On Picket Duty.

There died last week at the Home for Aged Men in Boston one of the most faithful and intellectually-consistent Anarchists that I have ever known. When I name him, Joseph H. Swain, but few will recognize him outside of the circles in which he has worked for the last twenty years, part of the time in San Francisco, and part of the time in Boston, his native city. But the few who knew him will testify that he was tried and true. He never failed to see the truth clearly and never flinched from accepting it. I think I never met a man more free from prejudice. With these great qualities he would have done a great work had it not been for weaknesses of character that nullified his strength. Chief among these were the fatal habit of procrastination, a lack of resolve to begin the work that lay next his hand, and, whenever he did begin, an over-scrupulousness regarding petty details in its performance. His friends and comrades will cherish his memory faithfully and affectionately, but more because of what he was than because of what he did. During the last two years of his life he was very feeble physically. About a year ago he read "My Uncle Benjamin." No book ever gave a man more deep and real delight. I never saw him afterward that he did not speak of it with glowing enthusiasm. Knowing that his own death was near, he found especial comfort in the concluding chapter, which describes the beautifully natural and even jovial death of Minix. If Claude Tillion could know what joy he gave to the otherwise joyless end of this admirable old man's life, he would deem himself sufficiently rewarded.

An important vote was taken in Congress last week on a bill to repeal the ten per cent tax on State-bank notes. This proposal has the approval of many orthodox financial papers, and such opposition to it as exists is remarkably mild and uncertain. The bill was defeated, of course, but not finally. The House committee on banking and currency has a substantially similar bill under consideration, which will probably be acted upon during the present session. The Alliance congressmen have given renewed assurances of incapacity and ignorance by voting against the bill, on the ground that the chances for the realization of their sub-treasury scheme would be diminished under a State-bank currency system. Next to free banking and free currency, the repeal of the tax on State-bank notes must appear a highly desirable reform to all opponents of monopoly, it being clearly a step towards that complete decentralization of banking which competition would bring about. It is perfectly true, of course, that if the repudiation of the bills already in circulation would actually entail the miseries and evils which some of the financial Bourbons still predict will be the inevitable outcome of the measure, there might be another reaction in favor of federal monopoly—a reaction which might prove fatal to the free-money idea; but when we consider that the predictions are conceived in prejudice and blind fear of change, and that the increment of freedom contemplated by the bills before the House would simply disappoint its friends by proving inadequate without furnishing any real ground for opposition on the part of its enemies, we are justified in entertaining the hope that State-bank notes will pave the way to private-bank and mutual-bank notes.

"Golding's Nae Better Than 'Tis Ca'n.'

To the Editor of Liberty.

Your timely and forcible criticism of Henry D. Chapin's plea for the perpetual sequestration of the "enti," and of the editor of the "Popular Science Monthly" for admitting that plea to the columns of his magazine, directs our attention to similar infamous proposals made by alleged Liberals and the publication of these proposals in supposed-to-be radical journals.

What a psychological study we have in the person of the editor who, himself the victim of popular ignorance, prejudice, and vulgarity concerning all things pertaining to the relations of the sexes, prints in his paper, supposedly the advocate of liberty and of sane and sound legislation, his article in support of the proposition that the "seducer" should be castrated, of course woman is and always must be a legal minor, needing the guardianship of the ever-infallible State. And likewise the bigamy and polygamist and the father of the family deemed too numerous by his never-mistaken neighbors. Think of such a monstrous incitement to Statocratie and mobocratic savagery given publicity by such a man in such a paper and without one word of comment or criticism. Every intelligent person knows what to expect from the moralists when once their unreasoning anger is aroused and their attention directed to new instrument of torture or destruction or to an old one brought from the dead and damned past and put into their eager hands.

As to the writer of this article, who is he that he presumes to suggest such atrocious punishment for the man living in bigamist or polygamist relations? And the women in the case? Are they to go scathless? If so, why? Is it on the presumption that they do not know their own minds? How highly such women must appreciate such a compliment so delicately bestowed!

What shall be said regarding the editor who in the manner indicated becomes a partner with his contributor in foolishness, to call it by the mildest possible term? "Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad. There are some utterances that would never pass the lips of men that would never appear in the paper of an ordinarily prudent man. Such a man would think at least twice before jeopardizing that which is priceless, either the possession of himself or others. But some men are not ordinarily prudent. There are men in the Liberal ranks who cannot count on the fingers of both hands the number of persons in whom they are interested who would be disastrously affected by the practicalization of the idiotic suggestion or demand here criticised. Not many of them, happily, are so simple as are a few.

E. C. Walker.

A Rare Chance.

By the kindness of two old friends I have lately come into possession of a treasure which many will covet,—namely, a complete set of Liberty, unbound, from the first number to the present, and two of the first three volumes of Liberty bound in half morocco red. Each of these two sets consists of books, the first and second volumes of the journal being bound together and the third volume separately.

These books were given to me to be used for the benefit of Liberty. I propose therefore to sell them to the highest bidders. The eighth volume of Liberty will end on August 13, 1892. Up to that date I will receive bids from any who choose to send. Until that time the bids will be kept an absolute secret. No bidder will know the amount of any bid but his own. On August 14, the highest bidder will be given his choice between a complete unbound set of the entire eight volumes of Liberty or one of the two bound sets of the first three volumes of Liberty. The next to the highest bidder will be given his choice of the two remaining lots, and the third lot will go to the third bidder. In case of a tie each party to the tie will be given a chance to bid again.

The first four volumes of Liberty were exhausted long ago. The first volume has been sold repeatedly for $10, and I have had to refuse offers of $30. To the best of my knowledge and belief there are not more than fifteen copies of the first volume in existence, and of the second, third, and fourth volumes not more than thirty copies each. No one need fear to invest money in these volumes, as the value is sure to double and triple. Fifty years hence a complete set of Liberty will double its command a very high price. Whoever has money to spare can afford to bid high on this occasion. On the other hand let no one refrain from bidding because he cannot afford to bid high. Nothing is certain, and who knows that a bid of ten or even five dollars might not secure one of the three lots? It costs nothing to bid, and when a chance costs nothing, it is better to take it than to leave it; even if it's but one in a million.

Epigram.

I live to love, I love to live.
But love is life's greatest acquirement.
And now my life is dead, I'd give
My life to live no longer.

(Mrs. Caroline, Darrow.)
of issuing bills or paper credit designed to circulate as money, constitutes a franchise, while the exercise of the incidental powers of banking specified in the statute is a right belonging to the citizens generally and not a franchise; and (2) that, under the police power vested in the State, the Legislature may regulate, but it cannot prohibit a business or occupation not necessarily offensive or injurious to the community.

In deciding the case in favor of the defendant, the Supreme Court elaborately deals with the questions involved, but its grounds and conclusions may be summarized thus: 1. A franchise is a special privilege conferred by the government upon an individual or corporation which does not belong to citizens of the country generally by common right. 2. At common law, the business of banking in all its branches was open and free to all, and did not constitute a prerogative of the sovereign. 3. The only banking privilege that is made a franchise in this country is the privilege of issuing bank notes intended to circulate as money, which, since the adoption of the Constitution of the United States, has been vested in the national government, and, when not exercised by it, can be exercised by the several States. 4. It is not an exercise of constitutional power to deprive the citizens of the right to carry on the business of banking other than that of issuing bills or paper credit designed to circulate as money, which was not a franchise at common law and has not been made such by the State or National Constitutions. 5. The business of banking, not being necessarily offensive or injurious to the community, the Legislature cannot, under the police power, prohibit citizens from engaging in it. 6. The act of the Legislature, in so far as it prohibits such banking, is in conflict with the provision of the federal Constitution which declares that no State shall make or enforce any law which abridges the privileges of citizens of the United States, and also with the provision of the State Constitution which declares that all men are born equally free and independent and have certain inherent rights, the enjoyment of which is not subject to any law and cannot be made, that is to say, subjected to more show of justice, than justice, than the right of self-defense, and defending life and liberty, acquiring and protecting property, and the pursuit of happiness.

Logically and legally, the decision is without a flaw. But the student of political and ethical science cannot fail to be struck with the utter rottenness of the foundations of present societies as revealed in judicial decisions on the "rights of men." While the judges eloquently and warmly plead for our inherent rights, fundamental liberties, essential prerogatives, and so forth, they are in reality far from suspecting that there are natural social laws which constitute-framers, no less than legislators clothed with a little brief authority, cannot violate without becoming tyrants. Provided a law conforms to the Constitution of the United States and of the State, the National and State Constitutions, no question of its propriety is ever raised. Our "inherent" rights turn out to be, after all, simply the privileges granted by constitution-makers and ratified by the majority of legal voters. We have abandoned the notion that kings and duly-elected representatives can do no wrong; but that constitutions ratified by the "effective" majority can be less than perfect, has not yet dawned upon the legal mind. The source of right and wisdom is no longer the Legislature, but the Constitution. In the case under discussion, the so-called "incidental powers of banking" are left to the citizen by the constitutions, and hence the right of the legislators to alienate them is denied. But the right to issue bills or paper credit intended to circulate as money, which was equally recognized under the common law, is negated by the constitutions, and hence all propositions about men's right to the pursuit of happiness, inherent and fundamental prerogatives, and essence of political freedom, are tacitly dismissed as irrelevant or meaningless. Yet every consideration urged against legislative prohibition of the exercise of the "incidental powers of banking" can be applied with equal force to the question of the exercise of the "banking privilege proper." If the Legislature may not prohibit anything not necessarily offensive or injurious to the community, why may constitutions impose such prohibitions? If men are entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, it is clearly as wrong to deprive them of any right by the method of constitutional provision as by any other method.

That judges, as judges, should ignore this aspect of the problem is natural and proper; but, as thinkers and citizens, judges might, in common with other inquirers, pay some attention to first principles of political life and seek for an explanation of the paradox which they are compelled to proclaim daily.

V. V.

Bursting a Bubble.

There is a type of reformer which is common to near all the phases of the striving social and industrial movement of the time. He believes he has a mission, and that self-sacrifice is its primary condition. He judges the importance and success of his enterprise by the amount of heroic self-abnegation which, he imagines, it calls him to undergo. If he is not continually paralyzing before his followers, or those he wants to become his followers, the extent of the sacrifices he has made for the cause, and which it is necessary for the cause to make, he, is, in the main, with more show of modesty, exhorting them to prepare for the inevitable and indispensable acts of personal sacrifice and self-immolation which every struggling and struggling cause demands of its votaries, upon which it feeds and grows, and by which alone it lives and attains its goal.

He is in the Socialist and Labor movements. The Anarchist movement is one of the most striking instances. To take his part he has forsaken many social enjoyments, braved pecuniary loss, thrown up a multitude of advantages, faced all the risks and borne all the penalties that Society (the monster) imposes on courage and independence. His time he gives to the good work of his choice. And for every such personal sacrifice he believes that somebody reaps an advantage. The workingman, the people, are benefitted. The movement spreads, the cause grows, and without which is the same thing. His profound belief in individual suppression, exemplified in his own work and in his appeals to others, is combined with the disinterested observer to consider the voluntary enslavement and sacrifice of each individual with the complete emancipation and assertion of all, indeed the true and only way to accomplish that desirable end.

As witness, he calls History, from Socrates and Christ to the most recent victims in our own day; and the theory is complete.

Believe not, reader, that the picture is overdrawn, or that it is beyond man's capacity. It is the result of observation and experience. And you will have no difficulty in locating it from your own.
That these reformers fully accept and believe in the theory we need not pause to question. That the theory is unsound and the whole principle false, misleading, and mischievous is evident to everyone. One man who takes up a certain position and pursues a certain course in a matter of public policy and general principle, whether he styles himself a reformer or not, if he is honest and sincerely believes in the least of his duty, the desire of his ambition, and the line of conduct which gives him the most pleasure. Neither the law nor the opinion of his neighbors—society calls upon him to make this profession, but he always resists being meddled with; nor, if he is sane, will he take it up to make a living. Yet we find men under these circumstances who actually believe that the course they have taken in the field of politics, of science, of philosophy, or of suppression, will ultimately save mankind, reclaim and revolutionize the world.

To abstain from brandy and champagne when I have a natural taste for all alcoholic beverages may seem an heroic act of self-sacrifice—while I know not of my aversion. To withdraw from the insanities of conventional society, to shun its unmanned follies, when I detest its hypocrisy and despise its luxuries, may prove me a saintly man; but only to those who cannot conceive my view. In reality I am just a self-assertive, wilful mortal, doing that which I seemeth to me good to do. I can only claim that I possess courage enough to be true.

It is true that what appear to be acts of self-sacrifice are often deeds of permanent value and, good to mankind. But the spirit which engenders such performances is not necessarily valiant, but rather the most perfect assertion of individuality. How, then, are the clombers for self-sacrifice to prove either its existence or utility? A man may act boldly by opposing tyranny or by asserting and upholding individual rights (erroneously) in a way to suffer for his temerity; but, if it is done in the interest of others, and not at all on his own behalf, without being just the thing he took pride and pleasure in doing, which is often broken upon by the class of reformers we are criticising,—who will have felt the benefit of his sacrifice, and where must he look for his reward? If he is in the wide movement for economic and social reform, assuredly he will be roundly abused, looking to the workmen for recompense or recognition, nor need he expect them knowingly to feel the benefits which he believes to accrue from his sacrificial course of action, therefore that it is apparent good to others or expects others to see any benefit to them in his conduct at all, then is he doomed to sad and grievous disappointment. Still, such must be the nature of acts cherished by those who make a living from the lives of others, and who, fondly believe that the people’s welfare depends largely on the disinterested and unselfish conduct of individuals.

After hugging this idealistic notion for a time, they often begin to notice the actual cost of their undertaking, and take. Slowly, as the first fire and enthusiasm burns to embers and the dreamland they are soaring in recedes and fades away before the grim reality, dimly the cold truth forces itself upon them, that the world cares nothing for their sacrifices, that the people thank them not, nor even show the least sign of gratitude to their self-consumed benefactors. The ideal vanishes, the hope for the generation of the next, the work shattered, faith in progress lives no more. These are the consequences of a false theory, a mistaken view of the individual’s relation to others. But sometimes the outcome is better, than it might have been, for the loss of hope losses not hope and retains his faith in the future. He recognizes that with himself alone he must reckon his loss and gain. If he seems to make a sacrifice for the principle he holds, he is himself the object of the sacrifice; if he lies in making himself subservient to others’ good; scrutinize more closely, discover the error, live, not for others who are no better off thereby and who don’t profit by his sacrifice, but for himself, for the expansion of his personality. An objectivity compatible with self-sacrifice, and everybody will reap the benefit, and the world will be the richer by his presence.

The revolution cannot, will not, come in a lump. We must insist, this time and every time, that, besides being a general question concerning all, it is also and more particularly an affair of the individual. Each man for himself, none for others, none for himself. Then, no matter what he does or what part he elects to play, there will be no more disappointment, shattered hopes, and dark despair.

If the revolution is to be successful, it must not rely on any individual for its salvation. The individual is too great consequence to be bound down, stiffened and enslaved, either morally or materially, in the name of the pondeuous, impervious, soul-less mass.

Self-effacement is a mere incident in the evolution of freedom, a matter of expediency rather than principle. This is written, not to befog our subject, but in the fairer interest of clearness. Of the many men who have most truly pointed out that clearness is the enemy of enthusiasm. But I prefer to sacrifice enthusiasm, shadowy, vague, and undefined, in the interest of clarity, to cast away all illusions, however elevating and soothing to the mind, in order to cling to the reality, earthly and commonplace though it be, to abide always by the knowable and the known.

If we understand ourselves, it is so much easier to deceive one’s self then others, and to this class we must relegate those who, from the pejoration of their own disinterestedness, cling to the false idea that the masses and the people, the whole of humanity. It must by no means be inferred from the nature of these remarks that we counsel mean, selfish indifference as the path for the individual to pursue. Such is a view incomprehensible to the exact, thinking, feeling man or woman who sees the misery, slavery, injustice with which the world is filled; who hates hypocrisy and tyranny and oppression; who longs for the beauty of happy lives led by a free, intelligent people; who loves truth and liberty. If we cannot perform right the wrongs, nor hope to realize and see the condition of things we believe possible, the nearest approach to that happiness we shall ever know is the peace which shall be the expression and assertion of individuality, of liberty of thought.

So that the gains to humanity through the Reforma-
tion, in itself but the transference of authority from a man to himself, may be due to the deliberate or conscious self-sacrifice. Passing over all intermediate ground, let us take the most striking example of the present century in order to estimate the value of sacrifice to progress. Russian nihilism has vanished into insubstantiality through the heroic self-sacrifices upon the furtherance of its aims of which modern times furnish an instance. Whether those aims in themselves were worth such a vast expendi-
ture of life, it is outside the field of our present inquiry. And for the same reason we must eliminate the question of the expediency of force as a weapon of reform. Now I have yet to learn that the conflict between the self-assertion of the original purpose I gladly admit. But that purpose is an affair of the present ever, and what has been gained might possibly have been attained in another way.

The case of Ireland might be cited,—the undying, the unceasing hatred and anger of two generations. Yet who will assert to-day that she is better off in consequence, or that she is really any nearer the attainment of her hopes. Ireland is the most unceasingly unselfish reformer, and ask him where shall we find the fruits of his sacrifices, which he makes in the interest of the downtrodden masses. It is only through a confusion of terms that men are led to the thought that he as-

serts his belief in self-sacrifice, then let him cast aside the misnomer and talk no more of self-abnegation when he is doing the very thing he at that time considers the greatest benefaction. He who believes in making himself subservient to others’ good, scrutinize more closely, discover the error, live, not for others who are no better off thereby and who don’t profit by his sacrifice, but for himself, for the expansion of his personality. An objectivity compatible with self-sacrifice, and everybody will reap the benefit, and the world will be the richer by his presence.

The revolution cannot, will not, come in a lump. We must insist, this time and every time, that, besides being a general question concerning all, it is also and more particularly an affair of the individual. Each man for himself, none for others, none for himself. Then, no matter what he does or what part he elects to play, there will be no more disappointment, shattered hopes, and dark despair.

If the revolution is to be successful, it must not rely on any individual for its salvation. The individual is too great consequence to be bound down, stiffened and enslaved, either morally or materially, in the name of the ponderous, impervious, soul-less mass.
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