On Picket Duty.

During the last six weeks many complaints have reached me from subscribers regarding the non-arrival or late arrival of Liberty. These unfortunate people should remember that the Post Office is very busy just now. Republican campaign documents must have a show. Can John Wannamaker be expected to deliver a paper which his personal friends have sent to him of his office when there is an opportunity to circulate tons of literature written to keep him in office? But let my readers take courage, for the campaign is over. Until another begins, a more prompt postal service may be looked for.

R. W. Raymond, in his excellent defence of the wage system reprinted in another column, makes individual liberty and responsibility the backbone of the social structure, which, like the vertebrated type of physical structure, cannot be improved upon by evolution. I agree. But when he makes State guardianship of liberty also a permanent factor in the social organism, he goes too far. It seems to me distinctly an evolutionary conception that liberty and responsibility, with the advance of time, will stand and less in need of guarantee and guard, to the point of finally dispensing with them, and that then Man's Backbone will be stiffer than ever. It is Anarchism, not Mr. Raymond's Individualism, that is evolution-proof.

A Fatal Admission, If Allowed.

The following article appears in the November number of the "Engineering Magazine" over the signature, "A Consistent Libertarian," in comment upon an article by Prof. N. S. Shaler that had appeared in the October number combating the State licensing of professional men but making an exception in the case of doctors:

There is no surer way to make the human race a tribe of fools than to protect it from the consequences of folly. Such, in brief, is the attitude taken by Prof. N. S. Shaler in the "Engineering Magazine" toward the legal regulation of the professions; and with the general consideration which he addresses in support of this position no man can be more in sympathy than I. But in his exception of the doctors from his general rule, I fear he has given the architects and many other professional men a chance to claim the shelter of legal privlege. It is necessary therefore to point out the weakness of his reasons for according special favor to the medical men.

"The man," he says, "who is taken suddenly ill or who has met with an Injury is not in a position to form judgment based on reasonable inquiry as to the professional education of the medical man from whom he seeks help."

I answer that, if such accident befalls a man at his home, or so near his home that he can at once be taken to the nearest hospital or physician, it is difficult, when sound in mind and body, determined, after reasonable inquiry, to employ in such an emergency. A man, when sick, is entitled to the benefit of the judgment of the medical men, and further, it is a minor consideration that it is not only to interfere with his liberty, but to take a cruel advantage of his helplessness. If, however, the supposed accident befalls him at a distance from home, his judgment fails him, and he must be on his own. There is nothing to hinder the selection, by the authorities or others taking him in charge, of a physician possessing a diploma from the faculty of a high-class medical college, which ought to be rather more reliable than the certificate of a State board of examiners probably owing its position to the views of the tariff question or some other aspect of the whole problem even less closely related to the practice of medicine.

There is nothing, then, in the subterfuge or other peculiar circumstances of this hypothetical patient's illness, to justify, much less necessitate, even in his own behalf, a denial of the liberty of healing. But even if such exceptional patient were placed in greater danger by the absence of a system of State licensing, must we, to protect him, abridge the liberty of a hundred ordinary patients? For my own part, the little confidence that I have in medical science in its present state is to be found in the Allopathic representatives thereof. But I cannot see that the remote liability to which I am exposed of being treated by a charlatan if I am suddenly taken ill from an incompetent architect. It is much truer of such, a man than of a sick person that he is not in a position to form judgment based on reason,--his inquiry as to the education of the professional men is an unreasoning leap of faith. It is a chance he must take if he is to be saved. The danger of such a character is sufficient to warrant monopoly in medicine, the more so then does it warrant monopoly in architecture. But in truth it is just such an assumption sliding out of sight in comparison with the wider and deeper dangers involved, as Professor Shaler shows, in relieving men of the responsibility of choice, depriving them of the advantages of competition, and weakening the incentive to innovation and progress.

It is especially strange that Professor Shaler should single out the profession of medicine for exemption from rivalry, when he admits that valuable contributions to the healing art "have come from men absolutely without schooling." "Poupart, the founder of modern hydropathy," he says, "was an illiterate peasant, yet he invented methods of treatment which have been found most valuable, and which, to a great extent, have been adopted by the medical profession." Now mark the sentence which immediately follows: "The foregoing considerations seem to lead to the conclusion that the medical profession, if it be to continue as an organized profession (except medicine) by a system of government licenses will go against the spirit of our society. The patriarchal qualification which I italicize constitutes in such a case a form of license by which a man, who has so logical and philosophical a mind ever permitted to escape its vigilant scrutiny, Professor Shaler's first ground of privilege for the doctors being inadequate, and his second ground being illegal. The state of medicine from a third ground, which we shall find to be impertinent. "So far as the practice of medicine is concerned," he declares, "the argument in favor of legal control seems to have sufficient weight to justify a certain departure from the principle which dictates freedom of contract as the basis of relation between employer and employed, in all the walks of life." I submit that such a sentence is entirely out of place in a serious discussion of a question of political ethics. Certainly no one needs to be told that the will of the majority predominates adoption of whatever possible policy it may favor, but to be told that it justices it knows the bottom out of all philosophy. I take it that Professor Shaler, in asking the question: "Shall the Professions be Regulated?" did not intend to inquire whether fifty-one men out of every hundred favor such regulation, but whether, if such is the fact, are we wise in favoring it; and that the object of his paper was to convince at least two of the fifty-one that they are unwise. How absurd, then, to defeat himself by telling the fifty-one that they are justifiably wise because they are fifty-one. Of course it follows that the architects and their friends or, that matter, the hod-carriers and their friends have only to become fifty-one to be entitled to a monopoly. "Quo vadem, pie demostrandum?" I offer these criticisms simply because I am in hearty accord with Professor Shaler's main position, and therefore desire to anticipate these friends of monopoly and despotism who are sure otherwise to successfully steal this champion of liberty at his only vulnerable point.

The Prayer of the Pampered Pessimist.

Lord, I curse my daily ease: I don't believe things could be worse; For, if they could, O Lord, I knew They would have been so long ago.

Our life is but a living death: Champagne bills take away one's breath; We're corpses grinning in a row; First-class hotels do lured us so.

Our days are but an idiot's dreams: Where: nothing is, but only seems: Where good hard work pays a quarter, Twenty a hundred, nothing shorter.

O thou that hearest prayer, 'tis said, Give me this day my daily bread; But if I don't get turkey too, 'till ens things was as now I do.

Harry Ignot Kupman.

The Belfry.

This is the Nun's bell—harsh-toned, like their creed, It clings its call to worship; on the ear It smiles like Peter's sword; waxes rage and fear In those whose lives are not in check. Indeed.

Five hundred years this bell made Nature bleed, Rearing whilst women found a living grave In shame of their fair bodies which Jah gave, Preparing to pay on an unpleasant show.

Of passion's suicide; it did not scream A loud to waken when the nightmare shed Its terrors round their sleep, and in a dream They felt a phantom God, it might be said; "Die, Sisters, rather than take vows which bind The body when the soul's outgrown that mind."

Miriam Davell.
Liberty.

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As to the freeing of vacant land, I do not remember to have heard that this would destroy any but "speculative" values. There may be a greater relief at first, while the vacant land was being taken up. But certainly within a short time — within a year, I should say — all land which had any special advantages or peculiar soil character would be bought up, and these special advantages would be in the hands of the occupiers.

On the other hand, it must be remembered that, if any economic rent at all advances in prosperity, it will naturally tend to increase this rent. And liberty to cause an advance in prosperity.

Again, when vacant land is free, cities can be settled more compact; this will intensify the peculiar advantages of city life, and thereby increase the demand for city and suburban land. The effect of free vacant land would, I imagine, be analogous to that of rapid transit, which was expected to decrease rent, but has not.

How, then, is economic rent to be got out of the way?

STEPHEN T. BRYANT.

Liberty has never stood with those who profess to show on strictly economic grounds that economic rent must disappear or even decrease as a result of the application of the Anarchistic principle. It sees no chance for that factor in the human constitution which makes competition such a powerful influence — namely, the disposition to buy in the cheapest market — to act directly on economic rent in a way to reduce it.

This disposition to buy, which in a free market is fatal to all other forms of usury, is on the contrary the mainstay of economic rent, whether the market be free or restricted. When, through freedom of banking, it shall become possible to furnish money at cost, no one will pay for money more than cost, and hence interest on money, as well as on all capital consisting of commodities which money will buy and to the production of which there is no natural limit, will necessarily disappear. But the occupant of land who is enabled, by its superiority, to under- sell his neighbor and at the same time to re- sell, through his greater volume of business, more profit than his neighbor, enjoys this economic rent precisely because of his opportunity to exploit the consumer's disposition to buy cheap.

The effect of freedom is not felt here in the same way and with the same directness that it is felt elsewhere.

There are other grounds, however, some of them indirectly economic, that justify the belief of the Anarchist that a condition of freedom will gradually modify to a very appreciable extent the advantage enjoyed by the occupant of superior land. Take first one that is indirectly economic. I agree with my correspondent that great cities are not destined to disappear. But I believe also that they will be able to maintain their existence only by offering their advantages at a lower price than they now exact. When the property is mine, I claim it, to do as I please with; if it is not mine, it is impertinent, dishonest, and tyrannical for any body to forcibly take it from the land-occupant on the pretence that it is mine and to spend it in my name. It is precisely this, however, that the Single-Taxers propose, and it is this that makes the Single Tax a State Socialistic measure. There was never anything more absurd than the supposition of some Single-Taxers that this tax can be harmonized with Anarchism.

But I now and then meet a Single-Taxer who allows that the government, after confiscating this economic rent, has no right to devote it to
any so-called public purposes, but should distribute it to the people. Supposing the people to be entitled to the economic rent, this certainly looks on its face like a much more sane and more honest proposition than that of the ordinary Single-Taxer. But the question at once arises: Who is to pay the government officials for their services in confiscating the economic rent and handing me my share of it? And how much is to be paid them? And who is to decide these matters? When I reflect that under such a Single-Tax system the occupants of superior land are likely to become the politicians and to tax back from the people to pay their salaries what the people have taxed out of them as economic rent, again I say that if a part of the economic rent is rightly mine, I prefer to leave it in the pocket of the land-owner, since it is bound to ultimately get back there. As M. Schneider, the Carnegie of France, said in a recent interview with a "Figaro" reporter: "Even if we were to have a collectivist system of society and my property should be confiscated, I believe that I am shrewd enough to find a way to feather my nest just the same." M. Schneider evidently understands State Socialism better than the State Socialists as the State Socialists and Single-Taxers will have attained their paradise when they are robbed by officials instead of by landlords and capitalists.

In my view it is idle to discuss what shall be done with the economic rent after it has been confiscated, for I distinctly deny the propriety of confiscating it at all. There are two ways, and only two, of effecting the distribution of wealth. One is to let it distribute itself in a free market in accordance with the natural operation of economic law; the other is to distribute it arbitrarily by authority in accordance with statute law. One is Anarchism; the other is State Socialism.

The latter, in its worst and most probable form, is the exploitation of labor by officialdom, and at best a régime of spiritless equality secured at the expense of liberty and progress; the former is a régime of liberty and progress, with as close an approximation to equality as is compatible therewith. And this is all the equality that we ought to have. A greater equality than is compatible with liberty is undesirable.

The moment we invade liberty to secure equality we enter upon a road which knows no stopping-place short of the annihilation of all that is best in the human race. If absolute equality is the ideal; if no man must have the slightest advantage over another,—then the man who achieves greater results through superiority of muscle or skill or brain must not be allowed to enjoy them. All that he produces in excess of that which the weakest man can produce must be taken from him and distributed among his fellows.

The economic rent, not of land only, but of strength and skill and intellect and superiority of every kind, must be confiscated. And a beautiful world it would be when absolute equality had thus been achieved! Who would live in it? Certainly no freeman.

"Liberty, 244"

there are people who say: We will have no liberty, for we must have absolute equality. I am not of them. If I can go through life free and rich, I shall not cry because my neighbor, being naturally poorer, is made all men rich; it will not make all men equally rich. Authority may (and may not) make all men equally rich in purse; it certainly will make them equally poor in all that makes life best worth living.

"The Results of Reform."

The latest freak of Farmers' Alliance paternalism is the prohibition of the sale in Boston of oleomargarine in quantities of less than ten pounds. The bringing about of this invasion of Equal Freedom, to farmers tell me, was influenced by the farmers, and oleomargarine was being sold and used in the place of butter.

Of course it is being used in the place of butter, and the very fact of its regulation of its sale is evidence of as bad class legislation as the farmers themselves ever complained of. Not only in the abstract is it an interference with individual liberty, but it works the greatest hardship to the poor, to whom it would be a great benefit to be able to use butterfat at seventeen cents per pound in place of butter, the price of which ranges between twenty-five and thirty-five cents per pound.

But the farmer thinks he should be protected in the production of butter, although that commodity never before sold for so high a price as it did in competition with butterfat. It is natural, to be sure, that the farmer should wish to be protected, since he has seen another class protected very largely at his expense for so long; but as an act of retaliation this effort is inefficient, for the simple and very obvious reason that these other protected people would never use oleomargarine anyway, while the comparatively poor and unprotected workingman would be glad to use it, could he buy it at retail. The ten-pound limit will not affect in the least the hotelkeepers and other large consumers of butterfat; it is the poor man,—against whom it is to be presumed the farmer has no grievance,—and the poor man alone, who must suffer, that the butter producer may be protected.

For private reasons I do not use butterfat, but, if I were perfect, I would not despise the use of butter fat so long as the producers of that article demand and succeed in obtaining forcible suppression of the sale of its substitute.

C. L. Swartz.

"The Downfall."

Many and diverse are the opinions that have been expressed concerning the growing wealth of American cities, of course, first salary seems its pages for some point of alleged importance,—or obscurity—upon which to condemn it. In this, however, notwithstanding the tendency to disappointment, now, having failed in fals., the majority of them are ready to crown this work the author's masterpiece.

That Zola possesses to an almost inimitable extent the faculty of painting the horrible in its nature colors, no one who has read him will deny. In realism he is certainly in his element, and vivid pictures of life and character flow from his pen as paths from that of Dickens. Many, many compare him to the great English novelist.

Now one cannot follow Jean MacQuarrie and Maurice Levasseur through the weary marches, caused by the vacillating policies of those in command, the battle of Sedan; the captivity on the peninsula of Ijmas, with all the concomitant horrors: the siege of Paris; the battles of Blaye and Mortain; and the Com- mune,—no one. I say, with common sense and intelligence, can live these scenes, as Zola forces him to live them, and retain aught but a gen ine disgust and horror for the French army is for the picture itself, not for the painter, that one experiences these sensations. In no sense can it be said to "smell of the sewer and the dungeon," although the literary "I" of the Boston "Transcript" finds it "the most disgusting old Zola of yours."

This, however, is somewhat counteracted by the statement in an adjoining column that "Thérèse Raquin" is the same author, and probably the greatest study in literature of nervous prostration or mental aberration due to giving one's self up to "crime"; with which I am ready to agree, since I believe that the reading of that book would render it well-nigh impossible for a person to commit premeditated murder.

But the man who is probably better equipped than anyone else to criticize Zola and "La Débâcle" intelligently is the Vicompte de Vogt, who served contemporaneously in the same brigade in which the author places his characters and the centre of his action; and, aside from the fact that it brings to life memories that are more than painful, M. de Vogt is unimpeachable in his judgment of the author's "Revue." He would have us believe that some of Zola's works have been "disfigured," says that it is "the most remarkable book which has been issued from the press during the summer."

I do not pretend to say what Zola's masterpiece is, but I am absolutely certain that, having written "Money," to produce greater work Zola must choose something other than a social clerical novel. In a recent number of the "Fortnightly Review" George Moore says his description of the cavalry charge at Sedan "is one of the finest passages in French prose, and the battle-piece in particular that description is something grand, especially to him who delights in such blood and slaughter, and also to him who can admire the beautiful in literature no matter what the content of some such subject may be, and I class it as M. Moore classes it, in my opinion, to forget Hugo and "Les Misérables."

The story which Zola uses as a thread upon which to hang his social novel, is as artificial as it is crude, but the interest that it falls for short of being a well-executed plot. Both as a work of art and as an educator the love affair of Jean and Sivine is practically worthless. The real value of the book lies not in the story, but, as I have said, in the view of the various classes of this little man made from the cerebral crities—it is invaluable, and it will live in the annals of literature so long as human nature retains a semblance of its present status.

C. L. SWARTZ.

"The Wage System' and 'Slavery."

(R. W. Reynolds in the Engineering and Mining Journal.)

There is much loose talk, sincere and otherwise, about the wages system: as a form of slavery: as an anti-Christian and clausy apparatus, proving itself inadequate to the work of the modern world; or as a transitional stage, on the road to something better. The last view is probably that of the most sincere, intelligent, and educated of his host critics. It is hard to use in speeches and articles; it assails nobody; so long as it is expressed in optimistic generalities only, it can not easily be refused, because everybody must admit that everything in the present state of the universe is "transitional,"—hence, why not any given feature of the present social order? Finally, it possesses for many good people the irresistible fascination that it can be stated in terms of "Evolution." Having but recently got over being shocked by Darwin, however, they are now turning the tables with a vengeance, and shock ing the philosophers by their recognition of evolution everywhere, and their use of it as a theme for social progress.

But the real anxieties of evolution (even if analogy were a safe guide in this field) do not favor the conclusion thus drawn. Darwin could have told his scep tical disciples that natural selection has never improved upon the vertebrate type of structure, and Spencer
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