On Picket Duty.

The passage of the anti-immigration bill by the House marks a new departure in American legislation. It is certain that ten years ago so ignorant, absurd, and ridiculous a test as the educational one would not have afforded the slightest chance of becoming law. The stupidity of our legislators could not better be illustrated. They profess to be anxious to keep out the criminals and vicious, and jump at the conclusion that illiteracy necessarily argues criminality. This is not true even in countries where popular education is general, as daily occurrences, to say nothing of a priori reasoning, make plain; but what inference can be made from the fact of illiteracy in a country where there are few public schools and no opportunity for acquiring education? The reasoning of the "scholars in politics," like Henry Cabot Lodge, and the majority of the newspapers, would disgrace a school-boy. The probabilities are that the illiteracy test will keep out thousands of honest and hard-working people, and place no barrier in the way of any respectable number of the criminal and vicious.

With some of the advocates of the educational test is pure hypocrisy. They want to suspend immigration altogether, for a time or permanently, and lack the manliness to say so. General Walker, in the "Atlantic," thinks the country needs a rest from the process of assimilating degraded new-comers, and advocates measures really calculated to accomplish the end in view. His propositions can be discussed seriously. But this educational test is such a piece of idiocy or humbug that patient treatment of it is next to impossible. It is gratifying to see that about half a dozen newspapers in the country perceive the folly of the proposed course.

What a clamor and gnashing of teeth has been caused by that innocent Butler anti-bond bill! All the "sound money" patriots and champions of "national honesty" are up in arms, denouncing the Senate majority as traitors, anarchists, and flat theologians for threatening to pass a bill providing that no bonds shall be issued hereafter without the consent of Congress. Such a restriction of the power of the executive, they shriek, means bankruptcy, silver, and ruin, for the Senate would never give its sanction to an issue of bonds, and would force the secretary of the treasury to pay in silver. The logic of these patriots is somewhat queer. Are they prepared to take the position that the president alone stands between the country and bankruptcy, and that congress is not to be trusted? If so, why leave congress any important power at all? Why not deprive it of all legislative authority, or abolish it altogether? If it is not to be trusted to save the country from "absolute ruin," can it be trusted to deal with matters in which the evils of corruption are less direct and fatal? Congress makes all the laws relating to banking, currency, trade, and yet the patriots have not proposed to deprive it of this power, although it is perfectly clear that, if congress passes certain legislation with the view to prevent bond issues, and the president disregards its design and issues such bonds, the whole work of congress is set at naught.

To say that congress may control currency and banking and revenue, but that it will not do to give it the right to regulate the contraction of debts, is to strain at a gnat after swallowing a camel. Suppose congress should become a silver body; would the "sound money" patriots advise its abolition and the investing of the president with legislative powers?

Lest some one may infer from a paragraph in Mr. Robinson's review of Mr. Tandy's book that Mr. Tandy has dodged the standard-of-value question, I hasten to point out that such is not the case. Throughout his chapter on money Mr. Tandy clearly assumes the necessity of a standard of value, and places himself on record as against those who claim that such a standard is impossible. It is true that he does not attempt to determine what commodity or combination of commodities is best fitted to serve as a standard, but to his mind and to mine that is a comparatively unimportant question,—being a question, not of financial principle, but of banking practice. It is because Mr. Robinson represents Mr. Tandy as "avoiding the important question of a money-standard" that I venture to emphasize the matter, for this way of phrasing it is liable to be misunderstood. The closing paragraph of Mr. Robinson's review suggests to me the further thought that here he takes square issue with one of the central ideas of the book and appears to be unconscious that he does so. The motto on Mr. Tandy's title-page (taken from an article written by me) is: "Equality if we can get it, but liberty at any rate." Mr. Robinson, after properly suggesting that the book would have been improved by a demonstration of the tendency of liberty to produce equality, leads us, in his last paragraph, to believe that he would accept the opposite motto: "Liberty if we can get it, but equality at any rate."

Certainly, to tell us that he wants liberty only for the purpose of securing equality is equivalent to telling us that, should he find that liberty will not lead to equality, while authority will, he would then be ready to accept authority. Now, the only meaning that I can discover here is that Mr. Robinson, if confronted with the alternative, is willing to be a slave in order to procure material comfort,—is willing to sacrifice equality of (contract) rights to equality of conditions. It clears up this matter wonderfully to remember that liberty is nothing but a form of equality,—the equality of rights. I believe that equality of rights is the road to approximate equality of conditions, and that this is to-day the most potent argument in behalf of liberty, or equality of rights; but, if I ever have to choose between these two forms of equality, I shall certainly cling to equality of rights, except in the very extreme case where inequality of conditions is so great as to land me at starvation's door. Does Mr. Robinson really intend to say that he would rather be prohibited from baking his own bread (using this as a symbol of all the prohibitions) if thereby he could be assured a whole loaf, than to live on half a loaf and enjoy the freedom to bake for himself? To my mind there is no greater enjoyment than that of being one's own master.

I am in receipt of an encouraging letter from England. The writer, hitherto unknown to me, has been reading "Instead of a Book," which has so interested him that he desires to subscribe to Liberty and to secure other subscribers in his vicinity. His letter contains the following paragraph: "I have until recently ardently advocated the doctrines of Individualism, after Donisthorpe, but I must confess your work has considerably shaken my faith. I am anxious to thoroughly understand Mutual Banking." I have always preached free money, but mutual banking I knew only from the writings of J. Amsden, and I couldn't exactly make out what he is driving at. Your "Instead of a Book" has, however, thrown a flood of light over the complex mechanism of the currency, and now a more complete study is what I require." I think that my correspondents, after reading "Mutual Banking" and "Involuntary Unemployment," will see more of Mr. Amsden's writings than he saw before. And I would also say to him that to be converted to the teachings of Liberty involves less a departure from Donisthorpe than he supposes; for Mr. Donisthorpe, in reality, is much more advanced than his books indicate. Mr. Donisthorpe publishes his books so long after writing them that the author lags behind the man.
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Mr. Salter's Defence.

III.

I have, it seems, misinterpreted Mr. Salter's remark that "no line of principle can be drawn as to how far a society may go." By principle he did not mean the following principle, but a fixed dividing line. It gives me pleasure to note this important correction. Mr. Salter's italics misled me. I am glad to know that he is prepared to say that society cannot do wrong in two distinct ways at least, either by ignorance of scientific truth in relation to the conditions of social welfare or by deliberately offending against justice and equality. Now, if social action were unanimous action of all the members of society, it is evident that it could never be wrong in the second sense. But, since by social action Mr. Salter means majority action, it is evident that society can be wrong in that sense. If the majority should abolish Anarchy in religion and political discussion, Mr. Salter would condemn it, whether its action were due to ignorance or conscious tyranny. Yet we insist on calling it a "social" action, a "creation of society!"

As I have already dealt with this question at considerable length, no more needs to be said concerning it. As for the contention that no fixed dividing line can be drawn as to how far a majority may go, it follows from the principles I have laid down that the majority has no greater rights than the minority or a single individual. Equal freedom is as binding upon governments and majorities as upon individuals, and involves the abolition of all invasive governmental institutions. It is useless to quote John Stuart Mill on the subject of government. He is obsolete, "overruled." Mr. Salter might as well quote Aristotle and Plato. Mill was influential in "Social Studies" many years ago. The claim of the advanced individualists, and especially of the Anarchists, is that the Kant-Spencer principle of equal freedom covers the entire ground, and defines the sphere of individual action. The claim of any number of individuals to override equal freedom in the name of metaphysical abstractions and fictions is not recognized. The present-day defenders of governments must address themselves to the argument from equal freedom, and attempt to discredit that generalization; any other argument is a waste of energy.

Mr. Salter denies my reference to him as a governmentalist. It is true that Mr. Salter is perfectly willing to consider "each case on its merits" and to withhold everything from government which private enterprise is better fitted to do successfully. I am not aware that there is any school which would not subscribe to the same view in the abstract. The trouble is that the same majority which is alleged to have the right to interfere and crowd out private enterprise is made the judge of the facts regarding the fitnes and success of private enterprise. It is not his idea of what a government can successfully undertake that makes a man a governmentalist; it is his idea of what a man, rightly, fully, does. Mr. Salter is a governmentalist because he asserts the right of the majority to coerce the non-invasive for any purposes it deems necessary and proper.

We come now to Mr. Salter's practical considerations. Having asserted the right of society—of the majority and its government—to interfere in protecting life and property against invaders, in regulating production and exchange, etc., he proceeds to inquire whether it is advisable for government to interfere. With reference to protection, Mr. Salter says that, judging from facts of the past (I trust Mr. Salter will answer Mr. Byington's query as to what particular facts he has in mind), Anarchy would work badly. He adds:

Mr. Varros says: "there is nothing absurd in demanding that protection of life and liberty shall be left to voluntary social action”—surely there is the only question is whether, when it is so left, all the members of a society get it. If they do, anarchy is vastly better and simpler. But the general experience has been that, when such protection has been left to voluntary action, only a few get it.

Why shouldn't all the members get it, if they are perfectly free to organize themselves into defensive associations? In view of the marvelous achievements of private enterprise (among which may be mentioned railroads; telegraphs; telephones; postal improvements; electric power generally; the credit system; benevolent, scientific, literary, and educational societies; detective agencies; insurance; trade unions; etc.), it is rather odd to hear doubts expressed as to the ability of private enterprise to protect life and property. Do we depend on the government for our food, clothes, shelter, information, and recreation? How absurd it is to maintain that private enterprise cannot give us protection against criminals! What can be more wasteful, inefficient, and unintelligent than the management of the police system by government?

As for trade, our lawyers freely express the opinion that more is lost than gained by applying to boards of trade. What is routine, red tape, empty form, delay, stupidity, and blind devotion to precedent, justice is a very rare thing indeed in the courts.

That Anarchy would not work well in the industrial realm Mr. Salter is led to believe by observing contemporary life and the results of the present struggle for existence. He says that Anarchy already exists to a considerable extent in industrial relations, and that it has been found wanting where it has been tried. This is in response to my reminder that there is plenty of restrictive legislation in the industrial realm, and that existing conditions afford no precedent.

Now, in the first place, such liberty as exists in the industrial realm has proved of the greatest value to the workmen. Whatever sin capitalism has to answer for, it is not to be denied that the lot of the masses is steadily improving. The standard of living is higher; wages are rising; hours of labor are decreasing. The poor are not growing poorer, although the rich are growing richer at their expense. Even imperfect liberty has done much for the "lower classes." But it has not done all that justice requires, and the question is whether regulation and interference would have done it. Mr. Salter asserts the right of the majority to coerce the non-invasive for any purposes it deems necessary and proper.
Mr. Salter, indeed, doubts this. He is inclined to think that "the evil of Anarchy" [not of Anarchy, Mr. Salter, but of monopoly, of invasions] are derivable, not from governmental, but from causes deeper-seated than artificial arrangements, such as natural inequality. This is not the place to discuss economic problems in detail. My object was, and is, to show that Mr. Salter was wrong in alleging that Anarchy had failed to produce order and equity in industrial relations, and it is sufficient for this purpose to point to the monopolies of land, credit, banking, and trade, and to throw the burden of proof upon Mr. Salter. It is significant that in his reply he does not even allude to land and currency, and speaks only of protective tariffs as undoubted survivals of governmentalism in the industrial realm. I repeat, therefore, that Anarchy in industry means, first of all, free trade in capital and credit and an equitable system of land tenure. As long as these are lacking, the other liberties can produce no results.

Whether, if we had complete industrial liberty, natural inequalities as to intellect and character and skill would breed evils calling for intervention in a question into which I do not propose to enter here, beyond making the general assertion that mere natural differences in ability and skill have never been proved to be wholesome sources of social evil. Monopoly, legal privilege, and legal inequalities have always and everywhere been the instruments whereby the few have exploited the many. It has never been shown that poverty, misery, and voluntary idleness have been caused by inequalities of income due to inequalities of ability. The problem is whether, if true industrial liberty existed, involving, as it does, access to natural media, an abundant and stable currency, and freedom of trade, poverty and involuntary idleness—not inequality of rewards—would continue to exist. If not, the "labor problem" would be solved, although absolute equality might not exist.

One thing is certain: industrial liberty would not produce any injustice. Here, again, we are face to face with the difficulty of agreeing as to the meaning and definition of justice. Mr. Salter admits that he failed to give a definition of justice in his book, while in his article no attempt is made to supply the omission. He does not even tell us whether the definition which I imputed to him correctly represents his ideas. If, as he admits, it is not unjust for a man who does more work in a given time to get more pay, it is plain that natural inequality cannot produce unjust results in his opinion any more than in mine. Yet, if justice is not what becomes of the alleged duty on the part of brain to serve brawn, instead of buying it at the cheapest rate? It is not unjust for those who have organizing genius to use it for themselves, for they are simply profiting by natural superiority, and take nothing from the labor of others. It is certainly a piece of question-begging for Mr. Salter to assert that the inferior are forced by conditions to accept the terms of the superior as the alternative to starvation and death, for the contention is that, in the absence of monopoly and invasion, the superior would be forced, by the law of supply and demand, to offer equitable terms, and that the inferior would be in a position to decline anything less than the full reward of their labor, the entire value of their contribution to the product. The position of the superior and inferior alike would be vastly changed under a condition of complete industrial liberty.

As for my own conception of justice, it is true that I contended myself with affirmation and definition, and gave no argument. It was not part of my task to prove my conception of justice. It is the Spencian conception, and Mr. Salt can find a comprehensive treatment of the subject in "Justice," and other Spencian works. I accept the Spencian view of justice without qualification, and I supposed that Mr. Salter was familiar with it. It seems, however, that he is not, and a few words may be profitably added.

Yes, equal freedom is synonymous with justice, but industrial freedom alone is not identical with justice, because there are other spheres in which equal freedom is equally essential. We might have equal freedom in industry, and invasion in social, religious, and domestic relations. It is with this thought in mind that I observed that true liberty in the industrial realm would necessarily result in economic justice, meaning thereby that anything occurring in the industrial realm under equal freedom would necessarily be just, because justice—equal freedom in all things—demands nothing in industry but equal freedom.

Mr. Salter, however, thinks my definition of justice far from satisfactory. He declares that he can imagine two men perfectly free, yet one of them, because of a peculiar situation, able to strike an unjust bargain with the other. The trouble is that Mr. Salter again uses the word "justice" loosely. The way to prove that my definition is imperfect is by refuting it. It follows as an obvious corollary from my definition of justice that bargains struck under a condition of equal freedom are necessarily just. This, however, does not mean that they are necessarily always humane and generous. Under ordinary, normal conditions justice doubtless coincides with the demand of the higher sentiments, but under exceptional circumstances a perfectly just act may be ungenerous and even revolting. Mr. Salter should distinguish between justice and beneficence. Just contracts may involve serious hardships, but it is always safer to follow the general principle and enforce them, if such enforcement is not voluntarily waived.

But would you enforce the contract between the drowning man and his heartless rescuer? Mr. Salter will ask. In all probability not, for such a contract could hardly be a just one. True, the rescuer does not use any force, nor is he responsible for the accident, but there are other circumstances which vitiate contracts. Thus the promisor must be sane and in full possession of his faculties, fit mentally to enter into a contract. It will hardly be contended that a drowning man is fit to make a contract. He is not in a position to deliberate and haggle and balance advantages and disadvantages. Usually he is frantic, desperate, "emotionally insane," and utterly incapable of appreciating the consequences. That, at least, would be the verdict of any intelligent jurist, and such a contract as Mr. Salter supposes would not be enforced.

Mr. Salter avers that much of what is going on in the industrial world to-day is on a par with his extreme interpretation. This is hardly accurate, but, even if it should be admitted, nothing more would follow than that under the deprivations of important industrial liberties men are forced to make unjust contracts. That is precisely what Anarchists assert. Because equal freedom does not exist in the industrial sphere, no contract is really just. There is always force, invasion, artificial inequality behind it. But, if equal freedom prevailed, cases of hardship would be extremely rare, and they would result from accident and misfortune—things that have nothing to do with the question of justice between man and man. Equality of opportunity and equality of liberty being given, the free play of supply and demand would result in fair and equitable bargains.

In his concluding paragraph Mr. Salter charges that I have some confusion about his use of the social organism. This I venture to meet by a general and emphatic denial. Mr. Salter, it is true, has attempted to give us his definition of society, and it is a definition which all Anarchists and Spencersians unhesitatingly accept. But, when he asserts that society has rights and duties of its own, he confounds the Spencian conception of the social organism is "imperfect," because Spencer denies the ethical right of the majority to govern the minority, he implicitly advances a different and peculiar definition of society.

Mr. Salter does not detect any inconsistency between the argument from the social organism and the admission that all our prepossessions are in favor of non-interference. But why is liberty always a good in itself, and restraint always an evil in itself? Why, if society is an organism and has the right to interfere, should an attempt at interference provoke resentment and require special justification? It ought, I repeat, to appeal to every member of society as the most natural thing in the world for society to discharge its duty and enforce its right. If it does not, it can only be because of the general and profound feeling that any interference not necessitated by actual aggression is impertinent and wrong. If this feeling were reinforced by clear ideas of the nature of aggression, we should have a régime of equal freedom; in the absence of such ideas we have a thousand and one governmental invasions that affect society disastrously, but there remains the significant fact that men will not submit to restraint unless its urgency is clearly shown to them.

There were a number of minor criticisms in my review with which Mr. Salter has not dealt, but it is not necessary to bring them up again. The main points at issue have now been covered. I conclude by thanking Mr. Salter for his fairness and courtesy as well as for his generous personal references.
logy, and must continue to defend any political philosophy with such weapons as my ethies enable me to wield. If it is possible to make a different and stronger answer to Mr. Salter from the present point of view as mine, I should like to see the attempt made. Mr. Salter doubts not that I do not represent the one person, and that Mr. Tucker’s method of meeting his objections would be essentially dissimilar to mine in some respects. To undertake to deal with the charge of inconsistency which Mr. Tucker has brought against me would involve a reopening of our old ethical controversy, something which I deem inopportune at present. It was Mr. Tucker who requested me to review Mr. Salter’s book, and if there has been any trouble, I know that I could not have averted it. Mr. Salter is probably made possible by our agreement to work for the same object in different ways. We are doing very well, indeed, I think, in view of the fundamental character of our difference.

Mr. Jarros and I.

I agree with Mr. Jarros that he and I cooperate famously, considering that we disagree so vitally. I go further, and say that the success of this cooperation is due in a much greater degree to his own forbearance than to any of which I can boast. But Mr. Jarros is well aware that his position admits forbearance where mine does not. He is responsible only for his own utterances; I am responsible for the editorial columns of Liberty, which contain his utterances and mine. Consequently he does to me no wrong, no harm, by asking me to correct him, even though I think him in the wrong; whereas I am compelled to correct him whenever circumstances make it necessary to admit to the editorial columns the errors which he sometimes intermingles with his truths. If I should not do so, the unity of Liberty’s teaching would be impaired. And I am sure that no man more decidedly approves me in this course than does Mr. Jarros, for he is not one of those flabby persons who believe that an editorial policy gains in force by inconsistency. In fact, I may here supplement his information to the public that it was at my suggestion that he reviewed Mr. Salter’s book with the further information that it was at his suggestion that I printed my disclaimer regarding those portions of his answer to Mr. Salter with which I would not agree. In entering this disclaimer I by no means implied that Mr. Jarros’s answer to Mr. Salter is a failure as a whole. I consider it eminently successful at many points,—yes, at most points; it fails only at the two or three points where, as I have said, Mr. Jarros’s so-called “evolutionary ethics” get in his way. One of these instances of failure is to be found in the present issue, in the manner in which Mr. Jarros deals with Mr. Salter’s position of the drowning man who accepts ruinously harsh terms in order to have his life saved. Those terrible ethics which have subjugated Mr. Jarros compel his adherence to the position that justice is always expedient. Now, his common sense tells him that it would be clearly inexpedient to enforce this drowning man’s contract. So he is under the necessity of showing either that the contract is unjust, or else that there is no real contract. But he has already declared that a contract made under conditions of equal freedom is necessarily just, and, as the conditions in this hypothetical case are precisely those of equal freedom, he is obliged to resort to the extremely weak plea that the drowning man’s voluntarily given consent is not a contract, because a drowning man is emotionally insane, and therefore not one of those sovereign individuals who alone can make a contract.

Certainly the sanity of the drowning man is to be tested solely by his conduct. Now, will Mr. Jarros claim for a moment that the drowning man’s decision, for instance, to give up all his property in order to save his life is an insane decision? Will he claim that the same course is to rescue his terms, and drawn in consequence? Such a claim would be further, in any court, to establish Mr. Jarros’s insanity than that of the drowning man. Will Mr. Jarros desire that he make, having hours of time for reflection and deliberation and lugging, but confronted nevertheless by an alternative as absolute and as serious as that which confronts the drowning man, would finally adopt any other course than that which the drowning man is supposed to adopt? Surely not. Yet, unless he so declares, Mr. Salter, with his drowning man, has him on the hip, and his ethics are found wanting.

The true answer to Mr. Salter is that there is no obligation upon outsiders to enforce any contract, even though it be just, and that, when individuals associate themselves for defensive purposes, they will decide at the start what classes of just contracts it is advisable to enforce. And men who are so afflicted with “evolutionary ethics,” and who know that there are occasions when justice is not the supreme consideration, will decline to enforce the just contract of the drowning man.* In exposing such an error as that into which Mr. Jarros here falls, my purpose is not to chide him, or to reopen our ethical controversy, or to depreciate the invaluable cooperation which he gives me, but simply to protect myself as a teacher of rational politics.

A Great Chance Lost.

The news has just reached me of the death of Mr. Herman Royer of San Francisco, although it occurred as long ago as last December. For ten years or more Mr. Royer had been a reader and strong supporter of Liberty. One of the early converts of Henry George to the Single Tax philosophy, he was slowly but surely rid of it, after a long mental struggle, by a close study of Liberty’s teachings. When I met him for the first time, in 1887, I think, when he was at the east on business, he was still a Single Taxer, defending his view with all the keenness of a strong intellect and the persistence of an extraordinarily severe and determined nature. He was not a man easy to be turned, and it was a long time after his departure from the east before Anarchists finally won him. Tall, straight, and unbounding physically, his mental make-up was in harmony with his exterior. He seemed a man of iron. Yet to those who knew him best there were great depths of feeling beneath his stern exterior. In San Francisco he was a marked individuality. He was a well-known and mod- est man, also an excellent man, and thorough, and was honored for his high integrity and delicate scruple by all who had dealings with him. And he did not conceal his opinions. Wherever he went he made the cause of Anarchism felt and respected, and, though not an open-handed man, he did not in a little distribution of Anarchistic literature. Even under ordinary circumstances the loss of such a man to the cause we should have to deeply deplore.

But the startling fact that I am now to disclose regarding the man whose untimely taking — off to here I declined may well make one ponder over the ironies of fate. Neither a father nor a husband, Mr. Royer had no immediate family. His nearest relative is a millionnaire — brother. The estate which he leaves is estimated at forty or fifty thousand dollars, exclusive of legal judgments which he has incurred. In his favor that may double or treble its value. Sixteen years ago he made a will. At that time a German Freethinker of the Karl Heinzen school, and, as such, by the study of political and social questions to be useful, though as far as I know having then no pronounced economic convictions, he bequeathed his entire property, with the exception of two or three thousand dollars allotted to distant relatives in Germany (since distributed), to the University of the State of California for the foundation of a chair of political economy. At the time of his sudden death from heart failure last December, this will was found, and now stands as his last testament. But I am informed by his two most intimate friends and Anarchistic comrades, Mr. Thomas P. Hovarten, an inventor of high repute, and Mr. George Chumney, president of the San Francisco Mechanics’ Institute, that they know, from earnest conversations held with Mr. Royer during the months preceding his death, that it was his sincere and settled intention to destroy the will of sixteen years ago, and to substitute for it another bequeathing his entire property to me for the propagation of Anarchism. And now, instead, through his careless procrastination, prompted perhaps by confidence in his health, that property goes to the State of California, an institution in which Mr. Royer had lost all belief, to be expended in the teaching of ideas precisely contrary to those which he held, the will being executed by men who were his friends when he appointed them his executors, but whose friendship he had lost because of his radical opinions.

Think of it, my friends and comrades! The influence from his side which might have insured the propagation of Anarchism industriously and successfully, and now this opportunity is lost forever. It is a fact discouraging to contemplate. When Charles O’Connor, the conceded head of the American bar and one of the earliest of Liberty’s subscribers, died a bachelor and left his millions to comparatively distant relatives not in sympathy with his cherished views, I could only wonder and regret, especially when I learned later that the works of
Socialism worries me, Prohibition worries me, Comstockism worries me, the custom house worries me, the banking monopoly worries me, landlordism worries me, and the Single Tax worries me. Do you suppose for a moment, Mr. Hall, that if these things did not worry me, I should be publishing Liberty? Why, my good sir, I am bending all my energies to the throttling of you and all others who propose, from whatever sincere and generous motives, to enforce their will upon non-invasive people. You worry me; indeed you do. I wish most heartily that you would let me and other peaceable people alone, abandon your menacing attitude toward our property, and quit worrying us, so that we might go about our business.

So much for the charge of worry, which Mr. Hall used as an introduction to a complaint against me for printing, and against Mr. Yarros for writing, an article containing the following passages: (1) "Wherever it is profitable to improve land, it is generally improved without the compulsion of the Single Tax"; (2) "How would the Single Tax help labor in England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Italy, and France? There is no land speculation in those countries worth mentioning." With Mr. Hall's objections to these passages I do not propose to deal elaborately; perhaps Mr. Yarros will do so later. But, in vindication of myself, I may say that to point out vacant lots does not overthrow Mr. Yarros's statement that generally land is improved which it is profitable to improve, and that to point to instances of land speculation in European countries does not overthrow Mr. Yarros's other statement that land speculation in Europe is so much less frequent than in newer countries that it is not worth mentioning. The comparative and qualified statements of Mr. Yarros are construed by Mr. Hall into positive and sweeping ones, and then criticized as such. Mr. Yarros's claims amount simply to this,—that land speculation is an overrated evil even in this country, and that in older countries, where the land question is much more serious than here, speculation in land is so small an element in the problem that it may be neglected. Mr. Hall's surprise that I should print such statements is paralleled by my surprise at his hasty and careless reading of them.

It appears further from Mr. Hall's letter that the Single Taxers propose first to capture Delaware, and then to capture the Anarchists. Like the theatrical manager who prefers to test his new play in a country town before making a venture in the city, the Single Taxers will begin by "trying it on a dog." If they succeed with the dog, then they will accept our challenge. Our chances for a fight would be very bad, were it not that the dog, instead of giving bark for bark, is snapping at the Single Taxers' heels. If Delaware continues to send Single Taxers to the lock-up, there is a bare chance that Delaware will be captured through its own stupidity, and then the Anarchists' innings will begin. In view of Mr. Hall's honest admission that the Single Taxers are less intelligent than the Anarchists, the promised attempt of the less to swallow the greater is indeterminate of more value than discretion. It is one thing for the less to worry the greater; it is quite another to swallow it.
Mr. Tandy's "Voluntary Socialism."

It seems incredible to one who sits as I am sitting that there should be a "social question" agitating the minds of men at those degrees away on the surface of the globe.

I am sitting in a hunting-cabin close to the shore of an Adirondack lake. My right hand is rested on a big, wooden oar, my left is chilled by the dumb air from the open door. It is necessary that the door should stay open, for the fireplace smokes, and, if the door were shut, the room would be uninhabitable; as it is, it makes the eyes smart so that writing is difficult.

We have just had a visit from a neighbor, the only neighbor within two miles, a typical Uncle Sam with hollow cheeks, aquiline nose, and goatee beard. He came to greet the arrival—"for we had known him in the past years, and to tell us how his twenty-year-old son had just got a job at twenty dollars a month and board, and a pile of money that is, yes, a pile of money." As he sat "visiting," musing his very leisurely remarks with strangely impassive gaze over rural laughter "---o... o... o... about seventeen, strolled different," in, she too welcomed us. "She had hired out," a town twenty miles away, was at home for a "ye" or two only, she would go again, for months, to a time, her kitchen.

But what has all this to do with Mr. Tandy's book? This—that it brings home to my mind most forcibly the general social system of the Border after reading the book.

It is a difficult matter to criticise such a book. In general, it is a good—a very good—solution of the problem. The problem is this: to present a few large, vast, broad ideas, constituting an organic group to an audience which, if it grasps them at all, is sure to resort to questions of the most minute details.

The danger is that the perspective will be lost, that, in the attempt to bring out the small objects in the distance, the larger grouping of the foreground will be obscured. If the book had been intended for a tract to awaken thought, chiefly, it is to be feared that such would have been the effect. It is probably better to send those to whom are already awake and have, perhaps, already formed other opinions, and who therefore will read with a critical, not a docile mind, the elaboration of the background was doubtless unavoidable.

The subjects of land, money, currency, special privileges, government, egoism, and the allied topics familiar to the readers of Liberty are taken up, one by one, and are treated in a very clear and satisfactory way, the only objection I could think of having, as I have said, the sense of the proportionate importance of the topics is not quite as well preserved as might be wished.

Nevertheless the book is an admirable one for bringing the idea of freedom to the converted mind.

The important question of a "real standard" Mr. Tandy—very wisely, I think—avoids, urging that only under freedom can the real standard be determined by experiment. Theoretically, no doubt, all measures of value continually fluctuate, as do all measures of other things; the main difference is that in measurement of time, distance, and volume, the conditions are so simple that we can easily preserve them, and say that a certain brass rod, at a certain temperature, and with certain barometrical and electrical conditions, shall be a standard, as measures of time, distance, and volume, and so on are so various, so complicated, that we cannot prescribe just the state of affairs under which any given commodity shall be taken as a measure. Yet within such a circle, and only, and instance, the conditions are so simple that we can easily approach an unvarying value and be as truly material as the combined brass and iron rods with which the most perfect pendulums are constructed.

But this is what I should like to see worked up a little more in the next edition. It is the very important fact, in connection with evolution and the survival of the fittest, that with the beginning of society, properly so called, the intense competition of individual with individual, permitting the survival of but one perfect type, ceased; and the possibility begins of several different types surviving and prospering better than could a single type alone; so that the strong man will then be better off for the weak man and the weak for the strong, the clever for the stupid and the stupid for the clever. This, in short, is what we should have the basis of a community do the same thing, we call it a herd, not a society; but, when some ants are fighting, some workers, and some have still other functions, we recognize as the very tendon.

So with primitive man. While all are hunters or fishermen, the social development is least. When the man becomes an arrow maker, society takes a step in development.

The highest society is that in which there is the greatest number of functions, requiring the greatest variety of types of men to fulfill them, and the least possible sacrifice of life for lack of a suitable function. That is, the more reasonable scale of the past is felt to be incompatibl with the further differentiation of an industrious society.

In such a society, moreover, difference of capacity and corresponding difference of function imply, not only greater, but substantially greater, rewards to labor. Upon this foundation, and to satisfy this instinct the Communist Anarchists insist upon putting equality before liberty; not as seen, by the men of 1789, that equality follows liberty.

And this brings me back to where I started with the old backwoods farmer and his daughter. Equality follows liberty, and fraternity follows equality.

Here, where the oppressions that deny liberty are least, the social condition is least advanced. For the "hiring-out" girl may not be relegated to the kitchen, and expected to stand while her employer lectures her. She, too, is a man and brother; she will come in and expect a chance to get a good position in the house and a "warm word." You may hire her services, but not her subserivency. Her brother, at twenty dollars a month, though he estounds it as "a pile of money," is not to be chided in rows of brass buttons, or expected to make his own bed every time he speaks to you. He would starve first.

And here the house, staid uncheck'd, no deprecators trespass. An unoccupied house may be used by a belated traveler, but everything is safe in his hand.

People talk of the impossibility of such an Arcadian state for hundreds of years, forgetting that through the greater part of the country it exists now.

So strongly does the desire for fraternity appeal to the hearts of men that it seems to me most important, however clearly and coldly we preach liberty, that we should never forget that, after all, it is but a means to an end, and that we should satisfy our desires for fraternity and equality that we desire liberty.

John Beverley Robinson.

Rights to the Land.

To the Editor of Liberty:

The discussion of the land question carried on for some time ago by you and Mr. Yarros, is to say, interesting to one up a tree. Still, I cannot see that either you or Mr. Yarros has disposed of the question as to whether man has a right to the use of the earth, either from your point of view as a matter of expediency, or from Mr. Yarros's position of absolute ethics.

In No. 267 of Liberty you say: "The contract to observe and enforce equal freedom is, in Liberty's eyes, simply an expedient adopted in consequence of the discovery that such observance and enforcement is the best, say, the only means by which men can avoid the inevitable conflict of interests which themselves destroy the highest advantages of life." [Unics mine.]

Your purpose was, as I understand, to show (1) that the equal right to the use of the earth is a corollary of the principle that anyone shall have a right to the equal freedom; (2) that the principle of equal freedom is not a law at all. You have proven to my entire satisfaction the second proposition; but that does not dispose of the question of the equal right to the use of the earth.

If I had found expedient to enforce equal rights in other things, I was no less in the matter of land? Without the right to use land, the enforcement of equal liberty in all other matters would be worse than mere patchwork; it would be the enslavement of the masses of the people in perpetuity. They could not emancipate themselves at all or those they recognized the spurious rights of land-owners.

My contention is not vitiated by your disclaimer that in special cases and under abnormal circumstances liberty may be disregarded without invalidating the truth of the general principle, for you do not claim that you hold the right of land in any other than abnormal cases. Under the Single Tax regime, a few unimportant cases might have to be considered as special or even abnormal, but this would occur in most other departures of society from the truly ideal.

If the foregoing reasoning is correct, there is no room for the "occupancy and use" theory, whatever that may mean. I have often seen the phrase in Liberty, but it was usually used in a sense that did not rise to the dignity of respectable empiricism. I have never seen an explanation, or even a definition, of "use and occupancy" in regard to land. It has always seemed to one of obscure thought to be a misused word, with which inconvenient difficulties are dispensed of with a wave of the pen. Liberty would oblige a large contingent by discussing the question fully.

No one is in regard to the statement of Mr. Yarros in No. 310 that he is "free to admit that the taxation of economic rent for general public ends, if voluntarily agreed to, would be a more perfect arrangement in some respects, but the use of force to bring it about would be extremely unwise." This is not quite clear; it may mean the use of force in the initiation of the Single Tax, or in "special" and "abnormal" cases. I take it to refer to the latter. The manner of determining what the economic rent is to be purely arbitrary, or what amount to the thing—automatic.

If equal rights to the use of the earth be granted (whether from principle or laws cuts no figure), then all men have a right to collect rent from those who use it better than free labor. The "product of land" would collect such rent himself, if he had the power, failing in this, a contract is entered into, tacitly or formally, for the purpose of collecting rent. There is no more difficulty in forming such a contract than that one to maintain "occupancy and use," for the evident reason that a decided minority would hold the most valuable land under the "occupancy and use" land tenure, which is at best only a second-cause to remove from the general evil of restricting "allies" or holding land.

Alex. Horr.

Systems of Land Tenure.

To the Editor of Liberty:

The more free that there exists a land question may be taken as prima facie evidence that the prevailing system of private ownership of land, based on fraud or conquest, is to be rejected. Four systems of land tenure are advanced by more or less vigor: (a) the "administration" with division of product, (b) Periodical division of land, (c) Occupancy and use,—the system Liberty champions.

Absolute possession, subject to a tax sufficient to absorb economic rent.

The objections to theories (a) and (b), in an advanced state of civilization under conditions of freedom, are so obvious that it would be a waste of time to recount them. The two systems that deserve the most careful consideration are the "occupancy and use" theory and the "Single Tax" theory.

I need not dwell on the difficulties involved in any system of land tenure, or any occupancy and use. Its most able advocates fully appreciate these objections, and they rest their hopes on the uncertain and dilatory decisions of juries selected from the registered, or tax-paying, inhabitants of the community whose lands are involved. The solution that determines the destinies of the human race, the question arises: will not the decisions of juries be determined mainly, if not wholly, by the tax-paying inhabitants of the community whose lands are involved? This question resolves itself into a question of taxation: who will pay the taxes, when the revenues of the "administration" depend on voluntary contributions?

Individuals will locate where they can throw away the least tillage yet get the most from it. This is only a particular application of the general law that "man will seek to satisfy his desires with the least exertion." Each land-owner will do all he can to increase the value of the land he owns. Whatever will increase the benefits obtainable in any location will draw more people, and each addition of population will increase the desirability of the locality. The land...
Anarchist Letter-Writing Corps.

The Secretary wants every reader of Liberty to send in his name for enrolment. Those who do so thereby pledge themselves to fight every form of privilege in the world. The form containing the list of those enrolled is a letter, every fortnight, on Anarchism or kindred subjects, to the "target" assigned in Liberty for that fortnight, and to make it his business to write frequently. In case of failure to write to a target (which it is hoped will not often occur) the secretary may temporarily withdraw from the work of the Corps. All who become members, or as they are called, enrolees, will receive a list of names and addresses of all the enrolees, and of two bulletins, one weekly and one bi-weekly, each of which will be of the greatest interest and value to every successful writer. The Secretary, at the close of each month, will publish a list of the names of those who have been successful in writing to the targets assigned to them, and of those who have failed to do so.

Address, Stephen T. Brayton, East Harwich, Vt.

Please note change of secretary's address.

Members should remember that they are not in any way whatever bound to follow my directions in writing to targets. I usually give brief suggestions of possible lines of attack, because I have been requested to do so in order to make members' work easier. But no member is in any case bound to pay any attention to these hints. On the contrary, if ideas for the letter have suggested themselves to you independently of my advice, the better the better, and do not hesitate to send them to your editor for your letter. Neither are you bound to write on the particular subject for the sake of which I named that target—not even when I especially request that letters be confined to a given subject; though, of course, when I wish such a limit, I request it. I wish not to confine you to a single form of subject, unless your reasons for not doing so are very strong. When asked members to write commentary on the articles of Liberty, we recommended them to consider theSingle Taxer limited, while not insisting, is prepared at all times to take a larger and larger portion of economic rent, or any other type of advantage that exists in the market. Some may lastly decide that, if the above reasoning is correct, voluntary taxation would be just as valid a application of the Single Tax without a report to force. At that sight it does look like the "Single Taxer limited," but that the resemblance is illusory may be ascertained by observing this essential difference: the "Single Taxer limited," while not insisting, is prepared at all times to take a larger and larger portion of economic rent, or any other type of advantage that exists in the market. Some may lastly decide that, if the above reasoning is correct, voluntary taxation would be just as valid a application of the Single Tax without a report to force. At that sight it does look like the "Single Taxer limited," but that the resemblance is illusory may be ascertained by observing this essential difference: the "Single Taxer limited," while not insisting, is prepared at all times to take a larger and larger portion of economic rent, or any other type of advantage that exists in the market. Some may lastly decide that, if the above reasoning is correct, voluntary taxation would be just as valid a application of the Single Tax without a report to force. At that sight it does look like the "Single Taxer limited," but that the resemblance is illusory may be ascertained by observing this essential difference: the "Single Taxer limited," while not insisting, is prepared at all times to take a larger and larger portion of economic rent, or any other type of advantage that exists in the market. Some may lastly decide that, if the above reasoning is correct, voluntary taxation would be just as valid a application of the Single Tax without a report to force. At that sight it does look like the "Single Taxer limited," but that the resemblance is illusory may be ascertained by observing this essential difference: the "Single Taxer limited," while not insisting, is prepared at all times to take a larger and larger portion of economic rent, or any other type of advantage that exists in the market. Some may lastly decide that, if the above reasoning is correct, voluntary taxation would be just as valid a application of the Single Tax without a report to force. At that sight it does look like the "Single Taxer limited," but that the resemblance is illusory may be ascertained by observing this essential difference: the "Single Taxer limited," while not insisting, is prepared at all times to take a larger and larger portion of economic rent, or any other type of advantage that exists in the market. Some may lastly decide that, if the above reasoning is correct, voluntary taxation would be just as valid a application of the Single Tax without a report to force. At that sight it does look like the "Single Taxer limited," but that the resemblance is illusory may be ascertained by observing this essential difference: the "Single Taxer limited," while not insisting, is prepared at all times to take a larger and larger portion of economic rent, or any other type of advantage that exists in the market. Some may lastly decide that, if the above reasoning is correct, voluntary taxation would be just as valid a application of the Single Tax without a report to force. At that sight it does look like the "Single Taxer limited," but that the resemblance is illusory may be ascertained by observing this essential difference: the "Single Taxer limited," while not insisting, is prepared at all times to take a larger and larger portion of economic...
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