Mr. Ballie Explains.

To the Editor of Liberty:

It would be injudicious on my part to enter into a controversy on questions arising out of the articles now appearing in Liberty while there are still running in the present instance your somewhat premature criticisms call for a word of explanation. If I were attacking merely the "man of straw" theories so kindly formulated for me by the editor, or again if I could accept them as qualified and defended by him, the present section of my articles would never have been written. Why have I failed to clearly state the iron law that I attack? Because in chapter 2 I intended nothing more than preliminary hints as to the position I meant to take, having, before it was printed, completed the parts that attempt to grapple in a direct and systematic manner with the fallacies indicated in that chapter. I admit that by introducing the views I meant to set forth before I had reached the proper place for their full discussion I committed an error which has hitherto open to the editor’s charge.

That the iron law of wages and the wage-fund theory are but two sides of the same thing is a point on which I can readily agree with the editor, and I believe my remarks in the article in question indicate that idea. When he hears the case I shall put forward, and when the arguments I deem necessary to establish it are before the readers of Liberty, I hope to come to an understanding with the editor, though I do not anticipate an acceptance of my position by him. This will be when the present section is completed.

Francis A. Walker no more than Henry George can be credited with demolishing the wage-fund theory, for all that either has added was put forth in English in Thruston. For erroneous estimates of Walker’s discoveries I am not responsible.

My second-hand and unreliable information about Josiah Warren’s notions of value were obtained from “Equitable Commerce” by that estimable pioneer as well as from Andrews’s exposition of Warren’s ideas in “Science of Society.” Warren’s theory of value is at bottom the same as Marx’s, and both thinkers were undoubtedly aware that an hour of one man’s labor is not equivalent to an hour of every other man’s. I disagree with both, but not because I overlook the latter point. The inadequacy of Warren’s economics and Marx’s analysis of capital will be dealt with in their place in the series.

The editor’s criticisms of previous articles seemed to me to arise out of a difference in our ethical points of view that are not fundamental to the central principles of Anarchism, nor were they on a question of economics, so that readers could judge for themselves without further explanation from me or the danger of misconception on essential questions. Pratements,yours,

Wm. Ballie.

[...]

presentation of Warren is worthless. He tells us that Warren was "undoubtedly aware that an hour of one man’s labor is not equivalent to an hour of every other man’s." Does he mean by this that Warren held this view privately, but did not express it in his writings? If he means this, I deny it, and am ready to prove Mr. Ballie in error by quotations. Or does Mr. Ballie mean to admit that Warren upheld this view in his writings? If so, why did Mr. Ballie in his previous article represent him as holding another and different view? His defence against my criticism is a contradiction of himself without an confession. I shall give my best consideration to Mr. Ballie’s coming demonstration of the "inequality of Warren’s economics," but he must not misstate Warren’s economics unless he desires to be called to account. — Editor Liberty.

Press Opinions of “Instead of a Book.”

Under the heading, “The Logic of Liberty,” the St. Louis “Republic,” the leading Democratic daily of the West, gives the post of honor in its book review department to the following article on “Instead of a Book.” The longer extracts made by the reviewer are here omitted, the criticisms being indicated by periods.

Nearly twelve years ago Mr. Benjamin R. Tucker began the publication in Boston of a small fortnightly journal called Liberty. Of all titles that have been chosen for periodicals, none has been more true and appropriate, the little eight-page sheet edited by Mr. Tucker, which has found favor with a select few thinkers in every quarter of the globe, being a consistent advocate of Liberty, dealing with trenchant blows on every side with a logic that is so clear and inclusive that it pleases the reader while confounding his preconceptions. For its motto Liberty has three lines from a poem by John Hay, which reads:

For always in thine eyes, O Liberty! Shines that high light whereby the world is saved; And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee.

Liberty is still published, and growing in favor with thinkers, and its success is the more remarkable because it is one of the very few periodicals which seek no commercial notices or puffs, and has been steadily ignored by the public press. Books have been inspired by it, other journals of like aim have been called into being in the United States, England, France, Germany, and the Antipodes, yet the general public knows it not. The subject it discusses, however, is probably the most interesting and vital that ever arose or can arise,—the tendency and future form of the social organism. The writer has not seen a recent number of Liberty, but all who, like him, have admired its vigorous and telling arguments, while perhaps differing from its conclusions, will welcome this partial collection of the pages of Mr. Tucker’s writings, in a neat volume, consecutively arranged, and very well indexed, and will look upon it, in spite of its author’s modest depredation, as a fairly complete text-book of "Philosophical Anarchism."
Trade-Union "Coercion.

The decision of the New York Supreme Court in the case of Charles Moran vs. the President of a local assembly of the Knights of Labor is as illogical and unintelligent as most decisions of our courts in cases involving fundamental questions of human right and freedom. Charles Curran was a "scab," a non-union man, and was employed as engineer of the Miller Brewing Company, Rochester. The rights of Labor assembly demanded and secured his discharge, and this led to an action for $10,000 damages. The defence set up by the president of the assembly was that no malice was intended toward the plaintiff, that the discharge was secured in pursuance of a distinct agreement between the assembly and the Brewers' Association, of which the Miller Brewing Company is a member, that no workman should be employed in the brewery who was not a member of the organization. In sustaining the demurrer of the plaintiff, the judge writing the opinion says that "the sole question presented is whether the defendants in what they did were acting lawfully," and concludes that the method of coercion employed by the defendant "not only contravenes one of the fundamental principles of our free institutions, but it likewise violates the spirit if not the letter of a statute of this State." Now an act which violates the letter of the statute is plainly unlawful, but it is not safe to allow our courts to enforce the "spirit" of our statutes, even if the benefit of any reasonable doubt is accorded the defendant. In the present case the benefit of the doubt is given to the plaintiff. What is the statute the spirit, if not the letter, of which the defendant is declared to have violated? The judge refers to the statute which makes it a misdemeanor for an employer to require as a condition of a person's entering or remaining in his employ that he shall not become a member of any labor organization, and argues as follows: "The object of this enactment was doubtless to prevent what the legislature regarded as an improper interference by employers with the rights of their employees; and if it is made illegal for the former to coerce the latter, it is difficult to see why it should not be equally unlawful for one employee to attempt to influence another's action by the same means."
tion are unknown; and the only result I can foresee is chaos.

Furthermore, I cannot expect judges to agree often unless they are guided by principles generally understood, definite enough to be expressed in words, and minute enough in detail to enable a man of average stupidity to use them without missing the point. I am not quite certain which will hold the land if the jury is hung, the man claiming to be the original occupant, or the alleged trespasser whom he seeks to eject; but, unless we can tell at the bar, it is not likely that we shall expect possession to be much more than nine points of the law.

I had not thought of the limitation by area till I read "Instead of a single tax" which said that ground taxes would be levied on the agriculturist, agricultural land to the builder, and the sites of houses to the railroad-builder, under certain limitations which I might define. But I do not want to depend on myself, who am aversely out of sympathy with the idea, for a definition of its meaning. And I cannot even guess at the principle to be applied in some cases. I guess that an Anarchistic jury would decide that Union Square was occupied, but that the little private park on Fourteenth Street, a block or two further west, was vacant for the builder, unless the owner would throw it open to the public. But I cannot guess on what principle they would act, unless on some that would sound very queer in Anarchistic ears.

Secondly, I object to the scheme of free vacant land as thoroughly and needlessly authoritarian. To say that a man shall not spread his business over more than so much area because that he shall not use for himself within a certain territory for certain non-invasive purposes, is a long step on the way toward regulating everybody's business. It would be the most convenient of weapons for all forms of governmentality. I am sure there are places where a jury would find the site of a liquor-saloon vacant on the ground that it was, in their judgment, used for no purpose useful to anybody. But, even if it is the name of the principle of equal liberty, I hardly know where any government gives human stupidity a wider authority over other people's business. And the liberty of judgment allowed to juries has nothing to do with this argument; for the authoritarian character of the law is not at all dependent upon its uniformity.

Under the single tax, on the contrary, the individual regulates all that. Conceiving the single tax as an auction of land, you have the privilege, for which you can out in No. 239, of setting your own price on it by making your bid. Your neighbors expect to charge all they can get for waiving their claims to the liberty of using the land in question. If the site be worth to you, you do not want the land at the terms, and the man whose bid fixed the price gets it. To make up for your disappointment, you get your divided interest in his absolute principle of equal liberty, which is easy to conceive of cases where equal liberty must be promptly ignored. If, for instance, a malevolent individual were to go up in a balloon with a load of dynamite bombs, taking with him by force an innocent and unwilling party, and, locating the balloon directly over a city, were to begin raining the bombs upon the inhabitants, it would certainly be proper and necessary for the latter to riddle the balloon with bullets, though thereby they should send to instant death the innocent occupant of the balloon and thus do both equal good, no absolute principle of equal liberty is more than nominal in such cases, and it is easy to conceive of cases where equal liberty must be promptly ignored. If, for instance, a malevolent individual were to go up in a balloon with a load of dynamite bombs, taking with him by force an innocent and unwilling party, and, locating the balloon directly over a city, were to begin raining the bombs upon the inhabitants, it would certainly be proper and necessary for the latter to riddle the balloon with bullets, though thereby they should send to instant death the innocent occupant of the balloon and thus do both equal good, no absolute principle of equal liberty is more than nominal in such cases, and it is easy to conceive of cases where equal liberty must be promptly ignored.

Let it seem to the reader that the occupant's right, under equal liberty, to use his land as he chooses is stated in the foregoing paragraph as a thing absolute and inviolable, I will add that no more in the matter of land than in any other matter do I lay down equal liberty as an absolute principle to be observed in all cases. It is easy to conceive of cases where equal liberty must be promptly ignored. If, for instance, a malevolent individual were to go up in a balloon with a load of dynamite bombs, taking with him by force an innocent and unwilling party, and, locating the balloon directly over a city, were to begin raining the bombs upon the inhabitants, it would certainly be proper and necessary for the latter to riddle the balloon with bullets, though thereby they should send to instant death the innocent occupant of the balloon and thus do both equal good, no absolute principle of equal liberty is more than nominal in such cases, and it is easy to conceive of cases where equal liberty must be promptly ignored.

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The Sociological Index.

This is the first page of a page. The text on this page seems to be a list of advertisements and classifieds, possibly related to scholarly articles and publications. The text is not clearly legible, but it appears to include terms such as "industrial organization," "political," and "sociology." The page also contains advertisements for books and articles, with prices and dates mentioned.

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Sellers-Lettres.

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INSTEAD OF A BOOK:

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A FRAGMENTARY EXPOSITION OF PHILOSOPHICAL ANARCHISM.

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FINANCE.

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TAXATION.

---

MISCELLANEOUS.

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CLOTH BINDING.

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LIBERTY.

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