The Firebrand: Vol. 3, No. 5 (March 7, 1897)

For the Burning Away of the Cobwebs of Superstition and Ignorance.

Firebrand Publishing Committee

March 7, 1897

Contents

A Legend **3**

Why I am an Anarchist. **5**

The Paris Commune. **7**

An Answer to Criticisms. **9**

Things As I See Them. **11**

Note and Comment. **13**
Clippings and Comments. 15
The Letter-Box. 15
Notice. 16
Propaganda Fund. 16

The Workers Outcry. **17**

The Common Property Bugaboo. **18**

Must We Lie to Please the Critics? **21**

Echoes from Foreign Countries. **24**

Defends Himself. **26**
Vive la Commune!! 28

Social Conditions and Character. **29**

Correspondence. **32**
A Compliment from a Socialist. 32
For The Propaganda 32
Kelly's Lecturing Tour. 33
Anarchists, Wise and Otherwise. 33
Sample Copies. 35

A Legend

A knave and a fool on an island were cast;
Their ship had gone down in the hurricane's blast.

On the island they met, while hungry and wet,
A wise man who aid to them gave;
They were given a home, with the freedom to roam,
Bounded by naught but the wave.

The fool, though demented, was easily contented
To live in this beautiful land:
But the knave was a schemer (there's plenty lots meaner);
He thought out a wonderful plan.

Said the knave to the fool: "It's plain that some rule
Must govern society here,
Else murder we'll do—Anarchy ensue—
A government is needed, I fear."

The fool was demented, and of course he consented,
But the wise man opposed it alone;
His logic was parried, for the measure was carried
Over the minority of one.

Now none but a fool, or a knave wants to rule,
For a wise man knows better than that;
So the knave was elected, for no fool is selected
To wear a governor's hat.

The knave, as a state, was something quite great,
The fool was lost in surprise;
As he looked on in awe, for the majesty of law
Quite blinded and dazzled his eyes.

But states are expensive, and the fool was quite pensive
When the tax collector called round,
And took all his money, (and it wasn't quite funny)—
As payment for using the ground.

E're long the poor fool, by means of the rule
Of this cunning knave of a state,
Was reduced to a slave and made work for the knave,
From early morning till late.

The wise man foresaw that the knave and his law

Would drive from the island its peace;
He was branded a hater of law, and a traitor,
For whom toleration should cease.

The fool patriotic, and quite idiotic—
(Synomomous terms I declare,)
Was ready with chains, and the law's legal pains,
To fasten his own despair,

And to kill with a blow, first his enemy's foe,
And his own true defender and friend;
To preserve the knave's law, which he worshiped in awe
And to the gallows the hero did send.

Ross Winn.

Why I am an Anarchist.

We find ourselves in a world of conflicting ideas, and every person who has individuality enough developed to be more, in human life, than a domestic animal or lifeless machine, must align himself with others who hold the same opinions, whether he will or not, and then he is in the view of others, and perhaps in his own view, labeled with the name of the idea he holds. So we find that nearly every person is labeled, and some persons have a number of labels.

Finding that we must be something—must hold to certain ideas and work for certain ends—if we work at all, or amount to any more in human life than an ox, or an ax, it very naturally follows that we will adopt and work for the prevalence of such ideas as will bring us the greatest happiness, now or bye and bye. That is why I am an Anarchist. I am convinced that to work for the realization of the Anarchist ideal will bring me more satisfaction than an adherence to, or working for, any other ideal would bring me.

But every one should be able and willing to give a reason for the "faith that is within him," and I will try and do so.

I find myself in a world of sunshine and shade; of joy and sorrow; of happiness and woe. All around me I see fellow beings; beings that are constituted very much as I am, have similar desires, hopes and aspirations. I find that they are constantly trying to gratify these desires; to realize their hopes and attain to that for which they aspire. I find further that they can do these things only by exploiting inorganic nature, and by assisting each other. I find that as things are now, these beings instead of mutually assisting each other are constantly striving to injure each other, not because they take delight in the suffering of a fellow, but because they see no other way of satisfying their desires and aspirations. They think this state of affairs wrong, and are constantly clamoring for a change, but have not yet learned the great fundamental fact of human solidarity—of our interdependence.

Long have the various members of the human family sought to adjust themselves to environment, and of late have begun to endeavor to adjust the environment to suit themselves. All mankind craves for freedom, but most of the people have sought to gain freedom by subjugating others, or by restricting all alike. They have not learned that they cannot be free while they are holding others, or while they seek to restrict the freedom of others. No one desires to be injured, and yet no one can be secure from injury as long as he injures others. We all wish to be free from injury. I crave for freedom. I see that others want the same condition, and I know that my freedom can be made secure only by the freedom of all others. I know of no other ideal but Anarchy that, if really would secure freedom to me and to all others, therefore I am an Anarchist.

I long for plenty; for a sufficiency of the material necessities of life to make it possible for me to satisfy all my physical cravings, and I know that all others want the same thing. I see that the Earth yields abundantly; that it is possible for human beings to produce all the material necessities required to satisfy their physical cravings, and that if they would stop restricting and interfering with each other and turn their attention to production and mutual assistance, they could have every material comfort they desire. Anarchy is the only theory that, if put into

practice, would secure this abundance and at the same time secure full liberty. Consequently I am an Anarchist.

I love my fellows, some of them at least, and pity those who suffer. I desire association with my fellow humans, and crave their friendship. I have a horror of violence and of the shedding of blood. I find that, as a rule, the other members of the human family are influenced by the same emotions, and I see that these emotions are warped and stifled by the conditions by which we are surrounded. I realize that Anarchy would be a condition that would tend to develop these emotions, and to eliminate the emotions of hatred, revenge, jealousy and envy, by disuse: That in Anarchy association would rest upon mutual attraction, that all such hindering barriers as class distinction, rank, title or wealth would not exist, and so I am an Anarchist.

I love the beautiful. It gives me joy to see gorgeous sunsets, towering mountains, picturesque scenes. It increases my happiness to see bright cheery faces, happy people and comfort. I take great delight in works of art, in poetry and music. I do not enjoy these things alone. I wish to share my joy with others. As things are today the ability to enjoy these things is crowded or crushed out of most people, and I must have my enjoyment of them constantly marred by the lonesomeness I feel when trying to communicate my joy to those I love, or with whom I associate. I know that many who have great artistic power; who could add much to the world's stock of art, poetry and music, are prevented from so doing by the hard necessities that surround them, and I see that Anarchy would remove the stifling conditions that kill the appreciation of the beautiful and prevent the development of the artistic. I am, for these reasons, an Anarchist.

All this and much more goes to make up the reasons for my adherence to, and advocacy of Anarchy.

Henry Addis

The Paris Commune.

Again the anniversary of the Paris Commune is approaching. All around the world, wherever modern industrialism has gone, this anniversary will be celebrated. Much has been written concerning this great popular uprising, most of which has been of a derogatory character, but some truthful and commendary.

The uprising of the people of Paris against official corruption, in time of siege and general distress, is one of the brightest pages in the history of France, and has been a source of encouragement to the oppressed of every country. The lover of liberty, and the admirer of heroism and devotion may never weary of contemplating and discoursing on the events of the Commune, and the personalities of those who figured most conspicuously in it. How grand a relief to the stinking and cowardly action of the rulers of France, was that splendid uprising of the "common herd," when they swept the city clean of "boodle politicians," and found themselves free.

How it shocked the thrones of Europe and sent a thrill of hope through the minds of the downtrodden of every nation. Ah, how near to the realization of the dream of all ages it came. Ever had the people prayed for deliverance from bondage, and from the domination of oppressors. Always hopeful of what the future would bring forth, they had watched and waited for deliverance, and now, oh glorious reality, freedom had triumphed in Paris—the people of Paris were free. Were they incapable of appreciating their freedom? Did they feel like a fish out of water or a bird that longs for its cage? Nay, they enjoyed their freedom; they were happy. They flung themselves into the new form of life with a will and the spectacle of women and children, as well as men, walking abroad at all hours of the day and night, unprotected by police or other "minions of the law," and with no reason to fear, no robbery or other acts of violence occurring, was seen for the first and only time in history. Strange as it may seem, contradictory as it is to all authoritarian assertions to the contrary, Paris, during the Commune was absolutely without all those acts that the law is said to be made to prevent. Although besieged from without, violence was unknown within, and no community containing as many persons ever before or since existing that was as full of happiness and security.

But some men were foolish enough to think that all this must be made "legal." That "administration" was necessary. A "Committee of Public Safety" was elected, and it assumed the right to manage the affairs of the Commune. In other words, a government was established. Then trouble began within, and the foe without found it easier to force an entrance into that city. That was their great mistake. What need had they of legal sanction or "administration?" Had they not just shaken off the oppression of law and its administration? But the habit of thinking that some law was necessary was too strong, and while the majority were enjoying their newly gained freedom, the minority were unwittingly preparing a deadfall that would eventually engulf them all.

How alarmed the "powers that be," in the other nations were is shown by the fact that the Austrian government sent troops over to assist the French army in re-capturing the city, and the German army that had marched on to Paris and captured it from its governmental defenders, was held at Sedan in readiness to assist the French troops if need be. In fact every indication is that

every government in Europe would willingly and freely have rendered the French government aid, if they had dared, to crush out what at first bid fair to be the initial step toward the abolition of political domination of all kinds. But would they have dared? The International Workmens Association had its ramifications in every nation, and the attention of the down-trodden was directed to this, the first great attempt to gain real liberty, and it would have been dangerous for other governments to attempt such a thing, could the Commune have retained its original revolutionary character and have opened up communication with the outside world.

So the radicals every year find it of advantage to come together and discuss the glories of the Commune, and consider how best to avoid the mistakes made in '71, in the event that such another opportunity to shake off the shackles of oppression should ever again present itself. What governments will do in the name of "law and order" is shown by the unparalleled butchery that accompanied the re-capture of the city by the government troops. Calling the Communards wolves, they played the part of hyenas, aye, of demons. In the name of "order" the commanders of the government troops caused the most henious and bloody tragedy in the annals of history to be enacted, and the woe that they created has lasted even to this day, and it throws a dark shadow over the lives of many of the noblest and beset persons in Paris.

Oh, the lesson that is taught by the Paris Commune! Can you not see it? It shows all to clearly to those who can comprehend, that with the passing of government goes crime and insecurity, and that all attempts at legality, at legislation, are but toying with a deadly monster. Let all who desire liberty learn a lesson: Refrain from legislating; from obeying the command of a military commander; from participating in any of the functions of government, and no more will the promise of freedom realized, be thwarted by such mistakes as were made by the Paris Commune.

Henry Addis.

An Answer to Criticisms.

In a recent number of The Firebrand a correspondent says that I want "too much variety". It is certainly true that every New-Idealist may be called "a varietist of the extremest type", as he holds that to be able to enjoy at all times the best and most agreeable complement to his own complex nature he needs a great variety of human beings. How much variety (if any) in sexual enjoyments this would naturally involve is dependent upon the particular qualities of the individual, and in many cases, alas, it would probably include no sexual intercourse whatever. For some men it seems extremely hard to understand that love's joys include many things besides the sexual embrace. As I am convinced that my critic, in writing the above, thought only and exclusively of variety of partners for coition and that the majority of the readers understood it thus, I reject his interpretation as false and misleading and consider it wise to offer an explanation.

I want the abolition of any and all sexual contracts and defy the world to show the least advantage in such a contract. I advocate freedom in love, i. e. real freedom which is never to be sacrificed to any contract or "relation", nor to such a monstrously absurd ideal as the prevailing love-ideal. This is the theory "in a nutshell". To test its value I, of course, had to take into consideration all the conditions which could reasonably be expected to result from its general acceptance. My studies soon convinced me that a natural and inevitable consequence would be "variety in the sex-life of almost every healthy human being". Hence I had to figure with this and was highly pleased to find that we have no reason to dread this, that our objection to such variety is based upon nothing but rank superstition, that this conviction "is, in fact, far more cheering than if we had to suppose that for each of us there were in this wide world but one true sexual mate, but one being who could be considered a beautiful complement to our sex-nature." When I had reached this stage in my "emancipation," I felt justified in giving this advice: Be free in love and never barter away in any manner this your most precious, inalienable right! Whatever this may bring you to, never fear, you have everything to gain and nothing to lose thereby! I hope that at least the majority of my readers will be clear-headed enough to understand that this is by no means equivalent to advocating variety in sex-association as a good thing per se. And now I wish to say to my worthy critic: Don't be scared! All that we "want" of you is that you obtain for yourself and retain forever the right to say to partner, friend and foe, to Mrs. Grundy, Church and State, to each and every one in fact: "None of your business" whenever you are asked, how, when, where, with whom, or with how many you enjoy sexual pleasures. You might be a perfect New-Idealist, and still, under certain circumstances, happen to have the same partner for all your sexual co-enjoyments. If, however, this latter condition is due to the fact that you cautiously guard against "outside attractions" because you consider such "exclusiveness" purer, nobler, better, or healthier, then you are yet too superstitious to be called a New-Idealist. And, furthermore, if you desire to label a woman as being reserved for your sexual pleasures—no matter whether the label is a legal one or not, whether it reads "for life" or for a limited time (i. e. "until mutual love ceases"),—then you are very far from being a New-Idealist, even if you should desire to thus label a full dozen, or if your sexual record should bear the names of a whole army of women.

Another correspondent of The Firebrand thinks that I am "not out of the woods yet," because I believe in "an inviolable contract." The word "inviolable" is hardly in order here as it suggests the idea of enforcement by state, society or community by means of brute power, a thing in which I certainly do not believe. Leave out this word and I promptly plead guilty. Yes, I am forced to still believe in some binding contracts as long as the present economical conditions prevail. My opponent is perfectly correct in saying that every such a contract is enslaving to some extent, but it is equally true that under existing conditions not to enter into such may enslave me still more. To illustrate: I enter into a binding contract through which I secure for myself a steady income. Without this or a similar contract I would be obliged to steal or beg for my daily bread. In which manner do I gain the greater freedom? Or, suppose a man craves for a home. At present he cannot expect to gain this except through a binding contract which may enslave him to quite an extent for life,—and yet, every one who enjoys the benefits of a real home will agree with me that this may gain for him so many other liberties (by means of the security which it affords) that even in this case the net result will be a gain in his personal freedom. I hope as fervently as my opponent does that we may some time reach such conditions that we will not be forced again and again to sacrifice one liberty in order to again another, but I must remind him of the fact that my book is to offer suggestions for immediate action and that, therefore, I had to reckon with things as they are (economically) and not with the things as they ought to be. I promptly admit that it would be a great deal nicer for us men, if the women would offer us the benefits of a beautiful home and the joys, rights and privileges of fathership without binding our freedom in any way, without asking of us the promise to perform a lot of duties for a term of years or for life, but, as things are, I yet feel obliged to advise the women to "believe in" a good solid contract, yes, to make it pretty nearly "inviolable" by an intimate association of interests. This latter forms far stronger and far more reliable ties than the legal law, yet, I would no more blame a woman for adding to them a legal contract than I would blame an Anarchist for making any other business agreement, a sale or a purchase for instance, a legal one.

Another remark of the correspondent has caused me a good hearty laugh. "That's all rubbish! You can't evade my supervision!"—that's just what Mrs. Grundy will say too, but very soon she will find out that she has made a great big fool of herself, and that all her carefully compiled dates and figures (which seemed to show up the poor victim as a vertiable Messalina) are in fact absolutely valueless for the "control of the sex relations" of a New-Idealist. As to my assertions referring to our position towards the legal law. I will say that any intelligent lawyer of the U.S. will promptly concede that they are correct. I do not offer this article as an argument for my theory. My only object in writing it was to fully explain a few points alluded to by my critics. These allusions are so misleading that they might prejudice many against the book and induce others to buy it who would be disappointed in not finding therein what they had expected. I am receiving hundreds of letters expressing objections, doubts, fears etc. and pretty soon I intend to publish in The Firebrand some discussions and controversies on far more important and more interesting phases of the subject than those treated to-day.

Emil F. Ruedebusch.

Things As I See Them.

I am much pleased with the way you have defended Samuel P. Putnam against his own people. I have not read the article, but was told by one who had, that The Freethinker's Magazine published at Buffalo, N. Y., had an editorial speaking very derogatorily of Mr. Putnam, saying he was a free lover and a disgrace to the cause of Liberalism.

Mr. Putnam had his faults, but they were those of a lion and not of an ass, and when a living ass attacks a dead lion, the louder he brays the more sensible people stop their ears. I have listened to a great many speakers in my day, but never but to one in which the words seemed coming from a soulless shell. I thought it was my fault and spoke to a friend, a materialist, of the effect this same Buffalo editor's lecture had upon me, and I found that he was similarly impressed. So much for personalities, and I only brought them in to introduce that question of all questions, the sex question. Until there is Freedom for the holder of the creatory there can be freedom nowhere else. Liberals make a great mistake when they defend church morality, for by so doing they are really the supporters of church power.

Sex is the source, or channel, through which all life—I repeat, all life—is made manifest, and as without life there can be no power, it follows that sex is the fountain of all power. As before, I repeat— sex is the fountain of all power. Here we can meet on common ground. It makes no difference whether we believe in one, two, or a dozen states of existence, whether we believe that "death ends all" or not, science demonstrates that the two factors of sex are at the root of all life, and science further demonstrates that the finer forces are the most powerful, and that there can be no action without an elimination of some portion of that which acts and is acted upon, a fine, often invisible but potent force. Now, please, reader, note every step in this demonstration—I was going to say argument, but it is more that—please mark every step and weigh carefully each statement, for I shall show that church power is rooted in sex, consequently those who assay to oppose the church and at the same time sustain the standard of church sex-morality are really sustainers of the church.

In order to find why the church opposes the open and honest investigation of sex, we notice first the fact that the church secures its adherents by appealing to the emotions instead of to the reasoning powers. Now, if we can find what relation the emotions sustain to sex, we may readily tell the why of the law that makes it dangerous to investigate sex outside of church theory.

A. C. Thompson, a Kentucky Legislator, gives us the key note to the relation of sex to religion in an article to be found in the July Arena for 1895. He says, in arguing what is called "The age of consent" law:

> "It not infrequently happens that when the first dawnings of sexual appetite make their appearance this natural desire is, under proper instruction, changed in character and becomes an acquired psychical habitude, religious emotion. "For it is a fact, and one capable of easy demonstration, that there is a close relation between religious emotion and sexual desire, the natural desire and the acquired emotion taking

> the places one of another, on occasions unconsciously and without volitional effort on the part of those in whom the transformation takes place."

What an admission is here! Religious emotion unnatural sex action! But this writer continues:

> "The young girl yearning for she knows not what, will in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred find perfect satisfaction in religious emotion."

What more can we ask to show that sex is the basis of religion? But remember, please, that wherever there is action there is waste, a something set free that corresponds to the nature of the action or emotion. It follows, then, that when sex desire is transformed into religious emotion that in the action upon the desire which so transforms it, there is, there must be set free a fine element, a sex-aura, and what becomes of it? Is it not appropriated by those who so control these emotions as to absorb the desire?

But sex is life. Sex-aura is life-aura, and those who appropriate it grow strong in psychic power. No wonder the priest sways the people! Emotion, transformed sex-desire, in connection with servile worship curses the worshiper by weakening his life force, and so long as the manes are thus held Freedom is impossible.

I cannot half elaborate this question in a newspaper article, but I have said enough to show the importance of the sex question in connection with that of Freedom, and I hold that those who defy the church sex-code from principle, and stand by their acts, are doing more to hasten the day of universal freedom than are any other class of people, because they thus set free creative elements that vitalize life's currents, or atmosphere with the very essense, or soul of freedom, they create a mental soil in which Freedom can grow.

There is, there can be no question of more importance than the sex question, because all other questions are involved in that, and the so-called church opponent who sneers at "free love" don't know what he is doing.

Lois Waisbrooker.

Note and Comment.

We are in need of two copies of "The Speeches before the Court," to use as "copy," as we wish to get out a new edition of them.

* * *

The uselessness of legislation was nicely illustrated by the failure of the Oregon Legislature to organize. The deputy City Attorney remarked to me that it was a good thing; that they would have past some fool laws, and that there are too many laws now.

* * *

The Oregon National Guard (State Militia) has not been called out—except last spring at time of the fishermen's strike—nor used at all, in thirteen or fourteen years, but lots of money has been spent in keeping the organization up. Now that there has been no appropriation made for its benefit what will the captains do? Will they continue to command, without pay, or will they leave the State defenseless, to be ravished by its enemies? The truth is they know that they do not preserve order, and that the State would be just as tranquil without them, but it gratifies their vanity to be called captain, and it suits them very well to live such a life of ease, at good pay.

* * *

Morrison I. Swift sent us a circular letter, addressed to the unemployed, calling on them to make themselves conspicuous on inauguration day (March 4th), and for all who can to be in sight in Washington, D. C. It reached us too late to appear in The Firebrand before that date.

* * *

The Legislature of South Dakota refused to make any appropriation for the militia, and the Oregon Legislature failed to make any such appropriation because of its failure to organize. It remains to be seen how these two states get through two years without spending a lot of money on military displays.

* * *

How many radicals are there who wish to live a life a little more in harmony with their ideals? By this I mean how many want to realize a little of the freedom and fraternity we love to talk about, now, without waiting for the revolution or the judgement day.

* * *

It is possible, as The Firebrand publishers have demonstrated, to carry on an undertaking and make a success of it, without constitution, by-laws, rules of order or other supposed necessities of association.

* * *

It is a perfectly feasable proposition to undertake the carrying out of any object, or purpose, or the accomplishment of any task, or the conduct of an industry on a purely communistic basis. If undertaken by those who are mentally free, and anyway congenial, there is no good reason why the life attendent thereon should not be far more happy than the life of the average person in the ordinary struggle for bread.

* * *

Where co-operative homes are undertaken it is well to have persons of various occupations connected therewith. A shoemaker, a barber, a tailor, a dresmaker and so on, in such a community will always prove of great advantage even if farming is the chief industry.

* * *

Do you want better conditions? Greater freedom? Then do what you can to help get it. Merely wishing for it will do but little to bring it about. Can you awaken the same desire in another, that will do much to hasten its realization.

* * *

There is much to do, and much joy to be realized in "bringing the lost sheep into the fold;" in setting an example of fearless opposition to established customs; in sowing the seeds of Anarchy, of peace, love and plenty.

* * *

There are two ways to propagandise, one in opposition to existing conditions because they are hateful: in creating discontent and unrest from an iconoclastic standpoint. Another way of propagating Anarchy is by pointing out how much more comfortable and happy we could all be in Anarchy. How all our wants can be supplied, our artistic tastes and longing for the beautiful and grand gratified, and contrasting that with what exists now.

* * *

J. Allen Evans, corresponding secretary of the Liberty Co-operative Association, at Hutsburg, Tenn., writes: "We now have our own school for the colony children, and a few pupils from the outside attending. Mrs. Gerauld has been installed as teacher. Mr. F. L. Avery, who went away from the colony to visit friends and spend Christmas, has returned and says there is no place like home. Comrade Beck, who went back to Brooklyn, N. Y., on account of homesickness, writes that he is coming home for keeps, just as soon as he can earn enough money to pay his fare to Hutsburg. He is as homesick to get back to Liberty as he was to return to the place of his

nativity. Any friends of co-operation who feel disposed may lend a helping hand to Liberty co-operators by sending them garden seeds or bulbs, vines, cuttings, etc. Such favors will be greatly appreciated by them. We want a good blacksmith who is tired of hunting for a boss. A good mechanic of this kind can find a congenial home with the Liberty Co-operators if he can comply with the terms of membership."

Clippings and Comments.

"A rose would smell as sweet called by any other name." Great William assures us. So, a court house ring would act the same, whether called democrat, republican or "Union Bimetallic party, formed regardless of former party affiliation."—[Harney Co. News.

Why, then, brother News dont you throw the whole mess of political corruption overboard and make a clear unmistakable demand for freedom? The politicians act the same in office, no matter what party ellects them.

* * *

At the banquet given by the Sons of the American Revoluion, Mr. W. H. Chapin of this city said:

> "We do need that spirit of our forefathers—that unselfish devotion to and loyalty for our country's good. The country is running wild. Anarchy and Socialism go stalking through it rampant. Even Portland supports an out-and-out anarchistic paper, that is rapidly increasing in size and circulation. Politics are disreputable. Honorable men, let them once enter the field, and get the breath of office, and they stoop to things undreampt of before, so as to gain their ends. The country places in office the men with the longest purses. The day before election the papers on all sides urge their respectable following to go to the polls early so as to avoid the desperate characters that take possession later and frighten away the timid citizens who would vote if not too much trouble."

This was said in the presence of a number of politicians, and has caused much comment, but none of them deny its truthfulness. It is too well known to be denied, and indicates the decay of patriotism. Commercialism knows no national bounderies, and the commercial spirit is dominant. Everything is for sale: office, honor, glory, fame, comfort, luxury, love.(?) Consequently the long purse wins. It is as useless to try to win for patriotism against commercialism as to try to turn the course of events backward. Patriotism must disappear, and universal fraternity appear before the evils complained of can be overcome.

H. A.

The Letter-Box.

J. T., Brazil, Ind.—We are sorry to say it, but you are the only reader of The Firebrand in your town. We hope you'll get us some more.

B. G., New York City.—The books are sent now and you will have seen the reason of the delay in the last weeks issue.

C. S.,—We are receiving many encouraging letters, but that is surely not sufficient to keep The Firebrand eight pages. If it were not for you and a few other comrades, we would hardly have been able to cover the expenses. We trust, though, that the comrades will appreciate our efforts and assist s as much as possible and not leave the greatest burden to relatively few comrades. Many thanks!

R. T., New York City.—We are always willing to argue with individuals that are honest and fair, but when they are intentionally lying and knowingly misrepresent facts, as the editor of the Age of Thought does, we prefer to ignore them. On the other hand, we could not find anything in his paper that would be worthy of consideration. He is simply "committing a double-headed tapeworm every week," as one reader of Age of Thought writes us. The fact is that Mr. Fulton is retrogressing steadily.

Notice.

To find the HOME OF THE FIREBRAND take the Oregon City car at cor. First & Alder Sts., and ride out to Sellwood. Get off at Spokane Ave. Walk two blocks toward the river, then turn to the right and walk one block.

Propaganda Fund.

C. S., Philadelphia, $5,00. Headquarters, San francisco, $3,00. Market, Millers Bouvet, each $1,00. Pierson, Well, Lindall, Kiefer, Mueller, Rutshow, Geths, Pfuetzner, J. Rubenstein, S. Rubenstein, Lang, each 50c. Jackson, 40c. Taylor, Kurauer, Greenberg, Asquith, Holmes, Hoffman, each 25c. Minwegen 20c. Freiman, Tolbeck, Wager, each 10c. Unknown, 5c.

The Workers Outcry.

We have fed you all a thousand years,
And you hail us still unfed.
Though there's never a dollar of all your wealth,
But marks the workers dead.
We have yielded our best to give you rest,
And you lie on crimson wool,
For if blood be the price of all your wealth,
Good God we have paid it in full.

There is never a mine blown skyward now,
But we're buried alive for you,
There's never a wreck drifts shoreward now,
But we are its ghastly crew.
Go reckon our dead by the forges red,
And the factories where we spin.
If blood be the price of your accursed wealth,
Good God we have paid it in full.

We have fed you all for a thousand years,
For that was our doom you know,
From the days when you chained us in your fields
To the strike of a week ago.
You have eaten our lives and our babes and wives,
And we're told its our legal share.
But if blood be the price of your lawful wealth,
Good God we have bought it fair.

The Common Property Bugaboo.

Is numbers 50 and 51 of The Firebrand, under the caption of "Why I want Property," Mr. Byington, with face turned communism ward, makes a half-hearted plea for private ownership based upon his individual tastes as a student and teacher. His attitude strongly suggests the picture of a half converted idolator, uttering the praises and extolling the virtues of the god he has been taught to worship and which he feels he can no longer serve. That Mr. Byington is already more than half converted to Free Communism is shown by his admission that production will increase very rapidly under freedom, that we can set no limit to its probable increase, and that "this increase tends and will tend to give us more and more Communism in practical life." Having assented to this, which is the foundation upon which in my recent article I based the necessity of Free Communism, his further plea for private property in certain books—for, be it remembered, Mr. Byington does not demand private property in all books—even if perfectly valid and reasonable, in no way controverts my argument. My would-be critic is perfectly honest in his doubts and desires, and I believe that when these are shown to be based upon his imperfect understanding of the requirements of Free Communism he will be quite ready to acknowledge that his fears were entirely groundless.

Friend Byington's arguments for private ownership center in and about himself; his individual wants, his pursuits as a student and teacher are taken as criteria for his assumption that private property is natural and right. In doing this he is undoubtedly pursuing the proper course. If Free Communism will not satisfy individual desires, if it shall prove antagonistic to individual tastes, it cannot and should not survive. I as a Free Communist, as much as my friend Byington as a Free Commercialist, recognize the absolute sovereignty of the individual. But let us see.

Mr. Byington offers as a serious objection to Communism in books his pet habit of making marginal notes. But this merely a habit, not necessarily essential to his pursuit of knowledge, for while it furnishes him valuable references he could easily cultivate the habit of preserving his notes in another and quite as good a way, namely by keeping an index. I also make notes of the best books I read, and have found my experience that my index rerum affords me the most thorough and satisfactory system of references. I strongly advise friend Byington to drop the slovenly habit of marking up his books, and to keep a complete index, with cross references and personal comments.

Another plea put forth by Mr. Byington is his desire to use many books which are not of general interest, and which he therefore presumes would not be obtainable in a system of Free Communism. Upon analysis this objection will be found quite as weak as the other. Under freedom there would be a greater incentive to pursue knowledge, and it would not be long before the demand for rare books would necessitate an ever abundant supply. It is absurd to suppose that a free library under Communism would not be as well regulated as our present public libraries are. If Mr. Byington lived in Chicago he would probably find his Zulu Dictionary and all of his rare and valuable books duplicated in the public library there, but if not, the library board affords every facility to enable patrons to procure the books they need, and to this end purchase

thousands of books annually. Here in Denver many books have been added to the collection in the public library upon the personal request of its patrons. Under Free Communism there would practically be no barrier to the cultivation of the finest tastes, and Mr. Byington would doubtless find his every wish in that respect gratified at the expense of the community. Our friend, by his own showing is a poor man, and while he has by great personal sacrifice accumulated half a ton of books, he doubtless has experienced many a vain longing for books which he could not afford to purchase. How foolish, then, for him to raise weak objections to a system which would enable him to gratify his tastes for books without price. I also have a few books which are valuable to me, and in my journeyings over the country they are always with me, but at great expense and inconvenience. I certainly would not take the trouble and expense of packing, carting and railroading these books from town to town if there was any assurance of finding them duplicated in a free library in every place I moved to.

But be not afraid, friend Byington. Even Free Communists recognize the expediency of private possession of many things, and probably always will. I know of no recognized exponent of Free Communism who would deny Mr. Byington private possession of a Zulu Dictionary. It is quite certain the members of a free community would not have one or a dozen toothbrushes in common, or pairs of trowsers, or shoes, or hats, or beds, or dressing cases. I would probably own my own nightshirt, a comb and perhaps a pocket knife, and Mr. Byington might possess a watch, or even a bottle of hair oil. Even if he chose to carve his name or a love token on the watch case I don't believe that terrible bugaboo, the Commune would offer any serious objection. Why then should he not own his Zulu Dictionary, and mark it up with hieroglyphics to his heart's content? For my part I can see no possible objection to his doing so.

One difficulty with our Free Commercialist friends is that they are apparently unable to form any but a hazy idea of what is to be and what is not to be common property. If Free Communism comes through the process of a cheapening of production and a consequent falling off in price, those articles in which the cheapening process is most accelerated will first cease to be considered private property. Already we can produce book—the mechanical part at least— at a very small cost. Suppose some contrivance should be discovered by which Mr. Byington's most expensive literary treasure could be produced at a labor cost of say ten minutes, or, measured in money, say 10 cents. There is, as he himself says, "no limit to the probable increase of production." There are some things, however which despite their excessive cost, would tend to become common property, because they are of general utility; such as meeting houses, libraries, railroads, electrical service, etc. etc. There are other things, which because they are proper to the individual, would never become common property as that term is now understood; they would be in the private possession of the individuals who require them. Of this class of articles, I would enumerate clothing, necessary household appurtenances, etc. etc.

I congratulate Mr. Byington upon his clearness in seeing the basic principles upon which Free Communism rests. If he will consider that our chief desire for private property arises in the fear that we may be deprived of it, or may not be able to get it, with the help of the few ideas which this article may suggest to him, he will probably accept the logical conclusions of his own arguments, and accept without reserve the doctrine of Free Communism.

William Holmes.

"Written laws are like cobwebs: the weak and poor are caught in them; the rich break through them."—[Anacharsis.

Must We Lie to Please the Critics?

As my name appears with those of others who are said to have been putting on a "sickish, sentimental plaster, in the shape of 'respectability'" "to cover up the Putnam-Collins tragedy," perhaps I may be excused if I offer a few comments on that subject.

In the course of my life I have been accursed of a good many offenses, but I believe this is the first time it has been charged that I have catered to "respectability." At this moment I am unable to recall a line I have written in connection with the Putnam Collins disaster that in the slightest degree indicates that I am carrying a flag of truce into the camp of Mrs. Grundy. The trouble with the critics—orthodox and radical alike—is simply this: They assume that this man and woman must have been lovers, lovers in the physical sense, and hence neither faction is satisfied with a plain recital of facts—which does not justify the preconception. The orthodox of course think that it would be horrible for persons not married to each other to be lovers, and as they cannot conceive of a man and woman being together without associating, they are sure that the wicked radicals who know all about the circumstances are trying to make the best of a bad scandal by concealing some of the facts. On the other hand, the radicals whoa re "far-off," rightly believing that love is not disgraceful, are equally sure that something is being hidden by the radicals who are not "far-off," and that this suppression is inspired by a desire to be thought "respectable." Surely, my friend who writes the second paragraph on the subject in the first column of page seven of The "Firebrand" of February 14, should not have fallen into this error, for his whole theory of sexual reform rests on the assumption that men and women can be together in a bedroom with the door locked without exciting the suspicion of even the moralistic fossils.

It seems not to have occurred to our "far-off" friends that quite possibly the radicals of Boston know more about the circumstances than do persons who were within five hundred or two thousand miles of the scene of the tragedy and that their narrative of events must stand unless others who had equal opportunities for observation submit contradictory testimony. It is needless to say that persons who had such opportunities all substantially agree in their accounts. All the doubts and denials have room from those who were not on the ground. I submit that this fact is somewhat suggestive, especially in view of the greater credence that is generally given to the testimony of witnesses, in comparison with that accorded the theories of persons residing in parts of the country distant from the place of action.

I went to Boston to attend the funderal of S. P. Putnam and to get the bottom facts, if I could. From time to time I have recorded in "Lucifer" the results of my investigations. It was none of my business whether May L. Collins and Samuel Putnam were lovers, or whether they were only friends, and it was none of the business of other persons, including radicals who are apparently dissatisfied because I did not find them to have died in bed together. But, while their relations were not properly the affair of other persons, it seemed to be necessary to ascertain the facts in regard to the accident, so far as the accident itself was concerned. It was not my fault, nor the fault of those who had earlier become acquainted with the facts, that the victims were both dressed when found, that they were on the floor in different parts of the room, that the gas was flowing

from one valve while a jet was burning, that all the indications were that they had fallen to the floor from a standing position, and that Doctor Draper wrote a certificate that has been variously construed. I take it that the first business of a reporter is to record the facts as he sees them, and I am wholly at a loss to account for the impression that seems to have got abroad among the friends of social freedom that Mr. A. H. Simpson, myself, and other radicals have tried to deceive the public in the matter, and that we have done this because we did not dare to tell the moralists the truth lest we should lose our "respectability."

So far as I am concerned, I can see nothing discreditable in the relations of lovers because they do not happen to be married to each other or happen to be married to other persons, and hence I have no fear of being scandalized more when two unmarried friends of mine are found dead together than I would be were they husband and wife. But I cannot see that this view of love association puts upon me the obligation to try to make it appear that a certain man and a certain woman died, undressed, in each others arms when I have no evidence at hand to substantiate such a contention.

The facts have been given. One word now as to my personal feelings: I hope our dead comrades were lovers; I hold them to have been worthy of each other's love, as they were worthy of the love they drew from other comrades. The fear that the rich young life was extinguished before it had tasted the deepest joys of love and passion is inexpressibly saddening. Yet such pathetic tragedies darken every day in every land. Many are unavoidable, but the strangling of superstition will prevent the continuance of the wholesale sacrifice of the innocents. It is our loss that the hands of May L. Collins and Samuel P. Putnam have dropped nerveless from the throat of the monster.

E. C. Walker.

2089 Madison Ave., N. Y. City.

I am very glad that Comrade Walker has sent in the above, but I think he assumes one thing that the facts do not justify, i. e., that The Firebrand writers took it for granted that there was something in the Putnam-Collins affair that was being hidden. In The Firebrand of January 3d, I noticed the death of Mr. Putnam and Miss Collins and, among other things said:

"The Truth Seeker vehemently denies that there was "anything wrong"—that there was any sex union between them. However that may be I don't know, but assert that they, not being Christians, were not bound by christian morals,—and if they loved, and thus expressed their love, it was rather to their credit than discredit."

Not a word of accusation or imputation, that something did happen, but an out and out assertion that it was all right if such was the case. The other critic refered to by Comrade Walker said: "Comrade Addis' article about the Putnam-Collins affair was the only noble and courageous utterance about the affair which appeared in print so far as I know." He then goes on to elaborate this idea, by calling attention to the attitude of certain other papers. In it all, the attitude of the Truth Seeker and other freethought journals, on the question whether it was more moral for them to be found dressed or in bed together, has been the point of discusion, not the facts of whether they were dressed or not. So well have the various freethought editors understood this that it has caused a general discussion of free love in their periodicals, and they have almost

universally arranged themselves against it. Under these circumstances I think the correspondent was justified in his remarks.

H. A.

Echoes from Foreign Countries.

FRANCE. The professors in the State Universities wanted to organize a society for the betterment of their condition, but their right to associate was denied by their glorious government.

The French ladies at Paris held a grand meeting on Monday, Jan. 25, to protest against the Turkish atrocities. Madame Hurdy-Menos was the speaker of the evening, under the auspices of the Anarchist group, the "Social Art." Madame Hurdy-Menos' principle scorn was directed against the French sold-out press, whose moral standing is worse than that of a prostitute.

It is not enough, she said, that the French press says nothing about the horrible massacres in Armenia, but they go even so far as to show that the Turks were aggressed by the christians just like a gang of bandits. She also branded the French ambassador in Constantinople and his boss, the minister of foreign affairs, Barthou, and the rest of the scoundrels called statesmen, who are only anxious to pick up decorations from the blood of the innocents.

SPAIN. The condition of Spain is at present as bad as in the Middle Age under the reign of the Jesuits. Pig Margall is the only man that dared to break the cold and shivering silence and anger which is confined in the vigorous veins of the Spaniards, he is the only man in political circles who has realy at heart the true liberty for his country people. When the scelerate laws were passed through the legislature two years ago, the Republicans, Democrats and the State-Socialists were laughing at the Anarchists, but today many of their friends have to suffer the results of those very law . The country is now in a semi-barbaric condition. If there is a generous heart left who helps along the dependants of the imprisoned and prosecuted victims—he is sent to jail himself. If you read or write a paper and don't prostrate in front of the altar of the religious and royal fetich you also go to prison. In short if you have the gall to think different from the ruling Jesuits you have no right to be at liberty. What say the relatives of the many thousands of imprisoned; the mothers and wives of the young men who are sent off to Cuba and to the Phillipines, to die there young and vicorous, and all that to keep in revelry the vampires who are handling "law and order" with the "bloody scudo" of the poor? The social revolution is the only glimpse of hope of this proud and despairing people.

HUNGARY. The coal miners of Anina, which are employed by "State R. R. Co., got tired of the imposition by the company on account of their "aid and pension funds," which were controlled until lately by the miners for their mutual benefit. But the avaricious company couldn't see any more the independence of the miners in this way, and so the trouble came up; the miners destroyed the offices in order to better show their protest. The gendarmery was dispatched at once to the place and fired three discharges into the crowd. The result was eight dead and twelve wounded. The justice of governments is the same all over the world. This is a practical school to teach us to obey "law and order." When are the miners going to change their tactics and fire that way into the crowd of directors and other knavish foreman?

GREECE. Matjalis was a very consistent Anarchist; he never missed an opportunity to explain the beauty of a free society which we are striving for. Long ago he contemplated an act of open rebellion. As he saw, November 3, at noon, in Independence street, the two bankers, Col-

las and Francopoulas of Patras, who were talking at that time about the interests of the country before they sat down at a very tastily prepared dinner table. Matjalis saw in these two sinister individuals the personification of fraud and hypocrisy, living and reveling from the sweat of several thousand families, and passing at the same time as their protectors and nourishers; in them he recognized the personification of the shrewdness, brutality and infamy of the capitalistic system. He couldn't stand it any more nor control his excitement, but seizing the "poniard" which was reserved for the return of king George in his palace, hidden in his sleeve, approaching the two bankers he said: "Is it realy the interest of the people you are troubling yourself about;" at the same time he stabbed in the heart Francopoulos, who fell at his feet; then he jumped after Collas, whom he severly wounded in the neck; the banker all frightened ran into a store near by.

The noise attracted the police and curiosity seekers, but Matjalis kept firmly jhis revolver in his hand and defied any one to arest him, so the cowardly executors of "law and order" contented themselves just to follow up Matjalis who went slowly to the gendarmery post. The act of Matjalis made a very profound impression among the usurers in the country, especially at Athens. The population was against Matjalis from the start, but as soon as they could understand the motive of his act they changed their sympathies. After two days arrest in the gendarmery he was transferred to the prison of Acropolis, and our friend made use of the chance to expound our ideas and theories to the prisoners, until they commenced rioting. When the officer appeared and commenced to insult the prisoners in military style, our comrade stood in defence of the prisoners, and said that he ought to be polite and thankful to the prisoners because they were the ones that keep him in a "fat" office. The officer didn't dare to answer and only ordered the separation of Matjalis from the rest of the prisoners. When his friends offered themselves to bring him a better board and do something for his comfort, "You will see what I am going to eat," said he, and lit a match to smoke a cigarette, and then he saluted them.

A couple of seconds after that a double detonation was heard in the old fortress of Patras. Matjalis lit two dynamite cartriges one he placed in his mouth and the other under his chin. When the guardians came to the scene they found nothing but a body without a head, the brains and hair were scattered all over the wall. The authorities are looking now for his friends that furnished him the cartridges and keep many of our friends under arrest not only in Patras, but also in Pireus, Andrijontes, Prygos and Corfu. Among others implicated are I. Manghanares and I. Marionantos the editors of Epi-Aa-prosso. The next day at the funeral there were several laurel wreaths deposited on the grave.

A. Klemencic.

Defends Himself.

I have received a copy of The Firebrand which contains a criticism of my books, by Mr. Henry Addis. My self-esteem and combativeness are not overly large, but they are large enough to prompt a desire to defend the ideas given in those books.

So far as typographical and grammatical crudities are concerned I do not wish to defend them, or make excuses for them, however, they are not so numerous as to prevent a reader or my critic from understanding what I say. Mr. Addis seemed to desire to put me on the wrong side, from his stand point, whether what I have said would put me there or not. How any unbiased intelligent person can draw the conclusions which he has from what he quotes, I cannot understand. For instance he says, that the author does not favor freedom is shown by the following: "Many wives are sent to untimely graves or insane asylums through no other cause than rough brutality during intercourse." I ask in all candor what there is in this statement of facts, that can lead anyone to the conclusion that I do not believe in freedom. If Mr. Addis had quoted the remainder of the same sentence he would have done me more justice.

Mr. Addis says "But the author advocates indissoluble marriage." Is that so? Where? When? The fundamental principle of my books, and so stated therein, is that all sexual intercourse, whether it does or does not result in procreation, should be the expression of love. How this can be construed to mean that I uphold marriage "laws" or "superstitions" that bind men and women together when there is no love, is beyond my comprehension.

Mr. Addis says "He demonstrates his lack of comprehension of the causes of sexual misery." Well if the absence of love and knowledge are not the causes of sexual misery, what is? From what I can learn of Mr. Addis' views I have concluded that he holds the absence of sexual variety to be the cause of sexual misery. He has a right to such conclusions and I do not desire to belittle his comprehension because I differ with him. My books most assuredly do not advocate "sexual variety," and I do not believe that I am forced to advocate sexual variety in order to advocate freedom. I believe we have past the "variety" stage. I suppose my critic will say look at the social evil, does it look as if we had past the variety stage? My answer is, not in practice for some. Exclusive relations are, however, our highest ideal of the sexual relations. It is all bosh for any one to set themselves up as being the only one able to distinguish slavery. There is no slavery in the exclusiveness of two loving souls.

As to my ideas on procreation, I have no excuses to make: I am amply prepared to defend them. If people will follow the regulations given in my books, there will be fewer and better children born, receiving better care and education, thus becoming better men and women who will make laws useless. I reason from cause to effect. I begin with causes to change to effects and no trim up effects to lessen or change causes.

Mr. Addis says, "To comdemn a young man (the victim of self abuse) and say he is not worth saving because he is a victim of prenatal conditions and false teachings, is entirely too erroneous, and too vicious as well as too unscientific and superficial to let go unchallenged." I am well aware that the young man does as he is conditioned to do, and that we should not blame him, but

why should I propound the false teaching, to save him, that some "neighbor's daughter" should become a prostitute? If through sexual intercourse only he can be saved, let him love and secure the love of a "neighbor's daughter," so that both may be gratified and benefit and not simply relief brought to him through prostitution.

Again, Mr. Addis says, "One thing the author does not seem to realize is, that love is not one thing, but that it is complex, and attaches itself to many objects, sights and sounds. Not having recognized this fact, he very naturally writes from the orthodox stand-point." I suppose Mr. Addis thinks that I think that because I love my wife, I can not love my darling boy or the beautiful picture on my wall. I want to inform Mr. Addis that I even love a number of woman, in a way, but not as I love my wife—my mate. I love my mate, and her only, enough to desire to enter into the most intimate and responsible relation of all relations, and it is so with her.

There are other points that I should like to take up, but cannot at this time. So far as my prices are concerned, I desire to say, that I have no monopoly and no one is forced to buy these books. I shall not complain if they do not. I wish to say also that we are are not all fortunate enough to have a thorough literary education, but by persistent practice we overcome many failings.

Leroy Berrier.

Minneapolis, Minn.

I cannot see that Mr. Berrier has answered a single charge that I made. In commenting on the statement that "many wives are sent to untimely graves or insane asylums through no other cause than rough brutality during intercourse," I pointed out that this could not occur if they were not "bound" together, if the woman was free. He proposes that they practice "continent intercourse." I want to ask, in all candor, if a man who is so brutal as to injure his wife by rough intercourse, could be induced—while he claims her as HIS—to practice "continent intercourse?" All through his book Mr. Berrier referred to marriage as though it were a permanent institution, never raising his voice against its indissolubility, but proposing ways of making it bearable. He does not propose to bind people together who do not love, or think they love, but he does not take in account the fact that human judgement is liable to err, but writes as though every young man and woman could unerringly find a mate that was and, would remain, forever congenial, and it was that attitude I attacked. Of course there is "no slavery in the exclusiveness of two loving souls, unless," perchance, their love is comprehensive enough to include another, or a number of others, then such exclusiveness, to last, must be based on a sense of duty, or on fear, in which event it is slavery. Mr. Berrier admits variety in love in his criticism, and says sexual intercourse should be an expression of love. To be logical he must admit the right and desirability of variety in sexual intercourse.

It does not matter how few or how many children are born, nor how much or how little care they receive, as long as the ideas of domination—of the necessity for government—and of the rights of privilege are instilled into them, present conditions will last. To limit offspring would save suffering to many mothers, but would not, could not, of itself, solve the social question. Some write us that the industrial question is all important, and when it is solved the sex question will settle itself. Mr. Berrier writes that if we produce fewer and better children they will solve

the social question. I contend that the two must be solved together, and the solution will come with a broadening of ideas and an exercise of personal liberty.

I did not indicate that some "neighbors daughter become a prostitute," in order to save a masterbator, and Mr. Berrier advocates identically what I did when he writes, "let him love and secure the love of a 'neighbors daughter', so that both may be gratified and benefited, and not simply relief brought to him through prostitution". By all means let him love, and let her love, and let them express their love in such a manner as that love prompts; by all means let them. It is against the restrictions on love and its expressions that I kick, not on the method Mr. Berrier proposes. The difference between Mr. Berrier and myself amounts to this: he separates the sex question from the political situation and the industrial question and essays to solve it independent of them. He, by non-opposition, recognizes and upholds present institutions. I contend that the question of sex and of all other affairs of life are so intimately connected that they must all be treated together, and a solution of one necessarily includes a solution of all. I therefore attack all institutions that seem to hinder this solution.

H. A.

Vive la Commune!!

Memorial Festival, with Concert and Ball, arranged by the International Arbeiter-Liedertafel associated with the French and Italian Groups of New York, will be held at Germania Assembly Rooms, (large hall) 291 & 293 Bowery, on Thursday, March, 18, 1897, at 8 p. m. Speakers in English, French, German and Italian. Admission 10 cents.

The Committee.

Social Conditions and Character.

The contention of phrenologists who have been so fortunate as to study our economic conditions is that there are no bad men, no bad women, and even no bad children. Chemists who study matter in the same way as phrenologists study the human mind would be justified in saying there is no such thing as dirt in nature. There is mislocated matter, matter in the wrong place, which ordinary people call dirt; and it is dirt until it gets into its right place, when it becomes natural therefore useful. So, there are no bad men, but men and women who are mislocated, misapplied, ill-used, and therefore ill-treated—in fact, victims to adverse conditions.

Put any man in his wrong place, he is then, so to speak, matter in the wrong place, or dirt. A man mentally fitted for some active and laborious employment in the open air is happy and contented when he can expend his energies in a legitimate manner. When circumstances make such a man an idle saunterer in a large city, with money and spare time, he is dangerous and offensive to society, whether he be convicted or not, one of the criminal classes. The same may be said, in a modified form, of some rich idle women.

No one can over estimate the evil effect of poverty on the human mind. A man in search of food or articles of necessity for himself or those dear to him will commit many crimes or offences that a well-fed person similarly organized, phrenologically speaking, would not dream of doing. The fact is, that in times of want and hunger, the blood circulates wholly in the direction of the energies—those energies which are most actively employed in protecting and providing, such as Destructiveness and the executive and aggressive energy, Combativeness, or defensive energy, Secretiveness, the power or reserve or conceiling energy, and Acquisitiveness, the providing energy.

This is why the poor are quarrelsome. In some of the slum districts of every large town there are continual fightings and squabblings, always in proportion to the distress. Drink of course aggravates all this, but drink is one of the solaces of the poor and has more exciting effects on the brain the less the body is nourished.

The over-feeding, and enforced idleness of the rich has equally bad effects in more ways than one, the principal being that the brain, being deprived of its legitimate work, the blood has a tendency to circulate too freely in the base of the brain where are the strictly animal faculties. This would account for a good deal. The fact that men do now commit excesses in pursuit of animal pleasures in no way proves that in a state of freedom they would do likewise. We are not now living under anything like freedom, but under all the restraints due to a state monopoly.

Of course there are what may be called abnormal types—types of head the outcome of our present criminal-making system, which would be a source of danger to society. These cases would receive the most careful consideration from medical men who would possess a sound knowledge of the anatomy and physiology of the brain, able to treat skillfully and humanely all who by inherited tendency disregard the liberty of others.

It is always the over-fed, idle class who victimise the poor. The reverse is impossible. True, we hear of the poor blackmailing the rich, robbing them, breaking into their houses and appro-

priating their valuables, but all this is not done as an objectless kill-time, but always in search of food, or that which can be readily converted into food and other necessities. But to return to the idle rich. What strikes one as really marvellous is, not that some of these custom-enforced idlers are so bad, but, taking into consideration all the degrading conditions, that they are so good. It only shows what an unbounded desire for good there is in human nature in spite of adverse circumstance, and the bright hope there is for its future when there is so much goodness now, passive, if not, as a rule, active.

It will, then, be seen that human nature is not all earthly, sensual and devilish, as those imposters the clergy, try to persuade us. Much goodness is the great salvation of the rich; the painful thing is that the poor are too good—too sumissive, too contented, too docile. Another means of salvation for the rich are the games and toys which they so freely have resource to in order to occupy their minds—games of skill, it must be admitted, games that in their pursuit require the use of many of the most important faculties of the mind, games of contention and competition. With these they get rid of some of their pent-up energies, and exercise some faculties of their intellects which in their ordinary avocations of eating, drinking, novel-reading, entertaining and sightseeing, would not get any exercise at all. Without all these games and toys the rich would be much worse than they are. They look upon them as an occupation, and even flatter themselves that it is a useful one, and that they earn by means of it a night's repose.

With what earnestness some of these do nothings will talk about their particular games, how they will travel miles in order to go to some particular place where a certain game is to be played, and opponents to be met and conquerred! They will handle their clubs, bats, racquets and sticks as if they were honorable and useful implements; these grown-up men and women will enter into conversation with one another on the respective merits and qualifications of their particular toy with all the appearance of earnestness without even the slightest sign of a wink or a smile of contempt at one another. The fact is, the absurdity of the whole thing has never dawned upon them.

Let as look at one of these games, lately occupying much of the attention of the rich, called Golf. It can only be played on a special ground, such as a public heath or common or irregular formation, or failing that, land rented of many acres, with little hilss and dales, ponds and ditches artificially constructed, if necessary, called obstacles, and distinguished by various names in accordance with the nature of the obstacle. The toys employed in this game are called a ball, and certain variously-named sticks, called generically clubs. The play consists in driving a ball from a given position called Tee into a hole made in or about the centre of a flat grass-plat called a Green, these holes being called the first hole, second hole, and so on; the players take sides for competition's sake, the one who succeeds in driving the ball from the Tee into the first hole in the least number of strokes winning the hole. And so on over the whole course of 9 to 18 holes, covering a distance of from two to three miles. Each stroke has its special club, selected in order to get the best advantage in accordance with the position of the ball, In order to make this simple game as difficult as possible, it is embellished with a number of rules and regulations.

The intellectual faculties mostly used are Locality, the sense of relative position, and Weight, that of specific gravity; Locality directing the player to stand in the correct position relative to the ball in the direction of its flight when struck with a club; Weight directing the amount of force required to drive the ball the required distance. Such is this wonderful game.

True, there are many business men who play this and other games of skill, but their excuse is that they use their brains so much in business, they need the relaxation of the muscle work these games entail. What they need is more real brain exercise in their business occupation.

Idle rich men have other so-called occupations, besides golf, cricket, lawn tennis, billiards; one, very serious, throws all others into the shade for downright useless and silliness, called Hunting True; the ancient Briton hunted, the Red Indian hunted, the South African pioneer hunted, but only for food and at a personal risk to the hunter. Hunting then meant finding, pursuing and killing, and eating the slain, or removing a danger to the community. The rich man's hunting consists simply in following dogs chasing a fox or hare, and the so-called hunter is an idle spectator, the actual intellectual work being left to the dogs and horses, not to speak of the fox. Yet these rich men speak of this rather foolish occupation as if it were some meritorious and honorable one—Yes, "he hunts three times a week!" Yet many of these unconscious idlers are good men, but solely for the want of being able to view the world from a proper standpoint, go through life under the impression that they are useful, necessary, and just. They are really not useful, and therefore cannot be happy in the fullest sense of the word.

What would these rich people do if it were not for all this toy-shop occupation, waste of valuable time and muscular exertion? They would be even more vicious than they are now, seeking more and more, pleasure obtainable only from the exercise of those two important faculties intimely connected with reproduction and sustenance.

These pleasures were not intended by nature as a kill-time. We cannot depart from nature without injury to ourselves. We shall retain these games, but only as part of the education of children and youth, and, as such, they are most useful as a stimulating exercise for both brain and muscle.

In a state of freedom, when there shall be no monopoly of the means of life, adults will have so many calls on their brain and muscles in the execution of all that is usfeful and beautiful, serious and thoughtful, that they will no more think of wasting time in playing such games as they now play, than they would, at the present time, think of playing hide and seek, or hoop and stick; which latter are, even now, almost discarded by children for games of a more intellectual nature.

No, there will be no more useless games, but instead, the deep sympathies, developed during periods of individual and collective danger and strengthened through the various forms of civilization, would then be called out, in conjunction with other faculties, and natural and graceful courtesy would be the result. Life would then be full of color, and, no longer shuting our eyes to the wealth with which nature endows us, we should allow splendid physique, beauty of character, and rare intellectual ability, of all kinds to have free and natural expression; while nature would reveal such beauty that Art would be a reality, and the poetry of nature would be as the wine of life.—["Ireland" in Liberty, London.

Correspondence.

A Compliment from a Socialist.

I received your bundle of Firebrands on Friday, 19 and like them very much. The work of The Firebrand has been too much neglected by parliamentary Socialists; we have cast a vote in a nice, respectable, constitutional manner and then, with child like simplicity, waited for the developments that have not taken place.

I must also compliment you on your effort to run the paper on the voluntary basis and wish you success.[1] I will send you 50c in a couple of weeks, and a little more later; please forward me the paper regularly. In the meantime find enclosed 20c for which send me brochures marked on your Library list.

T. J. G.

Montreal, Canada.

For The Propaganda

I attended the last meeting of the Bohemian group, "L. R. K. Pokrok," and, among other transactions, I pointed at the proposed convention. Discussion followed on that subject. Comrades of that group are thinking not to hold such, but instead, have a discussion through our periodicals on all points which should help the spreading of Anarchism among Americans—bettering the propaganda. Hearing opinions of Comrades who were present at the last convention in England, they are not so very favorable to such. They simply say that all actions on these points can be better argued by a discussion in our organs, than in sessions lasting three or four days.

Comrades of the above mentioned group are about of the same opinion, i. e., that they can be more plainly expressed in our papers than any other way, because, every one gets a chance to explain himself thoroughly. Second. The expense which such conventions would cost, as fares etc., could be saved, or reduced to one third or one fourth. That would make also a good amount to give to our preiodicals and for literature. This is the view of "L. R. K. Pokrok."

A. Schmeiler.

New York City.

[1] Thanks for your congratulations, but we are compelled to return to a price, in form, but in spirit the voluntary plan remains.

Kelly's Lecturing Tour.

Embracing the opportunity of comrade H. M. Kelley's stay in this city on his way, westward bound, we arranged two meetings at which our friend spoke on Feb. 14, in Miller's Hall, on "The Radical Side of the Labor Movement," and Feb. 21, in The Duquestne Dancing Academy, "On the development of Trades Unionism; its follies and short-comings".

The audiences were not large but made up in earnestness of purpose what ever they lacked in numbers. A good coloring was lent to the first meeting by the opposition offered by a local Social-Democrat. The debate grew warm and instructive never losing its friendly temper owing to the tact displayed by the representatives of both sides. Another political Socialist made a foolish break while making the assertion, with a view of trying to reasonable account for the recent loss of something like 5000 votes by the Socialist Labor Party of New York, that he did not vote for the Socialist candidate of Pittsburg but supported instead McKinley owing to the fact of his possessing $200 which property would have been endangered had he as a consistent and practical Socialist supported the Bryan movement, which in case of success would have brought ruin to the middle class in its wake.

This naive and unsuspecting good brother confessed to a motive of attitude which all political Socialists should well consider before relying on the support of the small possessor when affairs reach a decisive issue!

The second meeting was much better attended than the first there being a larger sprinkling of the natives among the audience. Many questions were asked and satisfactorily answered by the speaker.

The comrades were well pleased with the feature of the discussion in these meetings—a thing so much lacking in German gatherings.

Friends of our cause here come more and more to the conviction of the manifest importance of propaganda in the English tongue at all times and any cost.

On the 17th inst. Friend Kelly paid a visit to the English speaking section of the Stone Masons of this city at their headquarters, where he delivered a short address. He was tendered a warm reception by the members present, and a vote of thanks.

The comrades are resolved to do all in their power towards the support of the English propaganda in the future.

From rumors current here and spread by the press it seems that the present policy of worrying comrade Berkman to death, not being efficient enough in the eyes of the prison authorities, they have resorted to means of provocation in hope to thus sooner get rid of the enemy. As a result of an occurrence of this character, the details of which in their full variety can hardly be learned now, Berkman is transferred to the prison hospital… It would be very desirable, if possible, to exact from the official torturers an account as to the findings and state of health of our comrade.

U. U. B.

Pittsburg, Pa. Feb. 22, 97.

Anarchists, Wise and Otherwise.

Hope you will excuse me for starting with the remark that, in my opinion, you made a mistake when you enlarged your paper. It would have been far better, it seems to me, had you reduced

its volume instead of increasing it. More work, besides more expenses, is all that will result from the enlargement. If some of your readers wanted more printed matter, you could have sent them selections from the Socialistic literature which would have cost you little money and less trouble. And—that's the point of it—the true Anarchist would, at the same time, have been exempt from that horrible, bombastic trash with which The Firebrand has of late been supplied. For the cause of Anarchism what good will such doctrines do as those of Prison Schools and Castration of Scholars? The author of that nasty stuff subscribes himself "Iconoclast." To me he looks like a cannibal. In spirit at least, if not by trade, he must I think, be rather closely allied to the man-eating fraternity.

Should others among your readers share the views of Mr. Idolsmasher (Idonoclast is more euphonious, I admit), then I am free to stamp and classify them as the Foolish Anarchists. No wise Anarchists would ever designate his erring fellowsmen as "wild, rapacious beasts;" nor would he commend castration for any human being. I have read of cannibals in the Dark Continent and elsewhere, but I never dreamt that a smasher (or slasher) like this one who writes about "reform," was found in civilized America. Crime as the State or its law calls it, is the only hope for Anarchism. Society—or the State—manufactures criminals, if I may say so, and then by virtue of its law punishes them. Now, it is this artificial law that is the head spring of all social evils and our common enemy; but how should we expect ever to get rid of it, if no one ventured to trespass against it? The wise Anarchist is casting about in his mind, is struggling day and night to solve the questions: how shall these prison-walls be removed, how shall our common enemy be laid so low that nevermore he shall rise? The fool bothers himself with such trifles as the free churches with their open doors, thinking we should have made a gigantic step onward, if only they could be swept away. The wise one goes to the very source of all true wisdom, to living nature herself, studying her everywhere, inside himself as well as in the universe, trusting to her and following her hints and directions. Seeing how and what he is himself, he has there the key to the understanding of his fellow-men. The foolish Anarchist turns his back on nature and studies from books, trying to drink life from death and gather honey from artificial flowers. A fool he was, and so he remains. A wise Anarchist is by no means an acephalist; far from that, he feels through his every nerve the unspeakable power and unmeasurable superiority of nature—how then could he avoid believing in it and acknowledging it? A fool knows of no other superiority than that of the fist and the conceit he has inbibed from his books. A wise Anarchist has but one enemy, a foolish one has many; the former takes but little stock in the Bible, that is: in the way it is interpreted by the theologians or the clergy in all christian land, because he knows that such interpretation is the very reverse of truth and as such is one of the despotic powers that rule mankind; the latter's wisdom, or part of it, is disbelief in anything and everything which he fails to grasp or comprehend.

The wise Anarchist knows that all attempts at partial or particular reform are useless, or worse than that, because the very principles of society are wrong; because the foundation itself, on which it was built, is an unnatural and unrighteous one; yet, standing on the mountain-peak of hope, he tries to preserve his equanimity despite all the sins against the spirit of nature committed at his feet; and looking from there into the future, he catches a glimpse of the land of true freedom, of unbounded liberty—the paradise that is sure to come, sooner or later. The fool looks backward or down into his books and, resting on his belly like a beast, ruminates on reformatory prison-schools and a new, scientific—or, maybe, butcherly—way of emasculating the graduates.

The supreme aspiration of a wise Anarchist is the Kingdom of Anarchy or how to get in there, if possible it were; the fool hardly knows what he should do with himself, his wife or the rest of his private belongings in such a public land of universal brotherhood.

A wise Anarchist has sympathy for all men, and not least for offenders or criminals because they are among those that need it the most. Where is the sympathy or fellow-feeling of an emasculator?

A wise Anarchist is aware that mercy or charity—in the usual or clerical acceptation of the word—is something that must be repudiated, not less than private property, nay that even human life must be disregarded, before the boundaries of Anarchy can be crossed. Is the fool ready to sacrifice himself and what is his—or does he but want to see the experiment tried on others?

The wise Anarchist keeps his light burning, watching the signs of the times and the forebodings around and above him, that he may rightly understand and construe them. He knows, furthermore, that the true gospel of Anarchism is proclaimed and reveals to man, not by-any-means from the pulpits or lecture-rooms, but exclusively and directly from the Spirit of Nature—the spirit that produced heaven and earth and endowed man with mental capacity to comprehend its wonderful works.

The fool is a living individuality of raw material, in the process of development at best, but without any spark of yearning for the true and universal happiness of mankind.

In conclusion—the wise Anarchist knows that, no matter how near or how far off the new sunrise may be, the people have yet to go through a period of suffering the most trying and intense that ever was visited upon mankind. That so it must come is a natural necessity. Things must be radically wrong before they can be set radically right. No reason for despair, therefore! Only, let us all be on the look-out and do our best to prepare the way for the new era which will come, since come it must. How can we be sure? Because things are about being strained to their utmost power of endurance. His Golden Majesty—the Money power—is closing his hold on us, on the vast plurality of the people, so deadly that either we must burst and fly asunder, or else must—he.

And therewith good-bye for this time, dear "Firebrand!"

Inclosed you'll find five Drops of the Golden Remedy. It won't cure you. It's harmless, anyhow.

S. D. Thorson.

Chicago, Ill.

Sample Copies.

We send each week large numbers of sample copies, and for this purpose we ask friends to send names of persons like to be interested. The receipt of a sample copy has no other significance than the hope of interesting you and securing your assistance in the work. The subscription price is nominally fifty cents a year, though in reality it is voluntary, for many friends pay more than the subscription price, and we sent it to all who desire it, even if they feel able to pay only a few cents or nothing at all. If you receive the paper without having ordered it, do not hesitate to accept and read it, as no bills are ever sent out.

The Anarchist Library
Anti-Copyright



Firebrand Publishing Committee
The Firebrand: Vol. 3, No. 5 (March 7, 1897)
For the Burning Away of the Cobwebs of Superstition and Ignorance.
March 7, 1897

<https://libcom.org/article/firebrand-free-society-journal>

theanarchistlibrary.org