"Why Government At All?"


In his preface he tells us that in 1893 he conceived a scheme of agitaction which he was sure would, if properly presented, force the whole social question to the front and bring relief to those urgently needing it. He tells us that it was the momentousness of the book which convinced him of the necessity of such a scheme. He never tells us that he has labored under a serious disadvantage, in not being able to obtain proper criticism at the time when criticism might prove so useful. Only when the book was finished and needed nothing but the final outlay of gold does the man of Van Oornum succeed in carrying his scheme through the barrier of criticism. Among the critics to whom the author is indebted for many valuable suggestions are a certain number of persons, one in particular, whom he does not mention by name, Mr. Westrup and others. It is a pity Mr. Van Oornum failed to obtain the cooperation of the late Professor George A. Schilling, who, I doubt not, would have put the author under great obligation for many negative and perhaps a few positive hints, and safeguarded him against some harsh and well-deserved censure.

Mr. Van Oornum has a very high opinion of his own achievement. He firmly believes that he has explored a new field, or, at least, that he has explored the familiar field of government in a new way. With the exception of the so-called Plan of relief, which must certainly have occurred to hundreds of reformers, but which has doubtless been dismissed by everybody except Mr. Van Oornum as something which never can be needful, he offers new objections to the systems of certain of our Anarchists cannot congratulate themselves on this addition to their literature, and the opponents of Anarchism will not feel greatly disturbed over the matter, as their side has not been seriously threatened by Mr. Van Oornum. If one likes to imagine that he has nothing formidable indeed, but, when one examines the actual performance, there is nothing substantial to reconcile with. Mr. Van Oornum further objects to the idea that the world is divided between order and anarchy, and to the use of the word "politics." I, for my part, have no feeling of explanation accompanying the passing sentence Mr. Van Oornum means well, and one wishes it were his fate to believe that he is not worse off because he has not been able to present his views in a more readable form. It is somewhat infuriating, to be sure, to read the inflated sentences which are used to explain away the slowness in progress, and the attempt to ridicule and defeat the man who is his antagonist. It is as easy to discover, no profound thinker; and his absurd pretensions tempt one to be severe with him. In his "Introduction," he says, "as yet the study of social questions has not been pushed far enough into the background, to separate the different schools of thought," and intimates that he expects to traverse the whole distance required. Yet elsewhere he confesses (rather superfluously, the fact being too glaring to escape observation) that the "economic" part of his work is the real theme, and that examination of the works of the prominent authors he quotes has very little to do with the question. The title-page of his book is not very easy to read, and it is not very easy to follow his purpose in writing the book. It is not very easy to follow his plan, or to understand the meaning of the terms he uses. It is not very easy to understand the meaning of the terms he uses, or to follow the arguments he presents. It is not very easy to follow the arguments he presents, or to understand the meaning of the terms he uses. Mr. Van Oornum's purpose is to disagree with something an author says, to give a forcibly presented analysis, and to simplify. He does this with a view to making his book as popular as possible, and as easy to read as possible, and as simple as possible. He quotes a few sentences, and points out the alleged falsity in them, and rests his case against the victim. There is no attempt to show that the theories attacked are so fundamental as to involve the whole of the system of society. Mr. Van Oornum does not attempt to show that the theories attacked are so fundamental as to involve the whole of the system of society. He is content to show that they are not very fundamental, that they are not very easily attacked, and that they are not very easily understood. He is content to show that they are not very fundamental, that they are not very easily attacked, and that they are not very easily understood.

The first man Mr. Van Oornum revives and seeks to convert, is Mr. George W. Whittaker, of the "New York Times." Mr. Van Oornum's book cannot be read, and the man cannot be called upon to do anything. The book contains nothing new or remarkable or striking, and he has nothing to say that is new, except that the book contains nothing new or remarkable or striking, and he has nothing to say that is new.

Mr. Van Oornum seeks to show us all wherein we err, and to convert us to the new idea. He shall see how in the book. He shall see how in the book.
ANNOUNCEMENT

Till further notice Liberty will be published monthly instead of weekly. The size will remain the same, and the subscription price will be fifty cents a year. All subscribers now on the books will receive the full number of issues for which they paid. That is to say, if a subscriber, for instance, entitled to eighteen monthly issues, receives eighteen monthly issues instead of eighteen weekly issues. The department devoted to the Sociological Index will be discontinued. Outstanding coupons will be redeemed either in articles already catalogued or in extension of subscription to Liberty, at the option of the holder.

It is with great reluctance that I make this change. But it is absolutely necessary. Personal reverses force me for some time to come—may months certainly, perhaps years—to devote all my earnings and nearly all my time to the fulfillment of obligations which I have accumulated in the last dozen years. If I were not by giving a little time each day to type-setting I can set up Liberty monthly without employing a compositor (thus reducing the actual outlay of money to the cost of paper, presswork, and postage, which receipts from subscriptions will pay), I should be unable to continue Liberty at all. But fortunately I am a printer, and, being the case, it is likely that Liberty will live in some form as long as I have health and strength. The next number will appear about the first of August.

Subscribers will be allowed, as heretofore, the privilege of buying books and stationery, and subscribing for other periodicals, at wholesale prices.

T.

NOT MURDERERS, BUT MURDERED.

For ever the world rolls round and round, And the general motion runs,
And ever the truth comes uppermost,
And ever is justice done.

Or, if not ever, at least sometimes; and, if not completely, then partially. For has not Governor Algeldt fulfilled the expectations which Liberty announced immediately after his election, by setting free the living martyrs of 1897—Fielden, Schwab, and Nebee? Yes; and the press has performed an act of magnificence, it is somewhat tardy, justice. It is the bravest act standing to the credit of a politician since Horace Greeley hailed Jefferson Davis.

In one respect, in fact, Governor Algeldt has much more than met my expectations, for never had I dared to hope that he would send these injured men back into the world with the words 'INNOCENT' stamped unmistakably upon their foreheads, and still less had I looked to see him place the official brand of MURDERER upon the brows of Gary, Grinnell, Bonfield, and all the members of the miserable gang. But this is precisely what he wrote in the seventeen thousand words which give his blow its crushing force, and which might fittingly be condensed to four for an inscription on the monument at Walhalla above the graves of Spies, Parsons, Engel, Fischer, and Linsig. Room should be straightway found upon that marble for the words, 'Not Murderers, but Murdered,' followed by the gravemarker of the governor of Illinois. By this verdict a partial justice, the utmost now possible, is done, not alone to the living, but to the dead.

In one respect, however, I have been somewhat disappointed. This act of justice is not as timely as it might have been. Justice is injustice, to the extent that it is delayed. No amount of sophistry can obscure this plain truth. The New York 'Herald's' comment on the pardon is that it is strange that it should have taken the governor six months to find all this out. Of course I am aware that, if the governor had acted more promptly, the 'Herald' in its perverted would have accused him of exhibiting an unseemly haste. But condemnation on that score could easily have been met, whereas the actual criticism there is no valid answer. If it was an outrage for Judge Gary to send innocent men to prison for life, then it was an outrage for Governor Algeldt to keep them in prison for six months. Any argument good against the one is good against the other. I point this out, however, only to draw the true lesson of the hour. It is not my desire or purpose to find fault with Governor Algeldt. Whatever may be the debit side of his account, the balance to his credit is overwhelming and can never be wiped out. He has done nobly. And he shall be our gratitude and all the glory forever.

A CHANCE TO TEST THE RIGHT TO BOYCOTT.

An interesting phase of the controversy over Sunday opening of the World's Fair is its relation to the boycott principle. The Sabbatarians, who are mostly the declared enemies of the boycott, have made the boycott their main weapon against Sunday opening. The United States Government was the first to apply the boycott on a large scale by making its grant of $3,500,000 conditional on Sunday closing. The Director has apparently decided to meet this move by taking the money, spending it all, and then forfeiting the grant and inviting Congress to recover it out of an empty cash-box.

Beaten here and in the courts, the last hope of the Sunday-closers is in declaring that they will not attend the Fair at all if it is open on Sunday. This movement, started more than a year ago by the Ohio Christian Endeavor Union, has been attracting much attention within a few weeks. Of course, the daily press has been crying the doctrine of boycotts, and the religious press has been twisting itself into various amusing shapes in trying to show that it is "not a boycott," because no threats of violence are used, or because the staying away is not generally done by command of an organization, or for some other equally pertinent reason. Meanwhile there is a fair probability that the International Christian Endeavor Convention, held at Montreal, July 3-5, representing a combination of one and half million members and a good many more friends, will commit itself pretty definitely to the boycott policy.

Is the Christian world, then, beginning to understand that the boycott rather than the policeman's club is the natural, convenient, and civilized remedy against non-invasive social offenses? Well, hardly. Most of these people will go right on declaring that the boycott is tyrannical and un-American, and that they will never countenance such a thing. But a few of them at least will get their ideas cleared, and many will be able to see the analogy to their own action when an orderly boycott for a good cause next comes before the public eye. At any rate, the result of this movement must be more or less in favor of the liberty of the boycotter; and whatever such influence it does exert will be put just where it is most needed.

It would wonderfully help to make the situation understood if a Christian Endeavor Society or two should be prosecuted under the anti-boycott laws. I am a member of that Society myself, and an enemy of those laws; but the educational value of bringing them into such contact would be so great that I am not sure but I shall begin praying for it to happen.

STEPHENS T. BRIGGS.

THE FOLS AND THE PHILISTINES.

When the New York "Sun" goes running for the "scalp" of Mrs. Mary E. Leas, it is generally provocatively amusing; for, when the "Sun" returns from the chase, the "erigorous officious" admiral of the far-famed priestliness and prophetism of Populism does not always come in at its belt. A late epistle from the Populist Party, via the "Sun" against Mrs. Leas was called forth by a speech which the latter recently made, somewhere in her native wilds, upon the millennium that is to be ushered in when the government becomes the owner and operator of the railroads, telegraphs, and all "public improvements," which consummation, she gently informs us, is but one short century hence. But in making the date 1903 she has overlooked an opportunity to do humanity a great service: she might have added another decade to the time and thus have prevented its being "five-de-sicle." This oversight of hers is unparrodonable.

Mrs. Leas's many vagaries are certainly sufficient excuse for some ridicule on the part of the "Sun," and doubtless every person (with the exception of Prof. Joseph Rodes Buchanan and the fair lady herself) will be ready to forgive the "Sun" its pastime after reading the following from the prophetic soul of Mrs. Leas:

Where Chicago now lifts her proud spires and many-storied buildings, a great lake or inland sea will surge its waters, and the belts of fresh and salt water run to the broad expanse of the cataclysm which engulfed the city and rolled the waters upon its sin and pride.

Now this is the daver of drivelling idiocy, and if it were all that all, Leas had said about the good time coming, I should have left her to the "Sun" and some of her friends, and be a good riddance; for certain such pious predictions of the late Col. Shepard is a fit subject for nothing but sport, and that of the merriest kind. But this is not all. She waxes scientific. She sets a pace for science that causes it to grow faint and footsore in the race. She has called upon it to furnish an ethical extract of the
"Why Government At All?"

(Continued from page 1)

ratchets another commodity seller. Marx regards the commodity-seller as a whole, as a group, and the wages-earner as a whole. Thus arises the relation between these two antagonistic groups. Surplusvalue pays for the commodity and what he gets for the price. The person to whom he sells it may get an equivalent; and yet, if the profit from the market, the reason being that both are employers and exploiter of laborers.

The solution of the socialist circulation in the phrase, "circulation, or exchange of commodities, begets no value," Mr. Van Ornum tries to score a point by saying that the lumberman performs the labor of "circulation," add by labor to the value of the in the product and are entitled to it. But this is what Marx has been urged that labor alone adds value to a product, and the above are set of exchanges.

Finally Mr. Van Ornum quarrels with Marx for affirming that "some crippling of body and mind" is insisted on from the division of labor and there lies the irremediable benefits due to division of labor. Those who work are Marx never merely pointed out that there was another side to the question, a dark side. Proudhon has done this in a superior and more complete way, as Mr. Van Ornum claims to have read the "Economical Contradictions." I may refer him to the chapters on the division of labor. In that work, and advise him to re-read it before again venturing to discuss the subject.

The theories of Bellamy. The criticisms are too shallow and the points selected of no moment. So, I always say, "You may have a theory that on "The Fallacies of P. J. Proudhon and His School." Mr. Van Ornum has only read "That is Property," and "the volume of contradiction." To the "Contradictions" we are not referred at all. Mr. Van Ornum merely intimates that it was rather foolish on Proudhon's part to work. Had he read the book, Proudhon failed to "understand the importance" of a literary work. It is not necessary condition of property, possession, "he would not have considered it necessary to devote a work of a few pages to the "Economical Contradictions." [By the way, the "Contradictions" comprise two volumes, each about 800 pages, a fact which may be (strangely enough, entirely unaware.) to the the consideration of contradictions growing out of an institution which is artificial and transitory in its nature.

This philanthropic observation shows that Mr. Van Ornum has not grasped the fact of Proudhon's position on the question of property. Proudhon did not hold that property is an artificial and transitory institution, which would disappear together with it. He pointed out the contradictions of the existing industrial organization by way of preparatory work for the solution of a new industrial organization, of which private property was to be abolished and features of political economy he also saw a future, and he endeavored to winnow the errors from the economic teaching of his time and to vindicate its truth. Proudhon never denounced the silly notion of the weak-minded reformers that social, economy and property are things to be abhorred and forsaken.

But even if we assume that property and political economy are doomed, how necessary is it to pretend that the "Contradictions" are a waste of energy! Are property and political economy so feeble, unimportant, and demoralized that no critical attacks on them are profitable? Have they a short and precarious life? Is it not advisable to hasten their defeat by well-directed thrusts? Mr. Van Ornum is manifestly ignorant of the whole question. A man who is like to a single dog, and his wish is father to his thought.

Property and political economy have come to stay, and Proudhon has done a great deal to tame their savagery and importance by attacking the servile and faltering posture of truth and true.

Proudhon, according to Mr. Van Ornum, discussed science without a clear knowledge of man himself in his individual character. The charge is absurd, of course, and conceived in ignorance.

The only point is that it is the shape of a few extracts from "What Is Property?" in which we find the methods of advocating methods of reform. On this same evidence is based the further charge that Proudhon subordinated the individual to the social whole and the interests of society. The truth is that Proudhon, as a matter of fact, led into the socialistic and authoritarian measures. His position as leader of a workingmen's movement, his political career, and his active nature have tended to be removed from the scope of his practical effects and his theories. Mr. Van Ornum became slightly dim when he had to follow Mr. Proudhon. Proudhon never understood the importance of liberty, the sovereignty of the individual, etc.

Our German comrade, John Henry Mackay, the author of "The Anarchists," is about to pay a visit to the United States. He will reach New York in a few days. A few Anarchists from this news will delight his many American admirers.

Mr. Jarros's excellent review of Van Ornum's "Why Government At All?" appears in small type only because its length made it impossible to print it all. The review gives more attention to the book than it really merits, but, in view of the author's extraordinary claims, it was thought best to examine them with some thoroughness, especially as his friends have been clamorous for Liberty's opinion and have been carrying chips on their shoulders ever since the book appeared.

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1766

not subjector to any measure for libertarian measures; he sought to use authority in the interest of liberty, being always to afford immediate relief to the public..."