On Picket Duty.

A curious question, illustrating the logic of legalization, has arisen in England. A man published a book on South Africa, leaving the last page blank, with the following words at the top: "Cecil Rhodes: What I Think About Him." The point was raised that this constituted a libel, and eminent jurists thought the publication would certainly be actionable. While there were some lawyers who disented from this view, the publishers decided to omit the "libellous" page. It is taken for granted in the press that the courts would have found libel in the facts stated.

"Puck" prides itself on its consistent opposition to special legislation and meddlesome efforts to protect individuals against their own folly or vice. Yet it advocates legislation to prevent as well as to punish the "criminal recklessness of those misguided persons who, under pretence of belonging to some new or peculiar sect, refuse medical aid for their sick, and pretend to rely on the efficacy of faith, prayer, or some miraculous interposition of Providence." It seems to think, too, that this position is perfectly congruous with individualistic principles. Would "Puck" force people to apply to regular physicians for medical aid? Are we to be prohibited from acting on our own beliefs? How would "Puck" treat those who have no faith either in "divine" or any other kind of healers? Surely it believes in the right to commit suicide or risk life. True, "Puck" uses the words "their sick," implying that it is criminal for a person to refuse medical aid for his family or relatives, but not to refuse such aid for himself; but this position is still more absurd than that which would compel the sick to apply to a licensed physician. Imagine a law which would compel a man to call a physician to treat his wife or father or adult child, while allowing him to refuse medical aid himself.

The New York Society for the Prevention of Crime asks the legislature to confer upon it the power to seize and arrest persons suspected of committing illegal acts. The "World" objects to such "government by private societies," and says it would be akin to Anarchy. The "World" is mistaken. There would be nothing Anarchistic in the plan. It would mean nothing more than the addition of a certain number to the police force of the city. The agents of the private society would only arrest the suspects; their trial and punishment would be left to the State. Anarchy means the suppression of crime by private societies without any connection with the present State or any recognition of the governmental principle. In other words, it means private defense, not private "government." The "World," in spite of its recent studies of the philosophy of liberty, equality, and justice,—studies which delighted many guileless reformers, who were innocently led to expect great aid from it in the cause of progress,—does not know the difference between defense and government.

After the appearance of the second article in Mr. Jarros's series written in review of Mr. Salter's book, now concluded by the publication of the third article in the present issue, I received the following welcome message from Mr. Salter: "I appreciate very much the thoroughgoing consideration my book is having in Liberty, and I shall say what I can in defence of myself after the concluding article." This is no more than I expected from so candid a critic as Mr. Salter, and I extend to him most cordially the hospitality of these columns. His defence will be awaited with interest by myself and by the readers. To my thinking, Mr. Jarros has torn his argument to tatters, and I am curious to see the crazy-quilt that Mr. Salter will make out of his rags. Perhaps I may add, for Mr. Salter's information, that Mr. Byington's article, "Is Government Justified by Experience?" in Liberty of February 22, was written in answer to Mr. Salter's book, though I at first supposed it to have been called out by the controversy between Mr. Bolton Hall and myself.

Two Chicago judges have severely rebuked jurors for rendering verdicts of acquittal in certain cases, where the evidence, in the opinion of the judges, demanded conviction. They declared that it was useless to have courts of justice, if juries continued perverse and ignorant. The newspaper thoughtfully applauds these judicial lectures; but let them stop to reflect a little. We are constantly told that juries are the sole judges of the facts, and that they have no right to refuse to take the law from the court. Suppose a jury should dissent from a judge's rulings, and venture to lecture him on the injustice and ignorance of his interpretation of the statutes or decisions. Would not the entire judiciary and press denounce this as impertinent and outrageous? Now, a judge, under the present system, has just as little justification for criticizing the jury's findings with regard to the facts. The jury are supposed to be more and competent to pass upon facts than the judge; what right has he, then, to assail them? It must, be borne in mind that, if the evidence is strong and convincing, the judge is, in many classes of cases, empowered to direct a verdict, and that it is only where the conflicting evidence raises a doubt that the facts are referred to the jury. There being this doubt, the jury must be permitted to decide whether it is reasonable or not. It clearly follows that, in cases where trial by jury is a right which the law does not permit an accused to waive or bargain away, judicial criticism of jurors is particularly unwarrantable.

It comforts me much to think that confirmed in my high estimate of Basil Dahl as a poet by two so artistic critics as those of Comrades Gorkak and Robinson, who in another column sound his praises. And, with one exception, all the opinions that have come to my ears coincide with these. Further contributions from Dahl's pen may be expected to appear in Liberty from time to time. Not all, of course, will attain the heights reached in "To the Toilers." A comparatively unpretentious flight, for instance, we have in the few verses, "To Whom It May Concern," printed on the sixth page of this number. Yet even these lines contain a lofty sentiment and give evidence of a very pretty wit. In the next number will appear a third poem, "With Nature," of more importance than the second, but still unequal to the first. Yet I am confident that this youth of twenty-two (for such I now know to be his age) is destined, as he matures, to outdo all his early efforts. Those readers of Liberty who are interested in his work (and I must think that nearly all of them are) I earnestly advise to procure the New York "Home Journal" ($31 Broadway; 5 cents a copy; $2.00 a year) of March 11, on the first page of which appears one of his poems, "To Her I Love," of about the same length as "To the Toilers," and approaching it in excellence, but of a quite different order. And, while they are at it, they had better get a copy of the issue of March 18 also, for that contains, in the same place, a poem by Comrade Gorkak—in my view his best work, from the strictly poetical standpoint—picturing in inspiring fashion the conditions, internal and external, under which Rouget de Lisle composed the immortal "Marseillaise." Let me conclude this paragraph with the remark, though it may seem rapturous and irrelevant, that of late I have had evidence that, in the matter of taking hints, the readers of Liberty are more obtuse than I had supposed them to be. "Pointers" apparently are wasted, even on the brightest of them. (Comrade Herman Kuehn will please consider himself excepted.) Well, they are the chief losers.
Mr. Salter’s "Anarchy or Government." III.

In the realm of industry, all our instinctive feelings and prepossessions are in favor of the method of liberty. This, says Mr. Salter, is as it should be, for government always requires special justification.

Now, these are very significant admissions, and Mr. Salter strangely fails to perceive that they are wholly repugnant to his great argument from the social organism. If we are all members of an organism, and if society has the right to "go as far as it needs to go and can," then why should its attempt at interference always require special justification? It ought, on the contrary, to be recognized as the most natural thing in the world for "society" to concern itself with the welfare of its "members," and to insist on personal supervision.

Again, if no line of principle can be drawn as to how far a society may go, why should an attempt at industrial regulation excite the special opposition of all instinctive feelings and prepossessions?

Doubtless Mr. Salter’s answer would be that practice, habit, and traditional economic teaching have so firmly established the idea of freedom in industrial matters as to the assertion of society’s ethical right, to him so manifestly valid on reflection, is at first blush resented as an impertinence and encroachment. Here, then, Mr. Salter repudiates the criterion of what “everybody would feel,” and implies that “all our instinctive feelings and prepossessions” may be entirely wrong. Yet, it will be remembered, in discussing government interference in defensive war, he hesitatingly appealed to the general sentiment, and assumed that its decision was final and supreme.

What would Mr. Salter say if I, shedding myself behind his own admission that all our instinctive feelings and prepossessions are in favor of industrial liberty, were to claim that no argument in favor of government would be entertained after such a statement? He would certainly regard it as an unprecedented attitude, since reason has to be brought to bear upon such questions, and feelings have to be examined in the light of the highest philosophical truth. It is, therefore, clearly incumbent upon him to reconsider his position on the question of defense against external enemies, and base it, if possible, on something more trustworthy than instinctive feelings and the general conscience.

All this, however, is on paunt. Coming to the main question, we find that Mr. Salter divides it into two sub-questions,—of fundamental principle, the other of expediency. On the point of principle, his view is already known to us. Society, he tells us, has the right to go as far as it chooses, needs, and can; there’s no line of principle to be drawn, our membership in society giving us a claim on its protection and care to work us the duty of submission. Having already fully considered this argument in connection with protection and the "higher interests," I need not repeat what I have there said. But, with reference to expediency, a few remarks are in order.

Whether a society is bound to interfere in industrial relations, says Mr. Salter, depends entirely on whether such interference is needful. "We have simply to ask: How do things go when individuals are left to themselves? Do individuals succeed when put upon their own resources? Do all who are willing to work get the chance to work? Do the stronger respect the weaker and refuse to take advantage of them? Do all share in some measure in the benefits, conveniences, and comforts that go to make up the material basis of life? If these questions can be answered in the affirmative, liberty, or Anarchy, in this realm is surely justified." But the facts, continues Mr. Salter, show that liberty does not work well, since we have enforced illness, poverty, dishonesty, oppression, and exploitation. We can only say that the world somehow gets along, but the society is not satisfied, and hence interference is wise and expedient. "There would seem to be no other course than for the society to see what it can do for itself."

The fundamental misconception which destroys the force of this reasoning is found in the assumption that the present industrial condition is one of liberty, or Anarchy. Because the State does not now regulate wages and prices, does not proscribe combination, and does not revive a certain kind of medieval regulation of industry, it is superficially assumed that industry is free, and that a fair test of Anarchism is afforded in that sphere. But surely Mr. Salter ought to perceive the baseness of this assumption. In all important industrial matters governments still interfere, while in some they interfere more persistently than formerly. At common law banking was free; to-day it is hedged about with numberless restrictions. The issue of the medium of exchange is a monopoly of a few governmental favorites, and the entire system of credit upon which modern industry rests is arbitrarily restricted by "protective" legislation. Then there are protective tariffs, laws regulating the rate of interest, factory acts, child-labor legislation, and a thousand other things that would have no place under industrial liberty. Finally, there is land monopoly, which deprives men of access to natural opportunities. Mr. Salter ought to know that, in our view, these monopolies and restrictions are the direct cause of the evils pointed out by him, and hence, unless he is prepared to disprove that theory, he cannot logically affirm that liberty does not work well in industry. The one thing certain is that the present industrial system is unsatisfactory; but, since it is not a free system, no one can pronounce liberty a failure. It is, of course, open to any one to contend that, even if perfect industrial freedom existed, certain evils would persist; but he who makes such an assertion only infers that liberty would fail; he does not say, and cannot say, that liberty has failed. Whether liberty could fail is a different question,—a question of economics chiefly. The point to emphasize here is that, as liberty has not been tried in industry, no case for social interference has been made out. So far, then, as Mr. Salter’s expediency is concerned, the time has not yet come for society to see what it can do for itself. The method of Anarchy has to be tried first, since, as we have been told, the presumption is always in its favor, while in the particular sphere of industry all our instinctive feelings and prepossessions are on the side of liberty.

But, while Mr. Salter entirely overlooks this important fact of the absence of real liberty from the industrial sphere, he indirectly raises the whole question of the effects of perfect freedom when he denies that there is any necessary connection between supply and demand and equity. In other words, Mr. Salter, after erroneously supposing that we have perfect competition and the free operation of the law of supply and demand, goes on to question the claim that justice necessarily results from a free play of supply and demand. Having called attention to his mistake of fact, let me now assume a condition different from that now existing,—a condition of perfect freedom of competition,—and consider the theoretical question whether justice must naturally follow from the free play of supply and demand. Mr. Salter says:

"If unlimited production of useful things were possible, and if all men were equally gifted and were situated in something like similar circumstances, it [supply and demand] probably would [work justice], not be some men meant to do justice, but because they would be virtually compelled to do it."

These suppositions, Mr. Salter truly observes, are imaginary, but it is well to note that he agrees in a general way with those who affirm that justice might be the spontaneous product of certain political and physical conditions, regardless of men’s will and intention. The difference (and it is a vital one) between Mr. Salter’s position and ours is this: we maintain that industrial Anarchy would bring about justice, while he believes that it would not, and, in addition to perfect competition, it would be necessary to have equality of gifts. In other words, he says that these elements are necessary: (a) equal gifts; (b) equal opportunities to use the gifts; (c) no interference from the state, assenting with regard to the necessity of the elements (b) and (c), dissent from his view to the extent of rejecting (a).

Here we must get a clear idea of what Mr. Salter means by justice. Nowhere in the book is the term defined, and we have to infer his meaning from the text generally. He writes:
What one produces and what one gets are two distinct things to be in no necessary connection between them. How is what one gets determed (under the present system)? Not really by the truth of what one produces and has to sell, nor either by the act of producing it and bringing it to market but rather by the quantity of things of the same sort that happen to be in the market... It is an illusion to imagine, as Mr. Spencer does, that under the free action of a person no gift is given, he gets sloppy, what he can get, which may be more or may be less than what he gives.

The obvious implication that justice is satisfied with the exchange of equivalents, with the getting by each of what it gives. But, if this is Mr. Salter’s meaning, where he includes equality of gifts among the conditions of spontaneous justice? If a shoemaker gives an equivalent gift for his products with a sum of average gifts and obtains an equivalent, justice is satisfied. But, suppose there is another shoemaker of exceptional ability, who produces more than his competitor; is he bound to give more in exchange to the tailor than the latter gets from the less gifted shoemaker? Is there any reason why the more capable should not be advantaged by their superior gifts to the extent permitted by freedom of competition? If one man can do twice as much work as another in a given time, why may he not get twice as much pay?

Under the free competition, coupled with equal opportunities so far as access to natural media is concerned (meaning by equal opportunity the right to hold land which one occupies and uses for the satisfaction of one’s needs), what is guaranteed is the exchange of average equivalents, so to speak. Competition cannot destroy the "rent of ability" entirely; hence unequal gifts will bring unequal rewards. But where is the injustice? Mr. Salter’s own implied definition of justice does not demand the appropriation by the community of the rent of ability, yet he expressly says that equality of gifts is an essential condition of automatic justice.

It is very unscientific for Mr. Salter to attack those who assert that supply and demand insure justice without ascertainment first whether he agrees with their definition of justice. He speaks of what "most people would call justice," but he ought to know that most people have no definite idea of the term. They mean by justice "the square thing," fair play, and so on; but what these things are, and what the scientific test of fair play is, they do not know. Ask the average man whether it is fair or just for Paderewski to charge high prices for tickets to his concerts, and he will unhesitatingly answer in the affirmative. Paderewski is not "protected" by any legal privilege; he does not suppress competition. Unequal gifts may bring unequal rewards without violating the sense of justice of most people.

Let me indicate, however, from my point of view, the connection between supply-and-demand and justice. Justice is simply "equal freedom," the recognition of the right of each to do what he will, without infringing the equal rights of others. Now, under equal freedom, production, trade, exchange, banking, credit, and every other economic function or activity would be exempt from all governmental interference; in other words, supply and demand would have free play. To restrict supply or demand is to interfere with some legitimate freedom of production or exchange or contract, and such interference is unjust.

Anything that takes place under free play of supply and demand is just, for there can be no economic injustice in the absence of some invasion of some one’s sphere as producer or consumer. It is true that under free play of supply and demand a man gets only what he can get; but Mr. Salter’s error consists in supposing that this has nothing to do with justice. The fact is that justice demands precisely this very thing,—that men shall be allowed to get what they can for their services in a free market. Justice does not tell us how much we are to get; it only tells us what conditions we are to carry on our activities. It is a logical deduction from what it tells us that we can complain of nothing as unjust which takes place for the prescribed conditions.

Mr. Salter may have a totally different conception of justice, but, if he has, his first logical step is to exclude the Anarchistic conception of justice, since every condition is one upon it and is defensible from it. At any rate, I believe it is now clear that, from our point of view, the connection between justice and supply-and-demand is intimate and close, and that we are perfectly consistent in affirming that true and complete liberty in the industrial realm would necessarily result in economic justice. Coming now to Mr. Salter’s positive theory of the industrial organization, I quote from him as follows:

"In normal type of social organization, an individual gets back more than he gives; he gives what he can needs or give, and in turn receives all the benefits of social organization (as far as he needs them); if he needs protection for his life or possessions, he may get a great deal more than he ever paid for, and, if he needs education for his children, it is quite a natural question of a social pre-arrangement. As a member of society, he simply gets whatever the society, of which he is a part, is able to give; the riches of the whole go to each one, according to his circumstances and needs.

This is plainly the Communist principle. Each is to give what he can, and get what he needs. Mr. Salter does not deem it necessary to demonstrate the justice of his plan, manifestly regarding it as self-evident. To show the baselessness of this belief, I need only remind him of the difficulties already dwelt on in my previous articles. Who is to decide what one can give and what one needs? Society, says Mr. Salter, forgetting that society is dumb, and that the question is always between the majority and the minority. The majority, therefore, will first determine what one should contribute and receive in return, and then proceed to enforce its decision upon the minority, without any regard to its views and sentiments. The majority will tax one man for the education of another man’s children; will compel an employer to pay higher wages to an employee than he wishes to pay; will force the industrious to support the idle; and, in short, will do everything which society is supposed to provide and inspire. It would be interesting to know how this absolute right of the majority to dispose of the life, liberty, and property of the minority is deduced, and where the warrant for it is to be found. We have already seen that, even from the standpoint of the "social organism" theorists, majority rule cannot be justified.

In the concluding sections of his final chapter, Mr. Salter sums up his conclusions by saying that for the present progress lies in the direction, not of liberty, but of constraint and regulation. The dominant tendency, he continues, will not have worked itself out to its legitimate result until the whole industrial life of a people conforms to the requirements of the social conscience, until every able-bodied person has a place in the industrial order, until industrial inventions and improvements become at last public property and avenue to the common benefit. It is needless to state that I cannot agree with Mr. Salter’s interpretation of the situation. The dominant tendency may appear to be toward regulation, and the trend of things may seem to favor government, but drifting is not progress, and society is now simply drifting. There may be a considerable increase of governmentism, but the results will prove disappointing and reactionary, instead of healthy and beneficial. Restraint will fail, and the other method, the method of liberty, will then have to be tried. An intelligent diagnosis of disease would prevent the blunder which seems inevitable, society—so-called, in the majority—being too intimate and too resistive to a scientific analysis of the situation.

Mr. Salter expresses his conviction that in the long run, and considering the issue of things, "social action" (meaning government) will tend to become unnecessary. "Government now," he says, "and an end of government in time to come. The social consciousness, in proportion as it is real, demands government under existing circumstances; but finally the social consciousness may be so perfect that government will be allowed to drop away like an outgrown shell. This is a repetition of what Mr. Salter stated at the outset—that perfectly just and civilized men do not need any government. Anarchists, I know, are expected to enunciate proper appreciation of this generous concession, but it really does not concern them in any way. It is entirely immaterial and irrelevant to their case against the existing order.

In bringing this rather long review to a close, I think I may state with some confidence that I have proved the charges which I made in opening the case." If Mr. Salter can successfully meet the criticisms I have passed upon his defence of government, I sincerely hope he will do so.

"Natural Rights" That Exclude Friends.

About two years ago, while standing in the large doorway of the shop, engaged in conversation with the foreman, something went by us as though a missile had been thrown.

"What the devil was that?" exclaimed my companion. "I am going to find out, any- how." Something appeared to be going on in the farther room, and he went in there, shutting the door behind him. He soon emerged, bearing in his hand what had once been a bright and happy bird—a kingfisher. It was a sight that I never shall forget; neither will my companion.

Man of the world that he was, unscrupulous in most matters (and good of denoting strength), he was visibly touched. For once the ribald laugh was hushed, in the face of this great sorrow. The lower half of the bird’s bill had been shot off close to
Equal Liberty in order to protect the embryo Jack-the-Rippers, the Napoleon's, and the Blaines, from the consequence of being born of cruel parents. And they wish to conjure and squall with the word Slavery used in an illegitimate sense. Much trouble has sprung from that word already.

Mr. Tucker has covered every point in this question, but there is one which he has not been called upon to make much of,—idal est, the length of time that must elapse before the realization of Anarchism. Surely a much higher civilization will be then attained, and the cases of the abuse of children will be far less as deaths by lightning. And then, as Mr. Tucker says, the boycott—a most terrible weapon. It will be used, too, with such tremendous force in some cases that sympathy will be turned from the tormented child to the child's tormentor.

Experience and logic have taught me to love my friends and hate my enemies. I should be only to enter into any contract that would interfere with this "natural right." If I must, I will.

But, the partridge comes and sits on a tree within ten feet of the house; the gray squirrel (wildest of the wild) and "brer rabbit" gambol in the orchard; the chickadeesee sits on the window-sill; the humming bird makes "ruby lightning and thunder" round the place all summer; and the checked arder raises its solemn head through the cranks of the floor of my shop, and, with the dark, mournful eyes of Lamia, looks at me askance.

And, at ever the botched Anarchist proposed comes to realization in my day, I shall stand forth and say: "Drop that gun! I will help you protect our enemies, but, damn you, don't you shoot my friends!"

WILLIAM WALSHEN GORDON.

I was in error in describing Bashi Dahi as a Slav. Though born and bred in Russia, he is of the Jewish race. That about him which is so strongly indicative of the Slav has been acquired rather from environment than by inheritance.

Comrade Labadie, I am sure, will be the first to protest against Dr. Maryson's interpretation of his perfectly true assertion (always maintained by the editor of this paper) that "Anarchism begins and ends with liberty" as meaning that the advocacy of liberty should be divorced from economic consideration. I am sure of it, because I know that Mr. Labadie, in his championship of liberty, constantly points out the economic effects that would follow from the removal of law-placed obstacles that hinder free activities in the sphere of production and exchange. I am sure of it again, because Comrade Labadie, in the lecture in which he emphasizes the negative character of the Anarchist philosophy, quotes approvingly and in his own support from my essay on "State Socialism and Anarchism," which is nothing if not the condemnation of the incapability of economy from liberty. It is perfectly true that one need not believe in mutual banking in order to be an Anarchist. It is also true that one may desire universal voluntary communism without thereby disqualifying himself as an Anarchist. Since an Anarchist is one who believes in making equal liberty the basis of social relationships, such a one cannot become less an Anarchist because of any peculiar belief that he may hold as to the effects of equal liberty. If Mephistopheles, desiring, not the happiness of humanity, but its torment, arrives by mental processes at the conclusion that the way to achieve his desire is the establishment of equal liberty, and accordingly becomes an advocate of equal liberty, then Mephistopheles is an Anarchist. But does Dr. Maryson suppose that anything is to be gained for liberty by joining hands with Mephistopheles in such a crusade in liberty's behalf? Does he not know that the reason of State Socialism's growth and of liberty's retardation is found mainly in the fact that the people have been taught to look for economic benefit from the former rather than from the latter? Does he not know that Anarchism has progressed where so-called individualism has dwindled, simply because it has married liberty and economy, instead of divorcing them? If he doesn't, Comrade Labadie does; and I counsel the latter to let his voice be heard in a manner that will make his meaning unmistakable, and so stop this nonsense which Dr. Maryson, J. K. Ingalls, a. I others are trying to put into his words.

An anonymous correspondent, writing in admiration of Bashi Dahi's "To the Tollers," incidentally criticizes the line, "You live, and know not what existence is," claiming that the poet's idea would have been more properly expressed by the words, "You exist, and know not what life is." The point is not well taken. In the first place, the distinction sometimes made between existence and life—namely, that the former means a merely vegetative career, while the latter implies satisfaction of the demands of a complex and highly-developed personality—is nothing more than a habit of speech utterly lacking in etymological warrant. As far as animate beings are concerned, the words existence and life are interchangeable. To exist is to live, and to live is to exist. So that, even had the poet's idea been what my correspondent supposes it to be, it would not have been more accurately expressed by the suggested substitute for his line. But I offer a more telling answer to my correspondent when I point out that he has not grasped the poet's meaning. It was not Bashi Dahi's intention to present an antithesis of the two dispositions, between life and existence, as is evident to be seen by an examination of the analogous lines immediately following the one criticized. Take this, for instance: "You hope, and know not what it is to hope." This makes it perfectly clear that in the criticized line the poet's meaning is: You live, and know not what it is to live. The distinction is not between life and existence, but between possession of life and failure to understand life, as in the other case it is between possession of hope and failure to understand hope. I am so absolutely and clearly right about this that it is useless to say more. But it may be well to remind my correspondent that, in writing and criticising poetry, it is necessary to give some heed to the exigencies of rhythm. The substitute line which he suggests does not scan.
The Chicago Civic Federation has secured the finding of indictments against fifty
“bucket shops,” and is congratulating itself on the job. The prosecuting attorney says that the
evidence collected is very strong, and that convictions ought to follow. Not only were the
proprietors and managers arrested, but also the clerks, typewriters, messenger boys, and everybody who had any connection with the
offices. What a great moral victory!

The Illinois Supreme Court, however, has put a different complexion on these arrests by dismissing all but one of them. The court ruled that the evidence was insufficient to sustain the charges. This decision is likely to have a significant impact on the investigation, as it may prevent further arrests and prosecutions.

Not to be Overestimated.

Dear Reader:

You have not in the least overestimated Bazzl Dahl. I do not think that he could be overestimated. The fellow talks poetry as if he really meant it, and with the dignity and correctness of its application. Surely such should poetry be,—serious statement of matters worth talking about, with rhythm unconsciously, or apparently unconsciously, spreading itself over all.

The poem is singularly affecting in its simplicity. I force myself to speak of it in a dry, critical way, for, if I should say all that I think, it would be such unmeasured and enthusiastic approval as is better thought than written.

John Beaverton Robinson.

Anarchist Letter-Writing Corps.

The Secret society wants every reader of Liberty to send in its name for enrolment. Those who do as they are told, pledge themselves to write, when possible, a letter every fortnight, on Anarchism or kindred subjects, to the "target" assigned for Liberty for that fortnight, and to notify the secretary promptly in case of any failure to write to a target (which it is hoped will not often occur), or in case of temporary or permanent withdrawal from the service of the corps. All, whether members or not, are asked to lose no opportunity of informing the secretary of suitable targets.

Address: T. Bivins, 1207, F. Inching, New York, N. Y.

I herewith request every regular member of the corps to let me know at once, by postal card or otherwise, his intention of keeping up the corps work. It is somewhat more than four years since I made such a request before. During that time the corps has made healthy progress; it is certainly stronger than then in steady working force, as well as in nominal membership; and evidence is clearly visible that the work is increasing. I would not have it understood, therefore, that I ask for this report, that the corps is sickly. I suspect the existence of some dead wood in it, and hope to find out where that is, but do not think there is more of it than is ordinarily to be expected in every organization.

My reason for wanting to hear from the members again is the same that makes me think it necessary to have, in the regular basis of membership, a pledge to do a definite bit of work, or to let me know if the work is not done. It is because I think it necessary, in order to do my work of assigning targets to the best advantage, that I have formed the regular working force of the corps. Also, from the possibility of members dropping out through callousness, there is the further possibility that some of those from whom I do not hear have died or fallen sick without my knowledge. I do not think a postal card report once a year or so is too much to provide against such contingencies and assure us that the work is being kept up.

Target, Section A.—The Minneapolis "Times," on February 7, having been asked to open its columns for the discussion of the money question by all persons who have intelligible views, did so in these words:

The "Times" will print communications upon the money question upon the condition that they are accompanied by the name of the writer (not necessarily publication), that they are not repetitions in lu-

The Chicago Civic Federation will doubtless receive the cordial thanks of every
pure, good, and decently stupid man and woman in that ideal community, Chicago. Un-
fortunately, the commendable efforts of the

The vilification of Chicago is not unfair. It has participated in the gambling operations by copying and mailing or delivering messages is pitifully shocking. The virtuous Civic Federation will doubtless receive the cordial thanks of every
pure, good, and decently stupid man and woman in that ideal community, Chicago. Un-
fortunately, the commendable efforts of the Civic Federation may not be heartily seconded by that immoral wretch and Anarchist, Judge Goggin, whose notions of justice are a disgrace to the bench. Thus, when the indicted gamblers were given their last hearing, he stopped court, and addressed the spectators and prosecution as follows: "This thing of the Civic Federation, or combination, or whatever it is, is indicting clerks and young women, who are endeavoring to make an honest livelihood by their skill, is an outrage against decency and civilization, if such a thing as civilization exists, and I am beginning to doubt it. I shall release the ladies in this case without bail and upon their own recognizance, and, if they will have a lawyer in court to-morrow, I will quash the indictments against them. I think the grand jury has been misled, and these young ladies should be left alone."

What plausible and criminal sentiments! Who would blame the Civic Federation if it held up this shameless ally of criminals to the scorn and execration of the religious and moral elements of the community?

After a silence of a few months' duration, literary critics are again regaling us with solemn articles about the "turning of the tide" and the "reaction against realism." A wonderful imagination is required to see a reaction from realism just at this juncture, when the two greatest of recent novels, by the leading writers of fiction, are profoundly offensive to all moralists, Philistines, and prudes. Where, pray, is the alleged "renaissance of the "truth and beauty" which are denied to Hardy and Meredith? Has another "Prisoner of Zenda" been given to the world?

Accomplishing Its Aim.

The Society for the Suppression of Vice is doing great work; there is more suppressed vice than ever.

K. H.

Like Chatterton, "A Marvellous Boy."

To the Editor of Liberty:

I share your enthusiasm in regard to Bazzl Dahl. Perhaps it would interest you to know exactly how the poem affected me. I read the production twice, to be sure that my eyes were all right; then aloud to the folks, who also pronounced it fine. I dropped the paper then, being unable to read further until the enchantment lessened. I did not get to sleep till eleven o'clock that night (late for me), and arose at three in the morning, built a fire, and read and reread "To the Tollers." So much for the power of the kind of genius that Freedom attracts.

The case is a marvellous one; here is a mere boy, with a brain comparable to T. L. McCreary's when that bright "dreamer" was in manhood's prime, to-
Thou May It Concern.
You write your letter in sneer sneek words, and wishes happiness in your life. But what you think of him you do not tell; you have no courage to pronounce the truth.

Behind his back you mock and slander him, Find fault with what he dreamed, or said, or did, And, living in a little world, you seem 
To feel each other, but you feel yourselves. Your friend, by being true and good, And wishing good to all mankind, You'll achieve at the same time your good. And your tattered shoes in mind.

Dear friend, by being good and true,
The skin of calves I'll never use.
But also never have, like you,
My reason buried in my shoes.

The Morality of Custom.
[Translated from Nietzsche's 'Morgenthau' by George Steiner.]
In comparison with the mode of life of entire ages the present is a very immoral age; the force of custom has become almost entirely submerged, and the sentiment of morality has been so refined and carried to such heights as to have become almost dissipated. For this reason it is so difficult for us, the later born, to apprehend the reason underlying the origin of morality; and, when we nevertheless find them, they cleave to our tongue and will not out, because they sound crude! Or because they appear to be a libel on the same as well as on the custom of the individual; naivety is nothing else (therefore especially not anything more) than obedience to customs, whatever these may be; but customs are the traditional mode of acting and judging. There is no morality in those things which come from custom, in other words, in obedience to custom; and, the less life is ordered by custom, the more circumscribed is the realm of morality. The free man is immoral because he iske in all things to depend on himself and not on custom; in all primitive conditions of mankind "bad" signifies as much as "individual," "free," "arbitrary," "unusual," "unforeseen," "unreliable." Always, measured by the standard of such conditions, if a deed is done not because it is commanded by a custom, but from other motives (for instance, for the sake of individual advantage), ay, even from the same motives which formerly gave rise to the custom, it is described as immoral, and felt to be as so evil, for it is not done in obedience to custom. What is custom? A higher authority which we obey, not because it commands us to do what is useful, but because it commands. Wherein does custom differ from the sense of fear in general? It is the fear of a superior intelligence which commands, of an incomprehensible, indefinite power, of something more than personal; there is superstition in this idea. The integral, and the care of health, marriage, medicine, agriculture, war, silence and speech, the intercourse with one another and with the gods, were included in the domain of morality; moreover, demanded the observance of precepts by the individual without any thought of self on his part. Originally, therefore, everything was custom, and he who rose above it was obliged to become a medicine-man, and a kind of half-god,—that is, he had to manifest a terrible, perilous thing! Who is the most moral man? Virtue, who fulfills the law most frequently; consequently he, who, like the Brahman, carries the consequence of his every act and into every little fractional part of time, so that he is constantly on the alert for opportunities to fulfill the law. Then, he who fulfills it also in the most difficult cases. He is most moral who never violate custom. But which are the greatest sacrifices? According to the answer to this question, we come upon several different moralities; but the most important difference will be found to be the moral of the morality of the most frequent fulfillment from the morality of the most difficult fulfillment. Let us not mistake the motive of the moral system which demands the most difficult fulfillment as the sign of a moral system. The section of self is not demanded because it is beneficial to the individual, but in order that custom, tradition, may appear as the ruling power, in spite of all individual advantage and longing to the contrary: the individual must sacrifice himself,—such is the commandment of the morality of custom. Those moralists, on the other hand, who, like the followers of Socrates, urge upon the individual the morality of self-control and abstinence as his own advantage, as his most personal key to happiness, manifest the situation: and, if to us it seems so because we have been educated under their influence; they are all pursuing a new path under the strongest dispro- prual of the representatives of the morality of custom; they separate themselves from the community of immorality, and are in the deepest sense bad. In the same way a virtuous Ruman of the old sort regarded every Christian who first and foremost sought his own salvation as bad. In a community and consequently a morality of custom, the idea also prevails that the punishment for the violation of custom falls principally on the community,—that supernatural punishment and limit are so difficult to comprehend, and which is pondered with so much superstitious fear. The community may compel the individual to repair the immediate injury wrought by his deed; it may also take a sort of revenge on him because of the consequences of his deed, the divine thunders and lightnings are gathering over the community; but nevertheless it feels the guilt of the individual principly as its guilt and bears him as a punishment. "The customs have become lax," thus runs the complaint "the soul of each, "such times are possible." Every individual deed, every individual thought, causes a sort of impossible to realize how much in the course of history the rarer, the more select and original, spirits must have suffered in consequence of the fact that they have been too good to have been thought of as good; they felt themselves to be so. Under the dominion of the morality of custom originality of every kind acquired a bad consequence; to this hour the sky of the best of mankind is, in consequence thereof, darker than it should be.

A Good Point to Insist on.
To the Editor of Liberty:
Permit me, an outsider to the ranks of individualism, to express my extreme satisfaction with the remark of Mr. Joseph A. Labadie, in your last issue of Liberty, concerning the essence of Anarchism. He states that there he has made it "a point to insist that Anarchism is purely negative in its philosophy, that it lays down no arbitrary rules for the reconstruction of society, but seeks, as a first step, to do away, not as a final expul- tance for the propaganda of Anarchism, and con- sider the point not only well taken, but pregnant with the best results, if consistently and perseveringly insisted upon. It was the dawning on my mind of this very thought that 'Anarchism begins and ends with liberty' that made me turn to the pages of Liberty, in hope of finding this view logically expounded (it was an orthodox Anarchist-Communist up to that time); hence my elation over Mr. Labadie's remarks. I tried then to advocate this essential limitation of Anarchism in Anarchist (or more properly, "Purist") and Simple (printed in the since defunct "Solidarist" under the nom de plume of F. A. Frank), from which, if permitted, I would quote the following:

Anarchism is essentially nothing more nor less than the elimination of the last vestige of compulsion. It is the principle of the highest possible individual freedom consistent with non-injury to others. It includes nor precludes communism, which claims to formulate the economic relation of future free men. Anarchism is incompatible with slave and wages; it is a principle of social life.

Now, I concur with Mr. Labadie in the point that "this method of presenting Anarchism frees it of all ambiguity and reformation. It does not put us under the necessity of defending either individualism or communism." For this implied ad- mission of an eminent individualist Anarchist that otherwise there may be more or less difference, and consequently the logical possibility, of defending com- munion in Anarchism is only another form of stating, as I did, that Anarchism,"the science of liberty," neither includes or precludes communism.

I rejoice, therefore, to find an ally in Comrade Labadie, and consider this standpoint common ground where all libertarians may honorably drop their respective economic adjuvant from their Anarchist mixtures, and powerless unite to deny and combat the pretense of authorship in the form of Anarchism's enemy, is Anarchism's antithesis, is Anarchism's implicable foe. Let us "relieve Anarch- ism of the burden of furnishing a cure for every con- ceivable ill that does or may fall upon the race, and thereby purge also ourselves of the errors of dogmat- ism and too much hair-splitting in matters irrelevant to the principles of Anarchism proper. It was well said: "the ill that Liberty cannot cure, no one can cure."—J. A. MARXON, M. D.

49 Stanton Street, New York.

The Toad.
[Ennio Zola in Le Plébiscite.]
When a young writer, a beginner, comes to see me,—as often happens, and I always give him welcome,—the first advice that I offer him is this: "Work much, regularly if possible, every morning the same number of hours. Don't be impatient; wait ten years for success and a market. And, above all, don't imitate us; forget your elders."
And my second recommendation is invariably this: "Have you a good literary stomach,—I mean, a solid stock, capable of nourishing and suiting your stupidities, all the abominations, that will be written about your works and yourself? No, I see by your blush, by your tremble, that you are still young, too delicate, and that you are going to cause you much annoyance. Well, every morning, on rising, swallow a good live toad. They are on sale at the markets: your cook will get them for you; the expense is a mere trifle,—three sous apiece, if you buy them by the dozen; and in a few years you will have a literary stomach capable of swallowing the worst articles of contemporary criticism, without the slightest nausea."
By that he meant the article of a worthy man at bottom, but of a limited worthy man, who shuts his eyes and understands the true point of which he speaks. A good toad, in short.

Then there is the poisoned article. This requires some talent; it is generally the work of a brainy man of letters, for he is not likely to poison an article even to the commas. The effort is to put into it all that can wound, all that can injure; to extenuate an author's forgotten phrases, to be reminded of which might disfigure them; to empress the parallel column, in order to give some dread reading mortal doings; to accept of legends those parts which may be fatal in their effect; to set a wolf-trap at the end of every phrase; to cause a river of abominable insinuations to flow through the meanest benefit. Such each word a poisoned arrow the slightest prick from which will kill. I know two or three such writers, incapable either of love or of admiration, whose articles, apparently earnest, are nests of vipers under roses. Perfidy exudes from them as naturally as resin from the pine-trees. What rage, then, flows through their veins, what consciousness of their impudence, that they thus drift upon every creation? One dream of unheard-of basenesses, of dark and ugly souls, of unpenitent persons who, haunted by the mediocrity of their own works, find relief in delling the work that is above them. To these is to my taste, the best of toads, covered with the pusables of envy, swollen with the venom of hatred. When a writer has the luck to swallow one of these, he is immune for months, beyond the reach of the most violent outraged.

Last, there is the mad article. I mean by that the article of a scurrilist, of a political or religious crank. Ah! that misery of intuition, of unrelenting passion, which cannot brook the light of reason and justice! You know them, you do not go! Going on the war-path in the very name of this justice and truth, they assume the most execrable roles, become slanderers and scoundrels and incapable of any proof, infest proof if need be, accept idle tales as de- monstrated certainties, fall furiously upon women and children, show no goodness, no charity, not even that simple good sense which prompts one to forgive in others the manifestations of one's own essential. In this way a what a work they are sure to leave behind them, a work which they imagine to be a work of justice and redemption! See, ten years after their death, some audacious investigator descending into this sewer of insult, where sleep the floods of putrescent, aversive disregarded in fits of manifest madness. To-day perhaps we explain these things to those who can no longer believe, but they must be put upon this mass of ignominy apt in the faces of the noblest, the greatest! I will be left for our grandsons to do the real work of justice and put each work of slanderers, who heap insults upon the radiant glories of to-morrow! Ah! these horrible, green, and stygian toads are as sweet to me as the pastilles of ambrosia which give in advance the divine taste of immortality.

Frankly, these critics, these indefatigable purveyors of toads, astonish me. Why the devil do they follow so ugly a trade?

To injure the authors whom they thus insult! But the calculation is an absurd one; they do not injure them, but serve them. Why do they not perceive the certain, undeniable truth that a writer grows only under the frowns of attacked, the greater the attacks, the more attacked, and, if the attacks cease, they are on the decline. It is an infallible test; they attack me still, then I still exist. The real literal death begins when the attacks cease. Thus to the man and the man. So that the insulter are really only the re- sounding trumpets that proclaim the glory of the writer whose triumphs they assail so furiously. When it is clear that more the more, their shrill and silly obloquy will be silenced. But here shines out the immanente justice of things. They cannot keep silent; they have to bark, like the dog, when the hub is made. I am not unaware of the evidence, in whom on this occasion I am willing to believe, has given us writers abusive critics, as it has given wind to the sail, to swell it and drive it faster to the glorious port of the future. Every eight or nine years we ought to pray heaven to grant us the power our overflowing 1t
calumners, for perhaps we should not exist but for them. Personally, in my modesty I sometimes say to myself that my calumners have given me really too splendid a share, in carrying my name to the four corners of the earth, and in kindly continuing, now that my old age is setting in, to lend me the aid of their voices in my majesty. This was a joyous choice, plus that I remain erect and invincible, their very attack being a confession that they have not ye been beaten me down.

If they cannot injure the people whom they attack, with what reason do they injure? Then, why, they injure themselves! The pages which a critic leaves behind him are terrible testimony: for, if he is mistaken in his work, then he has been in error, just as a witness commits himself to his verdict in the tribunal, and in the presence of the finally triumphant work. I think sometimes of Sainte-Beuve, whose memory certainly has its consoling features, for he has left a goodly number of equitable and definitive judgments; but, if he were to come back, what would be his annoyance to see the huge growth to which Balzac has attained, the unaligned multitude which he exults over in the modern novel, the Balzac whom he so combated and denounced! And Barbey d'Avreilly, and Planche himself, better balanced, more wise of them to remain in their graves, that they may not see most of their declarations reversed or written out of the eternal renewal of human genius, of the writers whom they consigned to oblivion!

Just now I spoke of the unhealthy, well which the master critics live by, persecuted with the mania for insult, is destined to become. But, without descending to these exceptional cases, the fate of which is certain, I am always surprised to see that such a thing as justice and truth is advanced. It is certainly upon the critic who utters it. He can have no excuse except sincerity, and even that will be considered stupidity. And as for the others, those who have acted loudly, from passion or vanity or hatred, they will be convicted of having been vile souls. Never have I read one of the many articles, filled with gall and anger, that have been directed against my books, without feeling a deep sense of compassion for the poor man who wrote it. Still another who wishes to present an unsightly appearance beneath his tombstone when both of us shall be dead and I shall be resting under the ground, content with having acquitted myself of an honest workman's task.

Fall, then, continue to fall upon me, beneficent rain of toads! Continue to give me the courage to look men in the face without a feeling of despair.

Every morning, before the sun rises I say to it that I do not fail to find upon my table, in my new papers, the usual live toad, which has so long helped me to digest my fierce literary life. I know well that this is a hygienic measure which has become necessary to my vigor. And, on the day when my toad shall fall me, I shall know that my end is at hand, and that my last good page has been written.

I am an article for to-day, a toad for to-day, while awaiting the toad of to-morrow and for my joy!

Trade-Union Despotism.

To the Editor of the Liberator:

Mr. Cohen started out by affirming that trade unions were the most thoroughly Anarchistic organizations to which ever existed. Others maintain that trade unions are as despotic and arbitrary as any other organization, and no more Anarchistic than the Pullman or Carnegie companies, etc., and that one and all are essentially bureaucratic, the others, and in No. 329 I attempted to prove it by citing some laws and rules of unions. In No. 334 Cohen has taken the position of justifying the tyranny of "executive power, rules and driving some unions out of town," which is in opposition to the life of the union, and he says that the "conditions" are to be blamed, and not the union men.

How does that prove that unions are the most Anarchistic organizations in our present society?
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