On Picket Duty.

The promised letter from Merlino, the Communist, has never been received. His failure to send it is probably to be explained by the appearance of a new journal, "Solidarity," of which I take Merlino to be the editor. He has evidently concluded that it will take more than a month's sojourn in America and a single letter to Liberty to crush out Individualistic Anarchism, and therefore has started a fortnightly organ of Communism in the English language. Of which more anon.

Renan is credited with the utterance of the following sentiment in a recent conversation: "Zola! Nay, Monsieur, you must not ask me about him, for I have no opinion on him. It is low, far away, beneath. It is the mud, and a pity for French literature. I have a horror for what is coarse." Yet only a few weeks ago, at a meeting of the French Academy, to which Renan belongs, ten out of thirty-nine immortals voted to immolate this mud by making its author the forty-first. What filthy fellows these must be,—Dumas, Coppée, and the rest! I congratulate Renan upon his associates. This man is less happy in describing others than in describing himself. Zola's name may be mud or it may not; that is a matter on which opinions differ. But when Renan once characterized himself as "a priest miscarried," no one ever disputed him.

A copy of the French translation of Comrade Mackay's book, "The Anarchists," has reached this office, and right glad am I to see it. It cannot fail to do good work in France. It is a rather free translation, but seems on the whole a good one. There are some blunders however, and among them one so ludicrous and confusing that it must be pointed out straightway. In the original German the author refers in several places to the New York "Freiheit." The innocent French translator, supposing this to be a German rendering of the title of a paper published in New York in the English language, and knowing that freiheit is the German word for liberty, takes pains in every case to render the title in English, thus making the author speak of "the Liberty of New York." As a result, poor Mackay is made to condemn Liberty, the organ of the very opinions which his book is written to champion. I can imagine the expression on his face when he first saw this blunder. Before a man uncer-takes the translation of a work on Anarchism, he should familiarize himself with its literature sufficiently to know the difference between two journals so nearly diametrically opposite as Liberty and John Most's "Freiheit."

With the editors of newspapers and magazines it is a general rule that the availability of a manuscript is inversely proportional to the ability of the author. If this rule is not observed in the office of Liberty, it is only the better proved by the exception. So long as the rule shall stand, it will give Liberty great pleasure to serve as a receptacle for the refuse of its contemporaries. A sample of this refuse is to be found in the article on "Political Duty," begun in this issue and to be printed in four instalments, which it rescues from the waste-basket of the "Arena." To find such excellent material in such a place is rather discouraging, except from the scavenger's standpoint. It is not surprising to discover glittering gold in the dirt-heaps of orthodox magazines like the "Forum" and "North American Review," but when such a nugget is cast out of the liberal "Arena," one wonders why, and begins to doubt its liberal-ity. The "Arena" has never yet published an Anarchistic article. It has purchased several, to my knowledge, but they remain buried in its pigeon-holes. Meanwhile it finds plenty of room for the wearisome vaticinations of Dr. Joseph Buchanan. What is the reason of this discrimination? Is it pretended that Mr. Perkins' article on "Political Duty," for instance, deals with an im-portant subject, or that it is uninteresting, or that it lacks thoughtfulness? Undoubtedly not. The subject speaks for itself, and every reader who follows the article to the end will testify that it is the product of careful thought presented in a serious yet entertaining way. I dislike to impute unworthy mo-tives to the managers of a magazine which is really doing a liberalizing work, but I cannot understand its policy towards Anarchism unless it is either unwilling or afraid to give that cause a hearing. And if that be the case, it is no longer an Arena.

How Monopoly Works in Italy.

[Northern Evening Post.]

A curious instance of the extremes to which State Socialism has gone in Italy is the extraordinary care taken by various professions to secure an absolute monopoly and prevent competition. Thus a surgeon is forbidden under severe penalties to pull a tooth without a special license as a dentist. Pharmacists are protected also, as will be seen from the experience of a certain physician who was treating a case of malarial fever. The quinine which he prescribed not having the expected effect, he took the trouble to analyze it, and found it to consist mainly of magnesia. He denounced the dishonest druggist, but that worthy was under the protection of a local boss, and the physi-cian was severely rebuked by the authorities for his misguided zeal and threatened with the loss of his position as village doctor unless he ceased to meddle with affairs that did not concern him. He naturally did not wish to lose his place, but neither did he wish to lose his patient, and accordingly he obtained some pure quinine from a friend and cured the sick man. But the druggist got wind of this and had the physi-cian arrested for illegally dealing in drugs, and the latter would have been severely punished had not the patient sworn that he had never taken any quinine except that put up by the honest pharmacist.

True Love.

What is true love? Is it this: Only on one mouth to kiss? Only on one breast to press? Only for one touch to sigh? Only in one soul to be Shined in love's lost idol? To have and hold a human heart For self, a slave, apart? Is this true love? It may be; It is not true love to me. Love most true is this, I deem: To, in love, be what I seem; To be always true to trust, Though the years go back to dust; To be like a harrowing bay, Where my love at last may be, Lie forevermore, secure, In a love that will endure; To speak, in the simple truth, To vary, in the main path Of a woman's agony, Should love speak insincerely? To the beards that hold me dear, Though they love, and love again, Of them the lips that I may know On still other lips may glow, Though another love is first, My love must not be the worst. What my loves love is to me Appeals for generous sympathy. As they change not, nor will I, But I give the sure reply. Making answer aye the same, When in love they speak my name, When they call me, calling clear: "Love, O hear me! "... "I am here!" This is true love, large and free. Love's reliability.

J. W. Lloyd.

Toleration.

What is your nature? Tell me, O my love, And I shall know where your horizon lies. With level line the world's woe is to your eyes. Ultimate truth for you that does not move. Nor do you guess that growth will show you more. Immense seas and water skies, Which proving ignorance may make you wise, Hiding to you of strange and unseen shore. O dear sweet child, if thou but only see As yet what height you bring to earth and sea and air, So, in the spiritual world as elsewhere. Your soul's eye can discern but a degree Of truth that's infinite. Hence do not dare To judge your fellow like a god aware. Mihowski Daniel.
The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

**Political Duty: A Confession of Skepticism.**

"It is well if the mass of mankind will obey the laws when made, without scrutinizing too nicely into the reasons for making them,"—Blackstone.

"The great political superstition of the past was the divine right of kings. The great political superstition of the present is the divine right of parliaments."—H. Spencer.

"The whole realm of political science is as yet little better than a superstition."—Patrick Edmond Devoe.

The arbitrary barriers which, in the discussion of certain kinds of questions, are set up to narrow the range of argument have often been noted. Experience teaches that some questions are not generally considered debatable throughout, and that against some opinions the strongest probabilities drawn from well-attested facts have no perceptible effect. Toil of the mind is to most people more irksome than toil of the body, to be sure; but furthermore it seems that the toil of examining the foundations of their beliefs is an unusual task to many who are, nevertheless, well used to other and serious mental exertion. The very same person who, in discussing questions of convenience in household or business arrangements, of economy in production, and the like, will weigh evidence, balance probabilities, and express opinions with dogmatism, will, often times, when the talk shifts to questions of freedom, fair play, observances, restrictions, and the like, speedily arrive at the arbitrary limits of his thought. To a certain point he is as reasonable as one could wish. Beyond that, he demurs, is angered, perhaps, at what he calls the "infidel" "communist," or "demoralizing" ideas presented, advances certain narrow generalizations of the conventional sort as if they were self-evident, and, if pushed for reasons, falls back on "the word of God," well-established customs, "the genius of American institutions," or some similiar phrase, or perhaps, changes the subject, or preserves a dignified silence. Some wit has said: "Men's minds are made in water-tight compartments." This is not merely a joke; it is the metaphorical statement of a fact of human nature; and the effect of this is that an irruption of new ideas does not directly flood the whole mind, but may make it limited and application.

The question I have chosen to bring before the readers of Liberty is one which is often treated in the manner indicated above. Nevertheless the temper of my countrymen towards such questions has changed and is changing, and believing that it will long continue to change, I venture to bring it forward, choosing for it, out of several forms which might be chosen, this:

*Is there sufficient reason why the people of this country should always obey the lawful commands of their official rulers?*

May be said that the question thus raised is of no present practical importance. It is probably true that its discussion is not likely to have much effect, for a long time, upon the relations between the official classes and the rest of us. It is not certain, of course, that a sheriff, a customs officer, a soldier, or a judge would resign his office, or even change his methods, even if he did become convinced that the performance of its functions was unjust and demoralizing; nor, on the other hand, would a hungry workman, an import protecting merchant, or a great financier necessarily refrain from unlawful acts because his faith in the existence and rightful authority of the State had been strengthened by argument. Nevertheless, it is highly desirable that on this question, as on others, people should think clearly and reason correctly, and that their prejudices and superstitions, if they have any Opinion be abandoned and the opinions derived therefrom be confirmed, modified, or abandoned. The future advantages of such a course are likely to be great; besides, the satisfaction that comes from clear thinking is considerable. Every man, too, is in the midst of powerful social forces, as well as physical forces, and the extent of his knowledge and use of them has much to do with the success or failure of his efforts. A large proportion of the people of this country, as of Europe, are in a condition that calls loudly for careful thought and wise action. The general custom, coexistent with civilization, of respecting and enforcing technical and customary claims to the control of lands, structures, and chattels without regard to the "owner's" use or non-use of them, and also without concern as to whether he or she ever produced their equivalent according to any estimate or not, has not been abandoned (as was necessary) in the subjection of a considerable part of the people to the continual necessity of hiring from others the space and shelter necessary for dwelling and working* and in very many cases of competing with each other for the privilege of working, wages, in such circumstances, necessarily either falling or (which is almost as bad) failing to rise in proportion to the worth of the productive arts and the expense of decent living. The same custom, in accordance with which some people are privileged to receive and retain goods and services from producers to an amount which is large out of all proportion to any productive work done by the recipient, makes possible a style of living which, on account of the material abundance, leisure, and control that characterize its followers, greatly heightens the contrast in fortunes produced by different knowledge of utilities and by circumstances not to be controlled. In such a state of things, it is as natural for men to investigate all projects for escaping the economic evils which follow this custom as for a caged bear to shake his confining bars, and the results of their investigations, which shall be the perfect plan what the child is to the man, may be seen in many directions. Following the instinct of self-preservation, workmen have banded together to resist the external forces which appear to them to hostile to their interests, but though they have sometimes succeeded, by strikes, boycotts, co-operative buying, and so forth, in diverting profits for a time from the pockets of their business adversaries into their own, the limitations of such methods and their slight effect on the general evil so long as greed resists opportunities and men go hunting jobs are only too apparent. It is becoming tolerably clear, with the measures which do strike, in some manner, at property-customs are likely to prove inefficient in dealing with the glaring inequalities which naturally spring from property-customs. But, back of all the customs respecting property, and enforcing the unjust customs as well as the just ones, stand the lawmaker, the policeman, the judge, and the soldier; and back of these men is an idea—the idea that duly qualified officials have a peculiar right to do all that they do lawfully. The importance of this idea as a buttress of the institution of property as it exists is such that it cannot possibly escape the analysis of the humanitarian reformer.

For years have comical statesmen, like their fellows in the ecclesiastical field, pointed back to the fundamental wido n of the fathers. For years have eminent jurists, following the example of their ancient authorities, studied precedents, split hairs of techniques, and adjusted the constitutions to the exigencies of class legislation. For years have economists and writers on public questions passed lightly over the anomalies which the concept of the State has introduced into their problems. But the time must come when this question of rightful authority, in republics no less than in monarchies, must run the gauntlet of full and free discussion, in all institutions resting upon it stand or fall by the results.

Obedience to Government officers while in the performance of their peculiar functions is, in this country, a dominant doctrine, and, in the Northeastern States at least, is, with very many people, an article of faith. While there is, in some quarter, much contempt and hatred for certain legalized institutions, it exists usually among people who, for one reason and another, keep their opinions on such matters to themselves. The tavern-keeper, for example, whose profits are directly affected by official restrictions on liquor-selling, seldom "hires a hall," or worries an editor, in order to express himself on the
question of prohibition, but prudently keeps his opinions (which are usually positive and definite) for a small circle of cronies and customers. The politician, too, whose occupation makes him familiar with the hidden parts of the machinery in the local or national statute-factory, and the lawyer, who is well-used to testing the tensile strength of such legislative products, have each his private opinion as to the usefulness of statutes in general and of particular statutes,—but then, such people are not expected to say unpopular things. So it comes to pass that, for the reason concisely stated by Demetrius the shithead in the Pauline epistle, "as the gospel was first preached at Ephesus, the men who could enlighten us most as to the practical workings of legalized control, instead of giving us the benefit of their experience, merely voice anew the common sentiments as to the wisdom and gloriousness of American institutions and the supreme duty of every citizen to obey the laws. As to doctors and clergymen, they seem, with rare exceptions, not to know that there can be more than one side to the question. Besides the classes I have mentioned, there are very many persons who are too heavily burdened, or too deeply enslaved to others, to admit of their protesting against the popular dogmas, even if they should wish to do so, and very many also who do protest in private, to a certain extent, but are wholly unused to any form of public expression. The ordinary leaders of public opinion have, therefore, been allowed to emphasize their side of the question with comparatively little opposition. That which is agreed upon by the lawyers, the politicians, the clergymen, and the editors is sure to be generally believed. And it is generally believed, and taught, that resistance to lawful authority is wholly inexcusable; that while it is proper and right to agitate and vote for the abolition of laws deemed unjust or unwise, it is improper and wrong, so long as the law holds its place among statutes, judicial decisions, or constitutional provisions, to resist its execution or even to evade it. The mere disobedience of a statutory provision, such as smuggling, for example, is condoned in many people's minds with deeds of actual injury or cruelty to one's fellowmen, and all are said, without discrimination, to be "wrong" or "criminal." And yet—and yet— I have not, up to this time, found any one able to give anything like a satisfactory reason for this doctrine. The reader shall see the most cogent reasons I have seen, and my comments upon them.

Theo. P. Perkins.

The Gothic Minster.

In these dullest days, when men aim at self-contained power, and every unit aspirers to be not only his own physician, art critic, etc., but also to be his own verse-maker, the copyright of the Muse may be said to have expired. John, Dick, and Emily Jane clothe their sensations in mediocre form, and scratch their brainless polls to see if the laurels are sprouting. Many are the rickety bastards of rhyme and imagery while paper-fed Tennyson or cloth-bound Browning, in the market. For the most part these labored products are swaddled in ruby morocco and regally gilt, to appeal to the aesthetic sense of those who would undoubtedly revere them but for their fine dress. The ancient Egyptians thought to hand themseles comfortably to posterity. Their gorgeous grasped busts still had their successors for dust and ashes of death therein. Who runs may read.

On the other hand, modesty sometimes conceals a true value too well, so that no poet heeds over the rim of our horizon, we expect him to shine his level best, and not to drape a cloud in front of himself. It is his duty to announce himself, and ours to judge if he be worth the while. The Gothic Minster, A Poem," by Harry Lyman Koopman, is a sixteen-page pamphlet in ephe-meral covers in which no way advertise or fly frame its great burden. We share Thackeray's aversion to tracts and booklets, but if he had a general idea of romantic literature, reproducing, with artistic ease in our minds the emotion which the writer himself experienced in viewing them. He pictures his subject in storm, in gentle contrasting moonlight, and then bids you stand before the minste when high morn Throws its revealing light on tower and wall; The airy structure hardly into stone; Not all forgetful of the sturn for its form: It were in darkness, nor the winged grace And lightness of that money musicery. A lively work of man, man of his best, Highest aspiring and most, self-sufficient, Therefore most exalted. Then, what art it? The genius of what master intellect Shines here by bards hands wrought vividly! No mighty genius no Hand. But common lives by faith and art adorned.

At this point the first entrancing rapture at so much beauty passes, and the old perplexing questions look at him at and upon this anomalous structure. It becomes a note of interrogation.

But, if the greatness was not theirs that wrought, What mastering, move so informed their lives As through so little with so exusion? Religion, Van, and art its minister, The records answer; but the question comes, If unto them the world was not significant, Or meanings manifest, though under all Able the root and spring of all religion, The loneliness beyond the soul Orphaned of its ideal?

The inner eye holds perfection, and the outer world reveals "crusade, failure, death, decay; everywhere injustice apparently succeeding, "force on earth usurps the place of light." The grieved heart

has memories in its inner shrine
Of love illimitable, its native air,
Its birthplace and its bourn; but seen on earth
Man's hand of hate, and hate and hate
Making the world a shambles, or a den
Of savages and immortal lions.

Learned after centuries, that is 'thriller'
To coin a brother's heart's blood, drop by drop,
Than spill it wastefully by the swift sword.

Notwithstanding the negative appearances of life, the soul "rescues from the lowest hells" and rolls itself "the infinite brought down to human ken.

Since, however, some souls cannot always soar, and not all have strength to wing so high, Men wrought them symbols that should reproduce

The shudder and the thrill.

Once more the sculptured music has ascended, and the poet's eye follows the forms in loving sympathy, while the motions inwrought even in details do not escape him. Each stone, each part, the whole climbing and aspiring to Heaven, pointing to the Infinite, lightening itself for higher flight till

Swifter the spire shoots upward, then suddenly
Stops, and in the rose-crowned blossoms forth
For repose of the beefy view;
So finds the life of man its res in God.

But even here, upon the crowning cross, the perplexing questions reassort themselves insistently: "Where finds it?" And the Minster vaguely answers: "Yonder, never here on earth."

The heart still urges, and for answer gives
Receiveth the becketting of the sculptured portal. With heart unpurloined and Athenaed soul go in:
The world shuts down behind, and thou art left
Alone in presence of the ineffable.

Here in the unreal atmosphere, in the glory and the great music, the senses sleep, lulled by the rain-drenched light amid the soft sighs of the deep organ tones, morbidly magnified.

Where and when
Have lost their meaning to the mind entangled?
Yet self it self is lost; the weary soul,
After long flight, within the stormy rests
Of the eternal, as she slowly sinks back in unct's immensity.

How retract the path to earthly life? The familiarity of the forms of beauty takes the mind to the worker who wrought so lovingly with chisel and hammer in the olden time. Fancy says...

On Sunday with t's children wandering
In wood and field, а t' noting form and pose
Of flower and leaf and stem.

Here no doubt some, who have been hithero with the poet in his imaginative interpretation, will take issue with him, remembering the memory of genius and of art rather than favor to the theory that the greatest accomplishments have been the fruit of energy conserved for work and not expended in sexuality, or exhausted by the toil of procuring and rearing a family. These venerable piles, such folk may say, were probably wrought for the most part by force of charity. This is a side point on which we must not just now dwell. No one will disagree at any rate with the statement that we do not look to Wagner's art, and that now pleasure belongs not to the labor. The art is in abeyance. But, given the art, still no cathedrals could arise, for the faith that built them is dead.

That faith is dead which made the earth a waste. And man's life but a dreary, empty waste. O'er burning sands and sandy shores and Beyond its bounds a Paradise and rest.
That faith is dead which saw Only the spirit's prison, a house of rim. To be escaped from, not the house of joy. That faith is dead, with its black pessimism. Which deemed this world the devil's world, and then. That men might live, rather in despair, Fashioned a heaven for earth's apology.

At last men see that, whatever the unfathomable future holds for them.

Yet is this earth his home, the theatre,
Where, and not elsewhere, he must play his part;
So much is this, the theatre of life.

Has the old faith prepared them to receive this knowledge? Also? Some kill their fellows, some declare the dead faith lives,

But most men to themselves so aimlessly Hurrying to find and finding naught.

"Yet," says the seer clear-sighted from the minster tower, "they seem to move in common"; and the sight a great joy within the soul. What the new life shall be he will not wholly surmise. But in part he sees the tendency of the massus below.

Away from hate,
Away from violence, men slowly draw,
And dare behind the bulging tear of force,
Which sinks in mass the individual.

Here at last the universal interest calumniates. The climax must not be marred by any further quotations for those who will be readers of the poem as a whole. The highest light is gathereth at last. There is no sudden stopping of song and swooned yore. The wild hill-tops, no abrupt closure. In strength and unabated enthusiasm, through history cautiously descending, we reach once more the lowly ground, stronger in hope and more unfeignedly than ever by our study of the Gothic Minster.

What Mr. Koopman has written in the past the writer does not know; what he may utter in the future does not make or mar this. The fragmentary torso reveals the master's hand to such as love their art. After all, size is only of value to the Ignorant, who measure paintings by the mile. A small drawing of a lion great in power, a miniscule picture more the king of beasts than Brion Riviere's large painting that put the two alternately in front of a giraffe, there is little doubt it would bolt at the Da Vinci inch and not the Riviere yard. To our thinking there is more appearance of a lion of Revelation in this tiny stroke to frighten usurers than in roaring volumes of blood and thunder. And as such we treat it with care; the main body is beyond praise and blame, but we pull the

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