Problems of Anarchism.

PROPERTY.

In explanation of the belief in government agency as the proper method for getting rid of existing social and economic maladjustments I wish to offer a few suggestions. While it is not true that society is more hopelessly diseased or economic conditions more unjust now than in former times, it is well to observe that much greater attention is directed to social problems and more efforts made to understand them than ever before. The propertyless class, the wage-workers, who bear the greatest burden, are realizing the extent of the weight that keeps them down and growing more discontented and ready to grasp at any means which seems to promise an improvement of their lot. At least an influential part of organized labor plans its faith to governmental extension in the control of industry and property, and nearly all the working classes favor some amount of authoritative regulation—in their own interests, of course—of the existing conditions. Add to this that they hold the semblance of political power through manhood suffrage, and that statesmen and politicians profess, before election most unreservedly, to do the bidding of the majority and enact such laws as Demos shall demand. And as a result we find the doctrinaire-collectivist, the opportunist reformer who wants to turn over the whole machinery of civilization to the all-wise and all-just majority and its still wiser and juster representatives and official servants, who will banish forever want and injustice and straightway usher in a new era. Of this type the more wily discard the notion of performing the feat by a sudden uprising or popular barricades revolution, and insist that the process must be gradual, bit today, another bit tomorrow; believing that existing institutions can be socialized by popular vote, they go in for municipalization of gas and electric works, railroad and land nationalization, and kindred schemes; a policy that is finally to put an end to capitalism and wage slavery. The position is something after this fashion. A man comparatively weak, who has been incessantly clubbed by a superior, at length finds himself in possession of the stick and immediately starts to belabor his adversary, forgetting that the removal of his original weakness should make the weapon lose its terror for him.

The working classes, becoming more alive to their inferior status and dimly realizing that authority is the weapon which has held them down, would now seize it to work their sweet will by short-hour laws, property confiscation, and government control, but fail utterly to comprehend that the weakness which brings about their oppression is the point which should first be re-formed.

If the laboring classes, instead of extending the scope and power of government, which still retains its primal character, though nominally controlled by the majority of the people, would curtail its authority, take away its ability to privilege and protect the property class at the expense of the rest, and chase the way for free initiative and industrial effort, which would at once diminish their economic weakness, they would then take a step on the road to social independence, and not merely be changing places with those they deem their oppressors.

All schemes of communal property and municipal or State Socialism rest their claim to support on the ground that they will be directly and primarily beneficial to the wage-workers. Thus these schemes imply that this class labors under peculiar disabilities and grievances from which other classes of society are free. If this be the fact, and we insist justly—"as it must under the circumstances of economic oppression, then its precise nature should first be ascertained. The law of equal liberty, according to our demonstration, entitles each individual to the full benefit of his energies, the product of his activities exercised without hindering others to enjoy the like. Now the working classes as a whole either do or do not under existing regulations benefit the full extent of their industrial efforts. If they do receive the full return, it would be manifestly unjust to alter things so that they would obtain more than this, for others would get less than the equivalent of their activities. And if, on the other hand, the wage-workers do not reap the rewards due to their own acts and services, justice is not fulfilled, and the first duty of the reformer be to learn the causes in order to establish conditions whereby it will be possible for each and all to receive the whole benefits of their individual exertions. When, as before observed, the existing injustice is economic, the reform, to be effective must be of like character. But none of the schemes of collective Socialism and communal property meet the question in this manner. They aim at doing something, anything that will on the face of it compensate the propertyless wealth producers for the injustice from which they suffer. It may be free education, cheap transportation, compulsory short hours, public libraries, municipal profit-saving industries, government organization of labor, or nationalization of land, and every such measure will have the effect of the property owners' incomes, capitalist profits, and inheritance, or through the suppression of competition, individual contract, and private property; the spirit in each case is coercive and brutal, and whatever the name of these reforms offers a permanent and scientific solution of the economic problem underlying the whole subject. The belief in them, however, seems to me perfectly intelligible, and arises naturally out of historic conditions, and in the attempt to retain those beliefs and superstitions due to the fact that these schemes of communal property and municipal or State Socialism rest their claim to support on the ground of their supposed benefits to the wage-workers.
The development of character is perfectly possible, and by very force of spontaneous reaction constantly occurs, under all conditions of tyranny.

I believe I stand pretty near where you place me. I believe in goodness and in the urging of its importance. I believe it is necessary to be just what you meant at, "good in order to be happy." I believe it is necessary, whether in the initiation of justice, to have a majority of character in order to be free.

Fraternally,

J. W. LLOYD.

This letter is chiefly remarkable for the calm way in which it ignores the argument presented in the article to which it is offered as an answer. In that article it maintains that we already have the amount of character necessary to the securing of liberty, and that the thing now lacking is less an addition to this amount of character than the acquisition of sufficient knowledge of political economy to enable us to understand what liberty will do for us and therefore inspire us to desire and demand it. In answer to this not one word does Mr. Lloyd say, but instead, after lecturing me for I don't know what, he says that I am too logical, he adds the force of example to his logical precepts by inferring from my opposition to the gospel of goodness that I am opposed to goodness itself. Which of course does not follow and is not the case. But by this method, which I suppose to be "something higher than Logic," I am represented as kicking against the pricks. If Mr. Lloyd had more of that mathematical accuracy in thought and criticism at which he sneers, he would not fall into such gross blunders. Or, to put it in another way by combining his own metaphor with that of the street, if he had given me a danc ing with one leg on a mathematical point, he would oftener get there with both feet.

Goodness, however desirable, does not come, to any important extent, by preaching. Truth, or the knowledge of truth, only comes that way, but not goodness. If, contrary to my view, the supply of character for the purpose of liberty is still insufficient, it will increase, if at all, by further developing under conditions, not of talk, but, as Mr. Lloyd himself says, of tyranny. In that case Mr. Lloyd, with his higher and deeper conception of Anarchism, may be permitted to take a look somewhere. His services will not be needed for some time yet. For, even after enough character has been accumulated, it will still remain to comprehend and realize the low Anarchism of Logic, the shallow Anarchism of Contract, the narrow Anarchism of the Mutual Bank, before Mr. Lloyd can begin to make his gospel effective. And when that stage is at last reached, liberty will prove a better gospelizer than he. There is a saying ofaine's, which Zola has used after him, that "vice and virtue are products, like sugar and vitirol." I commend it to Mr. Lloyd's consideration. And with this quotation I offer him another, not from a logician, but from a poet, my old friend Sidney Morse, which thinks with me that we already have a majority of character. The lines have appeared in Liberty before, but will bear repetition:

"Be good and you'll be happy, then,"
Said my good friend to me.
I felt quite foolish at the time; just why I could not see.
I could not plead the opposite; I could not say I shan't but somehow felt it all to be.

The poorest kind of cast.
Tis for lack of goodness, man,
The flames of hell are lit to hear a world-wide experience. Proclaim: 'Tis lack of wit.

In conclusion, I have a few questions for Mr. Lloyd, inspired by his opening paragraphs. Does his Anarchism that is higher than logic mean positive or negative conflict with logic? If it does conflict with logic, does it also conflict with the multiplication table? If it does not conflict with logic, can it be restored to the overthrow of a position sustained by logic? Has such resort any advantage in point of merit over the cry of hair-splitting raised by one who has been forced into a corner? Is it not Luciferian in its purgality? Does it not belong to the latitude of Topka, and ought it not to be confined to that locality? In any case, is it deserving of notice?

A Chicago gentleman, when recently renewing his subscription to Liberty, which had lapsed for a time, improved the opportunity to write: "There is but one thing which I cordially dislike about the paper, and that is what I esteem to be the very unjust treatment of Mr. George." Regarding which the editor wishes to say that he will cheerfully withdraw his hostile judgment upon Mr. George's personality whenever it shall be shown to be wrong. This judgment is not at all biased by the fact that the editor is seriously at variance with Mr. George on questions of political economy. The editor numbers among his very best friends some of Mr. George's most ardent and not so ardent disciples, to whom would not be the testimony of the fact that a Single Taxer is by no means necessarily a humbug. But a close watch upon Mr. George's methods for many years has convinced him beyond any doubt that the leader of the Single Taxers is a humbug of the very first water. The grounds of this conviction have been stated repeatedly in these columns, and there is no occasion for their repetition. When the editor first arrived at this conviction, he held it, as far as he now knows, absolutely alone. For expressing it he was then, as now, frequently expostulated with by Mr. George's friends. Since he has met so many of these friends, one by one, reluctantly abandon their faith in Mr. George's character and finally denote him most bitterly. Some of these friends, too, have had better opportunities than the editor of knowing Mr. George. He knows him only as a public man, having met him but once, and then for a few moments only; they have known him in private also, and very intimately. Is it any wonder, then, that the editor, seeing his own judgment thus borne out, holds it more vigorously than ever? Of course, there are other friends of Mr. George who, like Liberty's Chicago critics, have not yet found him out. It is but natural that they should feel indignation when their hero is denounced. But let them meet the charges and the evidence which the editor and the others have brought against Henry George. They are ready to listen and to be convinced.

In a paragraph approving my refusal to address the Labor Congress at the World's Congress of Socialists, H. C. Boechtold, editor of the Chicago "Puckel," takes occasion to say: "But Mr. Tucker is undoubtedly wrong in his definition of Individualism when he says: 'The Individualist believes that cooperation for defense and protection should be compulsory.' Where is this written? There is certainly nothing in the word 'Individualism' that would justify or indicate such an interpretation; the contrary, rather, we should think. If I had made the statement criticized in reference to Individualism (with a small 'i'), Mr. Boechtold's criticism would have been sound. But I made my statement solely of Individualism (with a capital 'I'). There is as much difference between individualism and Individualism as between democracy and Democracy. By democracy popular government is meant, by Democracy the platform of the Democratic party. Similarly individualism is the doctrine of Anarchism, but Individualism is the platform of the body of persons known as Individualists.

This platform includes compulsory taxation. If Mr. Boechtold wishes to know where it is written, I refer him to the writings of such champions of Individualism as Herbert Spencer and J. H. Levy.

I lately heard a Single Taxer declare that one of his strong reasons for favoring the Single Tax is that this measure taxes taxation voluntary, since any one who would avoid taxation can do so by avoiding the holding of land. This same Single Taxer is an ardent free trader. How he would have laughed, had a protectionist told him that the tariff makes taxation voluntary, since any one who would avoid taxation can do so by avoiding the use of articles on which duties are levied.

Numerous complaints have reached me of the non-arrival of Liberty of March 18. I think, however, that in nearly all cases the copies eventually arrived at their respective destinations. Hence I have neglected requests for duplicates. But any subscriber still lacking the issue of March 18 can get a copy by applying to me, or by renewing his application if he has already applied.

Besides the cloth-bound edition of "Instead of a Book," I have an edition in paper covers, printed on very cheap paper, the price of which could defy any idiot or negro. For any one desiring to preserve the volume to lay the paper edition, it probably will be found useful in the work of propaganda.

A Sublime Theology.

Last January Madame Nordica, the distinguished contralto, paid a professional visit to Chicago. A local paper contained the following happy notice of her visit:

"When Mme. Lillian Nordica stepped into her apartments at the Auditorium last evening, she found ample evidence that all was not well. And it is probable that the enterprisers in those murderous industries, both in fertility of invention and mechanical skill, can successfully compete with government works. The only reason why the latter cannot do so is the interminable congestion of corruption, jobbery, soft berths, and control of expenditure with political power. A history of the British government dockyards and arm factories and of attempts at reform would bring all this home to the reader with conclusive force, but he need not be left, however, to seek out the facts for himself. The purpose of this chapter has been to show that, although we cannot acquire in any form of collective property a deduction from individual freedom, yet we should recognize the sources of the movement to be deeper than mere ephemeral agitation, while at the same time we must discontinue the conception of private property as a deduction from individual freedom from the actual property conditions that now exist.

WM. BAXTER