begins to be the case vacant land holders will hasten to improve their holdings, or dispose of them to the first bidder; the cancer of rent will cease to absorb the earnings of labor, and men will have begun to be free. This doctrine we believe to be unassailable, and we are not ashamed to proclaim it from the housetops and the hilltops, and to defend it at all times.—Phelps County (Neb.) Herald.

A Cheap Ranch.

One of EGOISM's subscribers offers at the reasonable figure of \$1500 the raw cloth for a good California home for a farmer or fruit grower or both. It consists of 80 acres of valley and hill lands; the hills are more or less wooded with fine live and white oak enough for 2000 cords of wood. The other land lies in level plateaus ranging one above another; the lower one being about 10 feet above the level of Carmel river, a creek running beside it, and the others 20 and 30 feet above. The soil is an excellent one, being a dark loam (not "dobe"), and considerable of the tract is ready for the plow, in five, ten, and fifteen acre lots. It is well watered, and in as good climate and fruit growing belt as the state affords, and has a new five-room house, a barn and wagon shed. At present its nearest market is 16 miles away, which is its only objectionable feature, however, it lies on a constantly-traveled road. The party now holding it bought 160 acres and finds he has more than he can handle alone, hence this low price. For further particulars address EGOISM, Box 1678, San Francisco.

EGOISM'S PRINCIPLES AND PURPOSE.

EGOISM's purpose is the improvement of social existence through intelligent self-interest. It finds that whatever we have of equal conditions and mutual advantage is due to a prevalence of this principle corresponding with the degree and universality of individual resistance to encroachment.

Reflection will satisfy all who are desirous of being guided in their conclusions by fact, that as organization itself is a process of absorbing every material useful to its purpose, with no limit save that of outside resistance, so must the very fact of its being a separately organized entity make it impossible for it to act with ultimate reference to anything but itself. Observation will show that this holds good throughout the vegetable and animal kingdoms, and that whatever of equality exists among members of a species or between different species has its source and degree in the resisting capacity, of whatever kind, which such member or species can exert against the encroachment of other members or species. The human animal is no exception to this rule. True, its greater complexity has developed the expedient of sometimes performing acts with beneficial results to others, but this is at last analysis only resistance, because it is the only means of resisting the withholding by others from such actor's welfare that which is more desirable than that with which he parts. If, then, the self-projecting faculty of mankind is such that it will in addition to the direct resistance common to the less complex animals, diplomatically exercise present sacrifice to further extend self, and it being a fact that equality depends upon equal resistance, diplomatic or otherwise, what are its chances in an absence of enlightenment in which the individuals of the majority so far from *intelligently* using this resisting power in their own behalf, do not even believe that they should do so? The result of a general conception so chaotic, would naturally be what we find: the generalization from the practical expediency of certain consideration for others, crystallized through the impulse of blind selfishness into a mysterious and oppressive obligation, credit for the observance of which gratifies the self-projecting faculty of the simple, while the more shrewd evade its exactions, and at every step from the manipulation of the general delusions of religious and political authority to the association of sexes and children at play, project themselves by exchanging this mythical credit for the real comforts and luxuries of the occasion, which the others produce. Thus in addition to the natural disadvantage of unequal capacity, the weaker are deprived through a superstition, of the use of such capacity as they have, as may be seen in their groping blindness all about us.

To secure and maintain equal conditions then, requires a rational understanding of the real object of life as indicated by the facts of its expression. It is plain that the world of humanity is made up of individuals absolutely separate; that life is to this humanity nothing save as it is something to one of these; that one of these can be not-hing to another except as he detracts from or adds to his happiness; that on this is based the idea of social expediency; that the resistance of each of these individuals would determine what is socially expedient; that approximately equal resistance makes it equality, and on such continued and a universal resistance depends equality. This can leave no room for any sane action toward others but that of the policy promoting most

the happiness of the acting Ego. Therefore EGOISM insists that the attainment of equal freedom depends upon a course of conduct-replacing the idea of “duty to others” with *expediency* toward others; upon a recognition of the fact that self-pleasure must be the final motive of any act; 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 idealism. It will maintain that what is generally recognized as morality is nothing other than the expediency deduced 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; that the belief that it is something other than a policy—a fixed and eternal obligation, outside of and superior to man’s recognized interests, and may not be changed as utility indicates, makes it a superstition in effect like any other superstition which causes its adherent-s to crystallize the expediency adopted by one period into positive regulations for another in which it has no utility, but becomes tyrannical laws and customs in the name of which persecution is justified, as in the fanaticism of any fixed idea.

Another part of its purpose is to help dispel the “Political Authority” superstition and develop a public sentiment which would replace State interference with the protection for person and property which the competition of protecting associations would afford. Then the State’s fanatical tyranny and industry crushing privilege would torture the nerves of poverty-stricken old age or pinch tender youth no more. The most disastrous interference of this monster superstition is its prohibition of the issuing of exchange medium on the ample security of all kinds of property, which at once would abolish speculative interest and practically set all idle hands at productive labor at wages ever nearing the whole product until it should be reached. The next interference is by paper titles to vacant land instead of the just and reasonable one of occupancy and use, which with the employment that free money would give, would furnish all with comfortable homes in a short time, and thereafter even with luxuries from like exertion. Following this is its patent privilege, customs robbery, protective tariff, barbarous decrees in social and sexual affairs; its brutal policy of revenge, instead of restitution, in criminal offenses, and finally its supreme power to violate the individual, and its total irresponsibility.

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