Problems of Anarchism.

L 3. THE TRUE FUNCTION OF COMPETITION.

When we remember that the most comprehensive aspect of competition is to be seen in the struggle for work and existence, continually going on among the wage-workers, the supply of laborers always apparently exceeding the demand and so keeping wages down to an average that scarcely covers subsistence; and when the competition is not confined to one industry, but spreads itself without respect for persons throughout every class of workers who sell their labor, and in every country in which modern capitalism has arisen; when the immediate effects of machinery and all improvements in the methods of production are observed to intensify the competition of laborers; and further, when the accumulation of capital itself, by excluding the educated to the common level and adds to the uncertainties and insecurity of the wage-earners’ lot, in creating the burden of life by the ever-present dread of failure and starvation, is it any wonder that competition is regarded upon as a monstrous evil, held up to the working classes by social reformers as the source of all their suffering and, together with the whole system of which it is a part, to be forthwith elimi- nated? Let us admit the fact; competition runs rampant among the toilers, and, besides the efforts of trade unions, determines the inadequate rates of wages they are compelled to accept. But before making up our minds what to do about these cases must form a clear appreciation of the nature of the supposed cause. What is competition, how does it arise, where it is limited, and in what manner is it confined? Is it possible to remove it? If we suppose it to be a force of nature which can be overcome and must therefore be reckoned with and made the best of: The efforts that we observe in the presence of competition, however un- desirable, do not warrant us in rushing at it blissfully, because further evidence is required to show that no other cause contributes to the result and to prove that competition, exclusive of all other forces, is the source of the results we deplore.

Competition, as it exists among the mass of workers, is, with good reason, denounced and condemned. When through capitalism enterprise in the expansion of business and creation of new industries workers are in demand and competition for labor runs up wages, it is still an object of suspicion from the laborer’s standpoint. If, by such a process, wages coincide with the value of the laborer’s produce, competition is not deadly in its effect. When, with the accumulation of capital, concentration vastly increases not only the power but the scale of production, makes wealth more plentiful, and drives the capitalists and merchants, and other traders to lower the price of all commodities, can it be denied that the result is beneficial to the wage-earners? We are told that competition among the capitalists leads also to low wages, to injury, adulteration, and all manner of deception; that it is responsible for the miserable wages of unskilled laborers, that women and children are driven out of our cities that throw them by thousands on the streets to eke out a living. Also it is said that competition is the parent of monopoly, that it drives the capitalists to combine, and gives us the trusts by means of which they rob the people with impunity.

But this kind of reasoning is superficial. The law of equal freedom gives every man the right to carry on his activities in any way he may choose so long as no one else is forcibly prevented from doing likewise. His liberty to produce, to sell, and to make contracts with whomever among free men chooses to agree with him cannot be set aside; it is the very essence of freedom’s law, which we must either reject altogether or else admit that those things are to be allowed. The right to property entails the power to dispose of it. Hence, the fundamental principle in competition we have already seen the justice of and established. Competition cannot exist without freedom; where it is abolished today, a close analysis reveals, not the evil effect of competition, but the need of more liberty.

Any theory of society that implies the downfall of competition is in the same position as moral notions that proclaim the negation of self and seek through universal subservience, which they, say, should be the guiding principle of each individual’s conduct, to attain social perfection. The utility of this is exemplified in the case of the State. That any government, after a hundred years of experience in reconciling the theory with individual practice, leaves the management of character and conduct precisely the same as before,--that is, selfish. Egoism is demonstrably a natural, necessary, and wholly inescapable force, which may be directed but never destroyed. Competition is simply the same force in the economic field. It is the necessary outcome of the relations of men with one another; the more pronounced it is, the freer they become. To eliminate it is neither possible nor desirable, but to direct it is within the sphere of intelligence. Like every other force that arises naturally and results from known causes, it is an end whose purpose is essential and beneficial that no artificial arrangement can substitute or perform its work.

What essential function, then, in the social economy does competition serve? Remember, it is but a means to an end, and as such a means must be judged. That end is for each individual to find his most fitting place in society. We shall presently see that all the conditions essential to complete competition are not now fulfilled, and therefore the ideal results of its realization cannot be expected nor obtained. The individuals composing society do not yet find the sphere to which they are best adapted, or, to use an old metaphor, round men get throng into square holes and square men wriggle in holes that are round. The right man in the right place is a worthy ideal, and the more general the action of competition the more is this ideal fulfilled. Indeed, the degree in which this function is attained is the measure of the value of competition and its only justification.

If we attempt to imagine a society without competition and the absence of demand for money and prices, we must either blot out from our minds the great complex communities of modern civilization with their unconscious interdependence, or else recreate some hitherto unknown mechanism which will instantly replace and fulfill the functions performed by them in the world today. Every Utopian and Communist scheme formulated that attempts to do without the enormous competitive forces replaces them by a monarchical and inescapable hierarchy, or else, like the Communist Anarchists, ignores the necessity for any machinery to adjust economic activities to their needs. This view avoids the choice between a newly evolved competition or a mere arrangement and some form of authoritarian regulation, the force of power or of numbers, authority or democracy. Any theory of society that denies competition one of its cornerstones is bound to replace it by an artificial coercive force (it cannot be replaced by any natural uncoerced force, as the State Socialists, or else involve itself in the same contradiction and absurdity that cripples the school of Communists just mentioned, who, while denying that competition is indispensable, believe in individual freedom, the natural outcome of which, as we have seen, is competition. For, if they proclaim liberty and ignore the need for an economic mechanism, which competition, etc., now supplies, they exist a chaotic and unbalance condition to the dignity of an ideal; otherwise, they must face the issue and admit the need of economic order which arises from the action of competitive forces in a state of individual freedom. In face of this economic necessity the Communists are logically compelled to either stand with the authoritarianism, accept a chaotic ideal, or admit a competitive basis as the only machinery for securing economic order in a free society.

I have already indicated the need of ascertaining whether the evil effects of competition arise under all the circumstances and different phases in which its working is observed, before we can proclaim it to be the real and only cause of such evils, or attempt to cure them by its overthrow. But a little thought and unbiased inquiry will once more demonstrate, if certain conditions is competition opposed to the welfare of the laborer, and that in its widest operation it is wholly a reflection of its effects. Every modern improvement that makes society richer raises the condition of the masses, all the methods that facilitate wealth production and distribution, the countless advantages of this over all preceding generations of men, can be traced to the breakdown of status and privilege and consequent growth, internal and general comprehensiveness of competition. It is the only known antidote to social stagnation, the mainspring of industrial progress, the whip that drives useful humanity towards general well-being and happiness. What seem its shortcomings are really traceable to its restriction through various causes. The supply of labor in channels where it appears to always exceed demand will be found to be due to removable causes maintained by special interest upheld by law and authority, and only possible because of the ignorance of the victims. The demand for labor in like manner is limited, the natural channels for adjusting the activities of the producers to their needs are by custom and law choked up, the means made subservient to class interests, and thus competition is one-sided, its benefits diminished and main purpose ignored. Institutions that maintain land monopoly, creating artificial values which without legal instrument could not exist, erect the mechanism of exchange, which becomes more and more important with the development of industry and trade, into a close monopoly, permit wealth to flow toward the holders, and fail to apportion rewards to the value of services performed,--such institutions are the disturbing elements in the way of a rational society and must be laid bare, their precise nature and action understood, and their uselessness and vicious influence established, before intelligent reform is possible.

* See No. 26 for preceding chapter.

 Blind Content.

[Editorial]

A mind satisfied with the present will be careful not to trouble itself about the future.
LIBERTY.

Issued Weekly at Two Dollars a Year: Single Copies, Four Cents.

Editor and Publisher:

Office of Publishing, 146 Liberty Street.

Post-office Address: LIBERTY, P. O. Box No. 182, New York, N. Y.

Established at New York in Second Class Post Office.

NEW YORK, N. Y., JUNE 17, 1859.

In publishing past and recent, the last statistics of abolition lo-

tics, the Revolution at stake in one side or the other of the

tensions, the ghastly triumphs of the great and the small, the

groups of the revolutionary, the cutting-knife of the department clerk, all these

(Continued from the Liberty of the last week."

The appearance in the editorial column of art-

cles over other signatures than the editor's initial in-
dicates that the editor approves their central purpose and

general tenor, though he does not hold himself respon-
sible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in

other part of the paper of articles by the same or other

writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in

such respect, disposition of them being governed largely by

motives of convenience.

A Radical Publication Fund.

Several weeks ago I was much surprised at rece-

ceiving from Liberty's friends in Denver, who are ever

active in Anarchist work, the sum of fifty dollars to serve as a nucleus of a fund for

the more effective publication of Liberty. At that

time I happened to be devising a plan for the

accomplishment of the same end in a less di-

rect way,—namely, the building up, through the

central office of a publishing business which would

not only be immensely

servicible in itself for propaganda but would

ultimately furnish a permanent support for Lib-

ey. Accordingly, about four weeks ago I

mailed a copy of the following circular, accom-

panied in each case by a special letter, to nearly

every person who had subscribed to the fund for

the publication of "Instead of a Book," omitting

a few to whom I intended to make a more spe-

cific appeal later:

It is proposed to establish a fund for the publica-

tion of radical literature, including novels, essays, and any original tracts;

with the principal problems of the day in the light of individual liberty.

The plan is this:

The subscriber to co-operate for the purpose shall agree to contribute to the fund a specific amount quarterly, the minimum contribution to be $1.00 quarterly, or a trifle more than one

cent a day. Those who are willing to agree to contribute a larger sum, $2.00 quarterly, or three dollars, or five, or ten.

These payments, however, shall not be in the

nature of an outright gift, but simply advance deposits for which value will be returned later in the shape of the books and pamphlets to be published. An account will be opened with each subscriber, and every payment will be given as the payments are made. The publisher will be at liberty to use the fund which thus accumulates, in connection with his own capital, for the publication of works radical in thought or tendency. When he shall thus publish a book or pamphlet, he will mail one copy to each contributor to the fund, and charge each contributor with one copy at the retail price. Any contributor who subscribes more than one copy of any particular book will be entitled to receive, without further payment, as many copies as he may desire, up to the limit of the amount standing to his credit.

For the first year it will not be possible to publish books very frequently, and consequently each contributor's credit will exceed his pur-

chases, unless he should take a number of copies. But each year there would be a greater frequency of publication than the year before, and the publications of the previous years would continue to be sold to the general public; the income would thus be increased and the deficits lessened correspondingly. Even these contributions, however, must not be looked on too lightly, for every copy of each book would find that these purchases would equal or exceed their quarterly contributions. Thus every contributor would ultimately get full value for his money.

Any contributor desiring to discontinue his quarterly payments will be at liberty to do so at any time, but shall be entitled to the part of anything standing to his credit, except in the shape of books.

The inauguration of this plan is promptly by the publication of "Instead of a Book," the idea being to generalize a method which in a specific case has proved so fruitful. The subscribers for "Instead of a Book" appear to be well pleased with the outcome, and, although the publisher will not be able to again publish books of such large a size at so low a price as $1.00, he expects to abundantly satisfy all his patrons. It is hoped, therefore, that after "Instead of a Book," and many others beside, will authorize the appending of his name to the following agreement, for as large a sum as his ability will allow.

We, the undersigned, hereby agree to pay quarterly to Benj. R. Tucker the sums set opposite our respective names in the annexed list to publish books and pamphlets in thought or tendency; with the proviso that we shall each receive one copy of each book or pamphlet thus published, and as many more copies as each may desire up to the limit of the amount standing to his credit.

Although there has now been abundant time in which to hear from all the persons to whom this circular was sent, the responses thus far received fall far short of my anticipations. I had supposed that out of this select list of about one hundred and seventy-five persons nearly one hundred and fifty would answer favorably, and that enough of these would pledge two dollars or three dollars each per quarter to bring the average quarterly payment up to one dollar and a half per subscriber. It will be seen below, from the subscription list as it now stands, that this average has been nearly susta-
ned, but the number of subscribers—instead of one hundred and fifty, is at present only forty. The following are the pledges that have been received:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Subscription</th>
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<tr>
<td>Evad Hammar, Ogema, Wis.</td>
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<td>Stephen T. Byington, New York</td>
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<td>Otto Schumm, Blytheburn, N. Y.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. J. Cruzan, Manor Station, Pa.</td>
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<td>W. L. Clingey, Meriden, Conn.</td>
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<td>E. Smith, Hackett, N. J.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ellen Battie &amp; Dietrich, Boston, Mass.</td>
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<td>Francis Lake, Dunkirk, N. Y.</td>
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<td>Life of a Hill, Detroit, Mich.</td>
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<td>W. G. Stott, Chicago, Ill.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. L. Haas, Pottstown, Pa.</td>
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<td>C. W. Pease, Waterbury, Conn.</td>
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<td>Sarah A. Bohrer, Loudonville, O.</td>
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<tr>
<td>H. Walter, Sheboygan, Wis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>J. T. Small, Provincetown, Mass.</td>
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<td>A. B. Renne, Hartford, Conn.</td>
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<td>Walter Cruzan, White Ahs, Pa.</td>
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<td>Henry Cohen, Colosse, Colo.</td>
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<td>John Ship, Denver, Colo.</td>
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<td>E. Fetterson, Cheltenham, Ill.</td>
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<td>P. S. Collins, Milwaukee, Wis.</td>
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<td>Geo. W. Potter, Pleasant Bay, N. J.</td>
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<td>James Thierry, Otter Lake, Mich.</td>
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<td>Werner Becklin, Burlington, Ia.</td>
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<td>W. Becklin, Jr., Louisville, Ky.</td>
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<td>Wm. A. Smith, Boston, Mass.</td>
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<td>E. C. Crumbaker, Zanesville, O.</td>
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<td>E. W. Hunsinger, Fort Chester, N. Y.</td>
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<td>C. I. Swartz, New York</td>
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Charlotte G. Hitch, Chicago, Ill., 1.00
Jay Rigby, Sr., Cambria, Va., 2.50
H. Miller, Ann Arbor, Mich., 1.00
Walter Kindsmore, Helena, Mont., 1.00
John Groth, Austin, Ill., 1.00
Wm. H. Sylvester, Newtonville, Mass., 2.00
Geo. W. Evans, Dorchester, Mass., 1.00
A. W. Seaton, El Paso, Texas, 1.00
F. A. Clark, Newark, N. J., 1.00
E. B. McKeen, Boston, Mass., 1.00
Pedro Larramie, South Norwalk, Conn., 1.00

$35.00

Here then, instead of the annual fund of eight or nine hundred dollars for which I had hoped, there is pledged an annual fund of about two hundred dollars only. To this is to be added, as an outright donation for the first year, $500 dollars from the Denver friends, and a few dollars from other sources. It is probable, moreover, that additional answers from the circulars will yet swell the annual pledge to three hundred dollars. But even this is a small amount, considering the magnitude of the work. I am now trying to ascertain the cause of this inadequate result. The stanch friends whose names appear above have done their part; what explains the attitude of others who are conspicuous by their absence? Not poverty surely, except in very rare cases. I should say that not more than twenty persons on the "Instead of a Book" list are so poor that they cannot lay out one cent a day for a purpose which, like this, must be near their hearts.

Is the plan, then, a poor one? Not in the opinion of those who have already subscribed; nearly all of these are enthusiastic over it. I have heard an objection from one man only. He declines to subscribe for books indiscriminately. If a separate subscription list should be started for each book to be published, he would subscribe for a number of the books as he might desire! And pray who wouldn't, if he were able? This gentleman utterly fails to understand the idea involved in the plan. It is cooperative. Here are five hundred people, say, who read radical books. Here are two books proposed for publication. One of them is desired by three hundred out of the five hundred. The other is desired by three hundred, but a different three hundred. It is impossible to publish either if only three hundred of each can be sold. But if the entire five hundred will subscribe for both, then both can be published. In other words, each subscriber is asked to take the small risk of having to buy a book which he doesn't want, in order to secure the great advantage of buying a book which he would very much want, and which otherwise he cannot get at all.

Put, however explicit or inexplicable, the fact remains that the list is very small. Still the nature of the plan is such that, if the faithful few are persistent, "we do not get disheartened by long waiting," must ultimately succeed. We shall be able to do perhaps in five years what we could do in two if all would lend a hand.

Get a head, then, we will. And let as many more join us now as are willing. Is it not a worthy cause? Think of it! Prieston, Stirner, Nietzsche, Humboldt, Spooner, Warren, and many others whose works have never been translated or are out of print,—these to be made accessible to all! The very mention of it would seem sufficient to secure a strong and united effort. Shall it be wanting?
The Legitimation League.

"The Woman" in "Yorkshire Post."

You can invent many curious things by analyzing the advertisements in a local paper. Here is something that caught my eye in the "Yorkshire Post" on Saturday:

**The Legitimation League.**

"Certainly, Mr. Dawson proposes legislation by which every woman who has a child born out of wedlock, and shall attend with the putative father before an official to be named in the Act to swear to the parentage of the child. It will entitle them to all the rights and privileges of a legitimate child."

"I see. But what about it? And has Mr. Dawson a personal interest in legislation?"

"I don’t think he has any hopes of it affecting his own position as the husband of a woman he has no wish to marry. But the six wives do not wish to marry, civil or religious at all, and I believe, if all those wishes were accomplished, he would be very well to marry."

"I am sure you will find that he is the son of the late Mr. T. Dawson, as you know.

"Here, then, I am on the edge of a romance, a voluntary union of Georgeville and Eliza, that of Chopin’s and George Sand."

"With truth, as David, I was asked, "Do I sleep, do I dream, or is it a vision?"

"I found Mr. Dawson in his pleasant residence, Colindale House, was courteously received, and given all the information I asked for. Mr. Dawson looks older than his age, and he is probably the result, perhaps, of dark hair and wide shoulders."

"And I have often noticed in "advanced" society, that a man with shoulder-width is likely to be a very fine man in his future, for they give him the half of his idea of half the idea of half the idea of the idea of half the idea of half the idea of his opinions upon you."

"Do it, other officers of the Legitimation League, take an effort, we don’t want to set ourselves up as a rival to Mrs. Dawson."

"Well, it was the reply, after a moment’s hesitancy."

"Rap not. Mr. Dawson and myself are the chief sufferers in the matter."

"If we do not multiply the legitimations of ch. a born of parents not married?"

"And make it possible, where there is money, for any family to set up a child."

"One has no money, but the other has a great difficulty. In so far as I understand it, Mr. Dawson is very much in this position."

"I don’t want to comment on the man’s wife, but I make the payment by the putative father as enforced by law very much more than it is at present."

"If a man had formed an interest with a woman and left her with a child, let him be a man and try to support it."

"And I make the legal claim very much higher. At present, a putative father cannot be compelled to pay more than 75. 6d. a week."

"Do you expect any public support?"

"We shall see. There is, for instance, a large body of people advertising the legitimating of marriage with a decease’s wife."

"I don’t want to say that they have anything in common with the Legitimation League, but it is a fact that they are advertising the fact that they are attempting to do. But at the same time it is a remarkable fact that the offspring of a man who marries his deceased wife’s sister is illegitimate."

"If this were not so, the man would have acknowledged offspring born out of wedlock, I should suppose that such people as these would avail themselves of some law."

"Have you any object to define your own position in the matter?"

"Certainly not. Ah — breaking off to speak of a "sonly hitched child who stood foolishly in the doorway — run away now, and ask Mamma to come."

"Neither the Mrs. Dawson nor myself believe in marriage."

"Civil or religious?"

"Neither. We both disbelieve in the promise for life."

"The Stain is no connection with the relations of the sexes, in the first place; and, in the second place, we don’t consider, even if it were right for the State to interfere, that it should make the conscience binding on the State."

"My conscience is as free as those of the Dutch."

"Perhaps I am not sufficiently in touch with modern developments of thought in relation to moral questions. At any rate, I confess to feeling started out of my usual course of unceasing, and unable to ask Mr. Dawson’s opinions on the legal and religious safeguards to a monogamist and Christian marriage."

"But there was one question that had to be put."

"I take it your religious views are —"

"I have been a freethinker for many years."

"What would you say in the case of a married man who forms a second alliance with a second woman, unmarried?"

"It is not for me to say my neighbor shall not be a rogue or a polygamist if he likes."

"Obviously, arguments as to the evil of indiscriminate relations of this sort, even with an improved legal remedy, was out of the question with Mr. Dawson, I did not try it."

"During the conversation Mrs. Dawson entered the room — a pleasant, graceful lady — and joined in the expression of her husband’s views on marriage."

"We don’t expect to be popular in this generation," he said, referring to the movement, "nor do we expect Parliament to recognize us in this generation, but I am doing my utmost to alter the law, at present, as to rigid public opinion in the matter until it is time to move."

"The late Mr. T. Dawson was a full length presentation portrait of himself and the living room at Colindale House, was, of course, a great Quaker. It is just possible that this fact gave the present Mr. Dawson his bias towards respectable cohabitation without the formalities of matrimony. For, as he pointed out:"

"In past times Quaker marriages were illegal, and the children were illegitimate. Then an Act was passed which legitimated all Quaker children and made the marriages lawful. My late father was very free with his Quaker friends, and after a Quaker who would be affected by the Act. The Legitimation League is going to register before the passing of an Act to legitimate the offspring of unmarried parents, and the Act will affect them."

"So now you know as much — or nearly as much — as I do about the Legitimation League. It may be added that Mr. Dawson is in very comfortable circumstances, and that his peculiar views on the subject of the relation of the sexes are the outcome solely of solid conviction."

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Radicalism Hidden in Official Garb.

Mr. Lees—Conservative.

I took a walk down to Washington, D. C., last week for the purpose of seeing how the papers in some of the bigger d—d (you may spell it out) if you enjoy it more that way, papers were getting along, and while there I met my old acquaintance, the Congressman, Mr. Lees. I found him as usual, in the office of the Radical League of the District of Columbia, and after a short talk, we went into the subject of Radicalism in the capital of our beloved country, and also found out if the morals of our statesmen were not looking up. I might quote as applying to our power-d-pens, that of the writer under the name of the "Manners and Morals of Our Red Brethren": "Their manners are disgusting, and they blight not morals."

However, it is not absolutely so bad, although I did meet with a certain official who told me it was an in-ternal shame that as he had to go home without an office, simply because a certain cabinet officer had to keep a place for the Republican brother of his charming Aspasia. Still, when young ladies, as one did lately in a Washington paper, that they would "like to meet a Senator or Congressman who would get them a position paying not less than $30 a month," the modesty of the application and the smallness of the salary equally gave me the shivers.

A Radical whom I met in Washington tells me that, while the Departments are honey-combed with Radicalism of every sort, yet it is said that even the brethren have a tacit understanding to cry low and keep it in the dark. Still, I am told that there are some energetic wood-sawyers, even if not all is a, w. g. in. What is said is indeed true, and the glibness and English ambiguities that only the initiates can catch.

I am thinking of petitioning the next Congress to appropriate money enough to inscribe over every door of every department the following quotation from President Grant: "The Department is too much in the hands of the official costume, too much subordination, too much idleness. Science demands an insurrection of thought; now the thought of an official is his salary."
The Sociological Index.

1733. Application of the s.e. to Solution. By the Editor. Social Economist, June. 9 pages.

1847. Industrial Organization.


POLITICS.
1840. The Russian Party. Full text. N. Y. World, June 6. 4000 words.
1873. The Natural Right of Suffrage. By E. P. Stockwell. South Political, June 3. 5 pages.

RELIGION.


1871. Investigator. Investigator, June 7. 1200 words.


SEX.


SOCIALISM.
1873. The Class Struggle. Servants, Strikes, Loans, etc. From the German of F. Kautsky. The People, June 10. 2000 words.

1869. The Coming Social Condition. (On Bellamy, etc.) By Frederick H. Coker, Social Economist, June. 3 pages.

TAXATION.

NEW BOOKS.


1893. Service and Interest. Editorial in Open Court, June 15. 800 words.


OUTCOME OF INDIVIDUALISM.
By J. H. LEVY.
Lecturer on Logic and Economics at the Hebrew Institution and City College, Havana; Secretary of the National Liberal Club Political Education Circle.

PERSONAL EIGHT ASSOCIATION.
9 YORK STREET, WESTMINSTER, W.S., LONDON.

INSTEAD OF A BOOK:
BY A MAN TOO BUSY TO WRITE ONE.

A FRAMMENTARY EXHIBITION OF PHILOSOPHICAL ANARCHISM.

By BENJ. R. TUCKER, EDITOR OF LIBERTY.

With a Full-Page Half-Tone Portrait of the Author.

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