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**ESSAYS ON THE SOCIAL
PROBLEM:**

**“WHY I AM AN ANARCHIST”—“DOWNFALL OF
NATIONS”—“HEREDITY”—“SURVIVAL OF THE
FITTEST”—“THE WAR SPIRIT”—“ANARCHY AND
THE FARMER”—“MODERN COMMERCE”—“POPULAR
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“COMMUNISM”—“IS ANARCHISM PRACTICABLE
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— BY —

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ESSAYS ON THE SOCIAL PROBLEM.

Why I am an Anarchist.

We find ourselves in a world of conflicting ideas, and every person who has individuality enough developed to be more, in human life, than a domestic animal or lifeless machine, must align himself with others who hold the same opinions, whether he will or not, and then he is in the view of others, and perhaps in his own view, labeled with the name of the idea he holds. So we find that nearly every person is labeled, and some persons have a number of labels.

Finding that we must be something—must hold to certain ideas and work for certain ends—if we work at all, or amount to any more in human life than an ox, or an ax, it very naturally follows that we will adopt and work for the prevalence of such ideas as will bring us the greatest happiness, now or by and by. That is why I am an Anarchist. I am convinced that to work for the realization of the Anarchist ideal will bring me more satisfaction than an adherence to, or working for, any other ideal would bring me.

But every one should be able and willing to give a reason for the “faith that is within him,” and I will try and do so.

I find myself in a world of sunshine and shade; of joy and sorrow; of happiness and woe. All around me I see fellow beings; beings that are constituted very much as I am, have similar desires, hopes and aspirations. I find that they are constantly trying to gratify these desires; to realize their hopes and attain to that for which they aspire. I find further that they can do these things only by exploiting inorganic nature, and by assisting each other. I find that as things are now, these beings instead of mutually assisting each other are constantly striving to injure each other, not because they take delight in the suffering of a fellow, but because they see no other way of satisfying their desires and aspirations. They think this state of affairs wrong, and are constantly clamoring for a change, but have not yet learned the great fundamental fact of human solidarity—of our interdependence.

Essays on the Social Problem

Long have the various members of the human family sought to adjust themselves to environment, and of late have begun to endeavor to adjust the environment to suit themselves. All mankind craves for freedom, but most of the people have sought to gain freedom by subjugating others, or by restricting all alike. They have not learned that they cannot be free while they are holding others, or while they seek to restrict the freedom of others. No one desires to be injured, and yet no one can be secure from injury as long as he injures others. We all wish to be free from injury. I crave for freedom. I see that others want the same condition, and I know that my freedom can be made secure only by the freedom of all others. I know of no other ideal but Anarchy that, if really would secure freedom to me and to all others, therefore I am an Anarchist.

I long for plenty; for a sufficiency of the material necessities of life to make it possible for me to satisfy all my physical cravings, and I know that all others want the same thing. I see that the Earth yields abundantly; that it is possible for human beings to produce all the material necessities required to satisfy their physical cravings, and that if they would stop restricting and interfering with each other and turn their attention to production and mutual assistance, they could have every material comfort they desire. Anarchy is the only theory that, if put into practice, would secure this abundance and at the same time secure full liberty. Consequently I am an Anarchist.

I love my fellows, some of them at least, and pity those who suffer. I desire association with my fellow humans, and crave their friendship. I have a horror of violence and of the shedding of blood. I find that, as a rule, the other members of the human family are influenced by the same emotions, and I see that these emotions are warped and stifled by the conditions by which we are surrounded. I realize that Anarchy would be a condition that would tend to develop these emotions, and to eliminate the emotions of hatred, revenge, jealousy and envy, by disuse: That in Anarchy association would rest upon mutual attraction, that all such hindering barriers as class distinction, rank, title or wealth would not exist, and so I am an Anarchist.

I love the beautiful. It gives me joy to see gorgeous sunsets, towering mountains, picturesque scenes. It increases my happiness to see bright cheery faces, happy people and comfort. I take great delight in works of art, in poetry and music. I do not enjoy these things alone. I wish to share my joy with others. As things are today the ability to enjoy these things is

crowded or crushed out of most people, and I must have my enjoyment of them constantly marred by the lonesomeness I feel when trying to communicate my joy to those I love, or with whom I associate. I know that many who have great artistic power; who could add much to the world's stock of art, poetry and music, are prevented from so doing by the hard necessities that surround them, and I see that Anarchy would remove the stifling conditions that kill the appreciation of the beautiful and prevent the development of the artistic. I am, for these reasons, an Anarchist.

All this and much more goes to make up the reasons for my adherence to, and advocacy of Anarchy.

Downfall of Nations.

Since the downfall of nations has been attributed to religion, it seems well to call attention to a few facts in relation thereto. Nations have risen in power and glory in proportion to the wealth created by the toilers of those nations and the ability of the privileged classes to exploit the toilers and appropriate the wealth to their own use and for the splendor of the "Court." Religion has been used to keep the masses submissive and obedient to authority until authority had so entrenched itself behind a multitude of privileges, extended to its supporters, that it could only be curtailed in its operation by its total destruction. In this respect religion has contributed to the downfall of nations; by helping to build them up. For no nation can fall until it has arisen, being an artificial arrangement, having within itself all the potentialities of oppression, enslavement, and the extinction of individual character. But no nation, society, or organization can rise above the individuals composing it. National character cannot exist when individual character is gone. This being true, when the nation has exterminated individual character the nation dies and becomes a thing of the past.

This is the history of most of the nations of antiquity. A small horde of free barbarians could easily overrun a "great nation" when it had reached the height of its glory and its toilers had become characterless.

Where disruption has come from within it has been on account of the undying desire for freedom of the toilers. Whenever a people had

individuality enough to resist the enslavement which always comes with the rise of power and glory in nations, revolutions have occurred and nations gone down, as a result of the existence of individual character. So it is evident that nations cannot continue. If they grow strong enough to destroy individual character, they will die of inertia. If they cannot succeed in extinguishing individual character, then the individuals will, in the struggle for greater freedom, extinguish the nations.

It is evident that whatever helps to overthrow a nation is a good thing, but it would be hard to prove that any system of religion has ever existed that acted as a direct cause in the downfall of nations.

Infidel nations, nations that do not recognize any religion whatever, are as sure to fall as one that is founded on religion. The repression of individuality and the exploitation of labor, and the ostentation of vast wealth, will work the downfall of any nation—government—be it religious or non-religious.

Heredity.

Lord, we are vile, conceived in sin,
And born unholy and unclean;
Sprung from the man whose guilty fall
Corrupts his race and taints us all.

This old hymn sums up the old Calvinistic conception of heredity, and many who imagine themselves emancipated from old superstitions hold very much the same view of heredity. The old conception was based on the "fall of Adam," and, strange as it may seem, the hereditary taint of Adam's sin has been transmitted through countless millions of persons that have lived since his time. Many of those who repudiate the original sin theory, and deny the fall, have adopted the theory of heredity, in order to account for much that they see in the human race, or in individuals, which seems to them otherwise inexplicable. In so doing they often fail to discriminate between what is inherited and the effect of environment, and often unwittingly fall into the same error as the one expressed in the aforementioned hymn. Some who have written voluminously and quite sagely on social topics have had much to say about hereditary crime, and

have tried to trace most of the crimes that have startled the world, to an hereditary taint; to a desire inherited from criminal parents, or perhaps from a long line of criminal ancestors. The advocates of this theory make such plausible arguments, and bring such an array of facts, which at first sight seem to sustain the theory, and compare them with the really scientific facts of heredity, that the non-critical students are drawn into tin acceptance and advocacy of these theories.

In order to distinguish between the truly hereditary characteristics of any given individual, and acquired characteristics, it is necessary to understand the effect of environment upon the individual, as well as to know what we inherit and what we acquire. I make bold to claim that morals are not inherited. They depend upon the economic conditions of a people, and upon their beliefs and knowledge. We inherit our physical structure, but even that is powerfully modified by environments, traits and characteristics which are special to any individual on account of peculiarities of the organism, which have been inherited, must display themselves in accordance with the conditions under which said individual lives. For instance: Owing to a peculiarity in the structure of the organs of taste, which has been inherited, a child may have an unusual love of sweets. It is evident that the child will try to satisfy this desire for sweets by eating sugar, honey, candy, or other sweet things that it can get possession of. So far the action of the child is strictly in accord with the hereditary tendency. It is neither moral nor immoral. But if the child is prohibited the eating of sweets, an driven on by this hereditary tendency, takes such sweets as it can get, in spite of the prohibitory command of the parents, immediately it is called a bad child, and the orthodox Christian attributes it to original sin, while the infidel believer in heredity begins to search for some criminal amongst its ancestors in order that the propensity to steal may he traced according to "scientific rules" of heredity. But allow the child free access to the sugar bowl, and he is no longer a thief, but a good boy, fat and jolly, his mother's joy. So you see the hereditary taint in the child is not a moral quality at all, and only his acts are moral or immoral, in so far as they are in accord with, or in violation of, the moral standard recognized by his associates.

It matters not how many generations of ill-fed or degraded individuals may make up the ancestry of any person; if he may satisfy his craving for food whenever he is hungry, freely and fully, and has such association and surrounding as to draw out and develop the nobler faculties, all the

hereditary taint of a long line of degraded and hungry ancestors can not prevent him from becoming, at least, an average man.

Traits and characteristics of even the physical structure are so easily influenced by environments that we never see two children of the same parents that are exactly alike, either in features or disposition. They all may have the family resemblance, some may have the features of the father, some of the mother and others of the grand parents, but, owing to prenatal and antenatal conditions, and possibly other causes too subtle for us to trace, they all differ in a greater or lesser degree. It will be seen from the observation of these facts that the effect of heredity upon persons is modified by numerous other influences, known and unknown, some within our power to control and some beyond our power to control. This being the case it is evident that those who object to putting our theories into practice, or to trying to gain freedom, because people are too degraded as a result of enslavement, do not understand the effect of environment upon the individual. The illustration of the child that loves sweets is applicable to nearly every action that is counted moral or immoral, and is the result of hereditary tendency. No matter what desires a person may have, if he or she be free to satisfy this desire, its satisfaction would not be immoral. The desire to kill others, which some upholders of law claim is so common, is not inherited to any such extent as they seem to imagine, and under free conditions, wherein there is nothing to fight over, and everything tends to stimulate and increase the social instincts, that desire would make itself manifest in deeds of violence only on rare and unusual occasions. The desire to get something for nothing; to hoard wealth; to take advantage of one's fellows; all these desires that are said to be inherited, and to make freedom impracticable, are not hereditary tendencies at all. If all had the opportunity to produce for themselves, or co-operatively, they would not care to get "something for nothing" from one another. If they felt sure of plenty all their life, they would have no desire to hoard. If all stood on an equal footing, and praise was not bestowed upon those who are "above" others, no one would care to take advantage of his fellows. It follows, then, that when environment is taken into consideration, we have nothing to fear from hereditary taint in contemplating unbounded freedom.

Survival of the Fittest.

Now that evolution is a recognized fact, and its evidences are discerned by a large number of persons in all walks of life, the upholders of the present order of things seek to prove the "naturalness" and perpetuity of present social and economic conditions by asserting that all these things are an evolution, consequently could not be otherwise. In excuse, or justification, for the inequalities that exist they tell us that it is according to natural law, that the fittest must survive.

Let us examine into the foundation of this remark and see if it will bear the light of investigation. If the theory of the survival of the fittest is true, and if we admit the premises, there is no escaping the conclusion. Not being satisfied with the conclusion, it becomes necessary to re-examine the premises and see if they accord with the facts.

The theory, briefly stated, is this: given a definite area of soil—an acre or the entire earth—a number of plants and animals start life together. They increase in numbers in a geometric ratio. As long as there is room for the ever increasing numbers, there is no straggle, but the increased numbers overflow into the unoccupied territory. But when the entire given area is fully occupied, the constant increase of individuals makes the continued existence of them all impossible. Hence the struggle for existence which is presented in plant and animal life. In this struggle some must perish, others will survive. Those that survive are termed the fittest, because they have survived, their survival being the proof of their fitness. Alter the conditions under which this struggle is going on, and immediately those plants and animals which were the fittest become the unfit and perish, while those which had previously been amongst the unfit, immediately prove themselves the fittest, and either partially or wholly, exterminate those that previously dominated the field. It is evident, then, that fitness to survive, depends upon the conditions under which the struggle for existence takes place. Then, again, it is only when the means of subsistence are limited, and the beings dependent upon these means exceed the number that can possibly subsist thereon, that the struggle for existence reaches that stage where some must perish in order that others may exist.

Bearing these facts in mind it is clear that any theory which justifies the luxury of some and squalor of others, as survival of the fittest, is not

founded on facts, but on a false, premise, for the purpose of misleading those not thoroughly acquainted with the facts upon which the theory rests.

I am free to admit that, under any given conditions, the fittest must survive. This is simply a fact, and does not imply justice nor injustice. If, then, political economists are right in considering the present conditions an evolution, not within our power to change, the logic of the argument is—the means of subsistence being limited, the ones that can supply their wants, and thus survive, are the fittest. The cruel, the cunning, the unscrupulous and indifferent to sufferings of others, under these conditions, become the fittest.

Let this idea get possession of the mass of suffering humanity, that it is intended to keep in subjection, and they may see the logic of it and make short work of those who consider themselves the fittest, and by the force of their numbers, and through desperation, prove themselves the fittest to survive, in a remorseless war of extermination. Who would be the fittest if the cities were burned and the cold chilly rain drizzling down incessantly on men, women and children, sheltering themselves as best they might, in poorly constructed hovels? The theory of the survival of the fittest justifies mob violence as well as the lawful methods of commerce. It is only a question of might.

But does the number of human beings now on the earth so press upon the means of subsistence that strife and violence are necessary to determine who shall exist and who shall perish? Most assuredly not. The struggle for existence now is due to monopoly: to the legal restriction of natural opportunities. It is an indisputable fact, that there are an abundance of resources to supply a much larger population than now exists on earth. This being the case there is no reason for any struggle between individuals in order to exist.

If those who now enjoy life at the expense of others insist on prevents others -from utilizing the natural resources, and thus providing themselves with the necessities of life,- and in thus making human life a fierce struggle, then they must not complain if their victims awake some day to the logic of the theory, m persistently put forward in justification of the distinctions existing in society today, and, acting thereon, drive them from the mansions and palaces, and compel them—once the fit, but now the unfit—to toil that the once unfortunate may revel in luxury which they once enjoyed.

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Such conditions are not necessary, nor are they desirable. The only struggle necessary to the existence of all, is a struggle with the crudities of inorganic nature, and with the weeds and brambles.

Imagine a condition of freedom, a condition in which every one has an equal opportunity with every one else. Superabundance of the requisites of life, culture and refinement, would soon exist. Under these conditions who would be the fittest? Those who took best care of themselves, that lived such lives as to give themselves strength, health and vigor. The careless, the indifferent, those who acted so as to break down their health, those would be the "unfit," the ones who first would "perish."

Now it only remains to be said, that, considering that our fitness depends largely upon ourselves, it behooves all true revolutionists to show that they understand this theory and, if the ruling class will not hearken to reason, will not allow a re-modeling of conditions so as to give full liberty to each and all, then they must prove themselves the fittest to survive not only in theory but also in fact. They must show that they can endure more exposure, cold, hunger and suffering than their victims, or—the others proving themselves the fittest—they must perish.

The War-Spirit.

I hate that drum's discordant sound
Parading round and round and round;
To thoughtless youth it pleasure yields,
And lures from cities, farms and fields,
To sell their liberties for charms
Of tawdry lace and glittering arms,
And, when ambitious voice commands,
To march, and fight, and fall on foreign lands.

I hate that drum's discordant sound
Parading round and round and round;
To me, it speaks of ravaged plains,
Of burning towns and ruined swains;
Of mangled forms and broken bones;
Of widows' tears and orphans' moans,
And all that misery's hand bestows
To swell the catalogue of human woes.

—Thomas Paine.

The war spirit has been extolled as the noblest quality of man. It has been made the subject of essays and philosophical dissertations. It has been one of the great themes of the poet and the novelist, and has been constantly shown on the stage. All of these great moulders of public opinion have for ages tried to impress upon their devotees the idea that the war spirit is the great moving and ennobling power that raised humanity above the brutes. The horrors of war have been described by some men of genius, but their voices have been drowned by the roll of the drum and the chants of adoration raised to the conquering warrior. Military commanders have been given places in institutions of instruction; they have been petted and feasted in society as some sort of superior beings. They have been put into positions of trust and influence, and the young taught to look upon them as worthy of unusual honor. So widespread is the war spirit that even religious bodies, going forth to spread a gospel of "peace on earth and good-will toward men," as they have claimed, have adopted the organization and discipline of armies on a war footing,

Everywhere this spirit of domination, of aggression, of rule or ruin, or "do as I say or I'll kill you," has warped the minds of men and turned

energies to murder that otherwise would have been turned to a better purpose. It has been the mainstay of all forms of authority, and an ever ready safety-valve to draw off the unrest of the people when the privileges of the parasites have been threatened.

In looking back over the history of the past we find all its pages stained with human blood. Everywhere the people have been taught to fight as a duty, and everywhere the ruling classes have caused the poor, deluded, honest, wealth-producing people to slaughter each other on the field of battle. Rivers of blood have flown; millions of widows and orphans have mourned; the tenderest ties have been broken and the most endearing conditions of life destroyed because the war-spirit dominated the minds of men; and they, poor fools, flung themselves into the heat of battle at the command of some potentate—some pompous parasite. All this blood has been wasted: this loss of life was of no good to those who bled or to their dear ones.

In our own day the war spirit is inculcated as much as possible, at school and in church, by the press and from the rostrum. War scares are numerous, and military organizations are spread from one end of Christendom to the other. Not only the school children, but also the attendants at some of the Sunday schools are drilled in military tactics, and squads of boys, too young to realize the awful gravity of what they are doing, go marching down the streets of our great cities, dressed in military uniforms, bearing guns, and stepping to the time of a snare drum. Long articles are written by eminent men to prove that the war spirit should be cultivated in the young. The ruling class begins to fear that the poor will quit fighting their battles for them. The idea is gaining ground that if kings and congresses want war they may do the fighting.

Workingmen begin to see that the militia is used against them in their straggles with their employers, and much has been written and said concerning what can be done to correct this evil. Some have proposed that the working men join the militia, but in New York City members of Trades Unions are debarred from joining by officers of the militia. In some places entire companies of militia, composed entirely of trades unionists, have been proposed. But oh, how few have seen that no matter how many trades unionists are members of the militia, they will be flung against their fellow unionists in case of strike or lockout. Pretty sight! Beautiful sight! Men who have met in the union and called each other brother, brought out, gun in hand, at the command of a braggart bully, liable at any moment to be given

the order "fire" at their brothers, perhaps of the same local. When will the Trades Unions and all their members refuse to belong to any military organization? When will working men see that military organizations are to keep them in subjection, and secure their robbery for the benefit of the parasites? When will people learn that war only brings anguish, destruction and death, and that all the desirable things of life come as a consequence of industry, never as a consequence of war?

When we have grown wise enough to banish the war spirit from amongst us: when all persons will refuse to use force against their fellows, then the power of the oppressor will be gone. No more could proud wealth rob patient industry and laugh in its face. Never again could the efforts of strikers be crushed by the militia. The power of the State would be gone, and the producers be able to maintain possession of their products. Then those who toil and create the wealth of the world could assert their power, and by combining their efforts raise themselves beyond all danger of want or privation, and forever place themselves in position to enjoy all the comforts, the luxuries, the arts and sciences. But as long as the war-spirit sways men as it does today; as long as men will take up arms against their fellow-men; will march and drill, and obey the command of a "superior," just how long will the parasitic class continue to fatten on the industry of labor, and uphold their privileges by inciting one section of working men against another section, and arousing the war spirit within them.

Wealth producers refuse to longer allow the foul fiend of war to urge you on to self-destruction: to cause you to slaughter one another in the interest of your common enemy. Refuse to fight!

Anarchy and the Farmer.

Usually the farmer and his vocation are overlooked in the discussion of socio-logic questions, or as it is called "the labor question," the city toiler and factory operative occupying the greater part, if not all, of the discussion. The farmer has been a dreaded and hated factor in economics by the old style Trade Unionist and advocate of "fair wages," and has stood so clearly out against the political sky as an individualist, that the State

Socialists have instinctively recognized in him a great barrier to their schemes of governmentalizing everything.

The farmer loves his lands, his flocks and herds, or orchards and meadows, as the case may be, and does not take kindly to the idea of having his farm taken by the government, and his work laid out for him by a committee. On the other hand he knows when to plow and when to sow, when to harvest his wheat and when to shear sheep. Experience has taught him better than any book-learned professor could tell him.

Socialist editors of the De Leon type try to get rid of him by declaring that agriculture is becoming an industry and that the property-holding farmer will soon exist only in history. This satisfies the average farmer-hating city Social Democrat, who rejoices in the foreclosure of farm mortgages and points with sanguine assurance to the big bonanza farms in proof of his pet theories.

Meanwhile the farmer goes on feeding the world and is undergoing hardships and struggles such as he alone can know.

The farmer of America feels the pressure of "hard times" and is "squeezed" by combinations of railroads, elevators and commission merchants, as long as there is any wealth to squeeze from him. Unable to get cash for what he has to sell, he is compelled to mortgage his farm in order to get money to pay his taxes. The mortgage on his farm is a sure sign to the wise-acre political economist that he has been extravagant, and has not lived "within his means."

To the farmer the mortgage is a constant source of fear. It stands over him as a monster, taking away his produce as interest, and threatening to take from him his home; his acres, which have cost him many days of hard exhausting toil to clear and put in cultivation; his orchard, which he has planted and watched grow up and gladden the eyes of many with its yield of luscious fruit. And the farmer hates the mortgage that thus threatens him and desires above all things to be rid of it and retain his home.

Is it any wonder he takes up with the theory of currency inflation which promises to make it possible for him to pay off his indebtedness?

But currency inflation cannot bring him any permanent relief, and as State Socialism is the opposite of his way of thinking and mode of living, there is no school of thought so well calculated to attract his attention, nor one which he will so readily adopt, or adapt himself to, as Anarchism.

When the farmer understands that Anarchism proposes that he shall keep his farm as long as he likes, that it will never be sold for taxes, and

that he will have no interest to pay or mortgage to meet in Anarchy, he very easily and quite readily takes up with Anarchist theories.

If Anarchism prevails he can retain his farm if he so desires, or, which is most probable, when he sees that co-operative effort is more desirable, he can unite his land with the land of his neighbors and work with men like himself, farmers, on such plans as their experience points out as best. In Anarchy no sheriff to foreclose a mortgage, or intermeddling committee to dictate the season's work, will ever molest the farmer.

Then the true desirability of rural life will become manifest.

By co-operative working of the land, and the village plan of living, the work can be reduced to the minimum for both the men and the women, and the greatest enjoyment be attainable.

Beautiful moon-lit nights, sweet scented meadows and the song of birds in the flowering shrubbery, as well as the golden grain and blushing ripe fruit, will be realities, delightful realities, to the young rustics, as they sing their songs of love and joy.

How shall we get it?

The farmer is strong and courageous, and in the revolutionary period just before us, depend upon it, every farmer that has caught a glimpse of these possibilities, who knows what the Anarchists want, will do his share of the work necessary to bring it about.

Courthouses and records have lost their sacredness in the eyes of the farmer who knows that their destruction means the abolition of his mortgage, and so repudiation will be accompanied by destruction of all evidences of indebtedness and ex parte ownership.

Life on the farm might be all that poets have described it, instead of the constant and hopeless drudgery that it is today. But it cannot be such as a result of political reforms, or in fact of anything short of freedom—Anarchy.

To reach it we must not only think and desire but dare and do! And our doing must be effective and intelligent. To make it intelligent we must never miss an opportunity to spread our ideas, our literature, and our periodicals among the farmers.

Modern Commerce.

Many persons are wont to speak of our commerce in boastful tones and to point with pride to our great commercial centers, with their swarms of human beings hurrying here and there, crowding each other in the streets or toiling all day long in shop or mart, as though all this were the acme of economic arrangements, the greatest achievement of mankind and the source of all human joy. So constantly have the writers, the orators and the dramatists held this idea up to the popular gaze that public sentiment has learned to accept it as correct, and even those who suffer most from the effects of modern commerce feel their breasts swell with pride as they gaze at the pictures of commercial centers in the illustrated magazines, or hear the stump-speakers boast of our commercial greatness.

To the superficial, and the one who is awed into admiration by vastness, the tangle of telephone wires over the city streets, the lines of trucks and drays crowding each other in their hurrying from depot to warehouse or from warehouse to retail store, the heavy trains speeding across the continent, all these have an effect that is irresistible.

But if we look below the surface and behold the picture there presented; see the ships that are wrecked, or railroad trains that have collided; hear the sobs of the sailor's widow or the groans of the mangled breakman, all because in the fierce rush of commerce the ship went to sea in a storm, or care was not taken to avoid an accident on the railroad; see the worn and aged men who have grown old while they might yet be young; see the gray-haired men who have grown so because their cargoes happened to reach port a few days late; see the wretched hovels and miserable lives of many who have given all their energy to carry on this mad chase; see the producer of wheat hungry, and the producer of wool cold; and his query rises, and, like the ghost in Hamlet will not "down:" is all this the perfection of human association or is it madness? It is far from the perfection of human association, and is, to a certain extent, madness.

Let us look into the workings of modern commerce, trace its effects back to their causes and see if it is either a blessing or a necessity. Without commerce the large cities as we know them, cities with their long streets of sky-high buildings, their splendor on one side and their squalor on the other, would not exist. These cities are the hot-beds of disease, crime and

vice; the breeding places of all manner of disorders and infamies. But they are the legitimate and inevitable product of modern commerce.

Modern commerce is the companion of modern industry, and, like it, is the child of monopoly. Look at the internal commerce of America. Immense quantities of white lead are produced at Eureka, Nevada. All the requisites for making white lead are to be had, and altogether it is an ideal spot for the manufacture of white lead. But the Southern Pacific Railway Co. has interests in San Francisco, so it will not haul white lead from Eureka except at such rates as preclude its sale in competition with other white lead. They will haul the bar lead to San Francisco, then back past Eureka to Ogden or Salt Lake City or Denver for less than they will haul white lead from Eureka to these points. They have a monopoly of the hauling business in this region.

Take wool as another example. Large quantities of wool are grown in Southern and Eastern Oregon. This wool is shipped to Portland. From Portland it is shipped to New York. From there it goes to Lowell or Fall River where it is spun and woven. From there the cloth is shipped to Boston, New York or Philadelphia where it is made up into clothing. This clothing goes to Chicago and St. Louis, and finally some of it reaches Portland from whence it is shipped to the towns in Southern and Eastern Oregon. The sheep-grower has raised much good wool, but after it has been hauled across the continent and back, the wool-grower only gets a few shoddy clothes, for the remainder has been absorbed by commerce—commission, storage, brokerage, transportation, insurance, profits.

I have eaten beef that was born in Southern Texas, fattened on the Staked Plains, butchered in Kansas City and cooked in Pan Handle City, Texas.

But what has monopoly to do with wool or beef being hauled so far and handled so much, you may ask. I reply: Everything. In the country where the Wool is grown, all along the foot of the mountains, are splendid sites for woolen-goods factories. Mountain streams come tumbling down from the upper regions where the melting snows and ever-lasting springs start clear and pure, down for the lower altitudes. They could furnish power enough to run all spindles and looms needed to manufacture all the wool grown in this region. But monopoly of land puts the control of these sites into the hands of those who do not wish to use them for manufacturing purposes. Monopoly of machinery by means of patent laws, and monopoly of money compelling those who wish to purchase machinery to pay ruinous interest,

preclude the possibility of putting in the necessary machinery, except by those who don't want the factories there. Then, transportation companies make such discrimination against all such concerns when an attempt at their establishment is made, that they are killed thereby. The destruction of home butchering in Northern Texas was brought about by adverse legislation and transportation discrimination. As a result Armour & Co. would sell Kansas City beef cheaper than the local butcher could sell his product, and so he had to go out of business. Then the price of beef rose, but commerce flourished—the cattle were shipped to Kansas City, and then shipped back as dressed beef.

When we look at this question in the light of these facts, it becomes evident that not less than three-fourths of our internal commerce—hauling, handling, transferring, interest paying, brokerage, etc.—is wasted, or worse than wasted. If the wool was manufactured near where it was grown, the wheat ground into flour at the nearest waterfall, and all industry organized on like considerations, the enormous amount of energy now wasted in these useless commercial transactions would be turned to producing necessities, comforts and luxuries. This would give far greater abundance and security, thus allowing greater leisure and opportunity for the cultivation of the artistic tastes and the literary and musical faculties.

Such an organization of industry can be accomplished only in a condition of freedom.

While government lasts commerce will continue to pillage and rob; to cause the young to look old; to furrow with care the brows of those who should be careless; and, while it fills the halls of some with splendor, it fills the cots of others with woe.

Away with the parent of monopoly—government—and all other monopolies will vanish like fog before the morning sun, and the re-organization of industries upon a sane and rational basis will proceed apace, and gaunt destitution be known no more in all the land.

Popular Government.

Some people are inclined to think that a popular government necessarily brings with it a better economic condition. They seem to think that if the law-making power is extended, better conditions follow as an inevitable consequence. The fact is, that no such relationship exists between government and economics.

Switzerland is, of all European countries, the one where popular government is most nearly realized. In spite of this fact the economic condition of Switzerland is worse than that of any other country in Europe—worse even than that of the United States. In Switzerland a man, native or foreigner, who enters a town or city in search of work, is compelled to pay an occupation-tax before he is allowed to work. In democratic Switzerland, the land of popular government, the home of the initiative and referendum, a man is NOT ALLOWED TO EARN A LIVING without paying for the privilege. Think of that, ye advocates of popular government!

“Government is a conspiracy of the rich to rob the poor,” and any compromise with government is simply a deal with a gigantic conspiracy. Reverence for government, respect for law and willingness to support these institutions, no matter how popular they may be, is simply a childish acceptance of tradition by some and a means of gaining wealth and power by others.

Government is the control of one or more persons by one or more other persons, and is fundamentally vicious, being founded on assumption and upheld by force. The assumption of authority is in its nature tyrannical and oppressive. If it be “popular,” that does not alter the facts and conditions involved.

Ten persons finding themselves in a given locality, might associate on terms of equality, or eight of them might assume to establish a popular government and could, of course, control the other two, compelling them to do things they did not wish to do and which might be detrimental to all. This illustration can be extended indefinitely. Should no government be established, but all the dealings be voluntary and by mutual agreement, no coercion would occur; but in the event of invasion or aggression of any kind, it would be quite easy for the injured one to have the sympathy of all

the non-invaders and to very quickly put a stop to the invasion. This illustration, too, might be carried to any length.

So the danger of popular government is apparent on the one side, and its non-necessity on the other. Voluntary association and mutual agreement is all that is necessary in the daily intercourse of people, and anything not of that character must be aggressive in its nature and leads to oppression and tyranny.

Popular government is one of those delusions which hold sway for long periods of time, because it is so vague in meaning that it is never known if it is realized in practice or is yet to be attained.

Reform orators and politicians, who hope to gain control through appeals to the down-trodden, find great opportunity to exercise their powers and further their schemes by playing upon this phrase; but clear thinking people know full well that popular government, like all other forms of government, is the relentless foe of liberty and must cease to exist before we can be free to live up to our highest ideal.

Political Action.

Many well meaning and conscientious people hope for relief from the present conditions through political action.

Is there any ground for such hope? Have we any reason to believe that relief can be obtained by such methods?

The old man described in the "Old Curiosity Shop" always lost at cards, but always thought that he would win next time. Reformers have constantly failed of their purpose through political action, but still continue to believe that they will succeed "next time." The case is analogous. The old man could not win, for he knew not the tricks of the card shark. Neither can the reformer accomplish his purpose, for he is unacquainted with the tricks of the politician. Should he become aware of the futility of political action without adopting the methods of the politician, he will either quit trying to accomplish anything through politics, or sink to the level of the schemer and corruptionist, thus disqualifying anything of a reformatory character.

The revolutionist may think: "Capture the government and hold the infernal machine still until the people take possession of the earth," as G. C.

Clemens puts it. But can a revolutionist with courage enough to “hold the infernal machine still” be elected? If the people are revolutionary enough to elect a full set of revolutionary officers they are unquestionably revolutionary enough to take possession without running the risk of electing some men who can be bought, bribed, cajoled or scared into acting as other officers do.

Governments, since their earliest inception, have always been the protectors of the privileged classes and the oppressors of the wealth-producers. Never, in all the history of the world, can an instance be pointed out of government being anything else than organized force, bent upon plundering the useful people in the name of tribute, tithes and taxes. Government is organized tyranny, systemized, so as to make its power the more potent, and its designs more irresistible. Many guileless individuals, seeing the tremendous power of government, think to turn this power into production rather than to destruction; into blessing rather than harm, forgetting, that its very organization makes such things impossible. As well might they try to gather oranges from the cactus or try to induce the hyena to lead a useful and sociable life.

Wendell Phillips tells us: “Government commenced in usurpation and oppression; liberty and civilization, at present, are nothing else than the fragments of rights which the scaffold and stake have wrung from the strong bands of the usurpers. Every step in progress the world has made has been from scaffold to scaffold and from stake to stake. It would hardly be exaggeration to say that all the great truths relating to society and government have first been heard in the solemn protest of murdered patriotism, or the loud cries of crushed and starving labor. The law has always been wrong. Government began in tyranny and force, began in the feudalism of the soldier and bigotry of priest; and the ideas of justice and humanity have been fighting their way like a thunderstorm against the organized selfishness of human nature. It is no argument to my mind, therefore, that the old social fabric of the past is against us.”

This statement is unquestionably correct. That being the case, what hope can any candid thinker have of gaining better conditions through political action?

To support government is to aid tyranny. To become a part of it is to join hands with organized murder.

Political action is for the ignorant, the deluded and the knave.

The Tyranny of Majority Rule.

It does not take much reasoning to show that majority rule is not just, wise or beat, and that it is absolutely lacking in that element of justice which it has previously been supposed to embody. But few have stopped to calmly consider the tyranny of majority rule. Tyranny has been supposed to be confined to the rule of one or a few, but in reality the rule of the majority has been and ever must be as tyrannous as the rule of a single despot.

Compulsion, whether it takes the form of incentive to action, or of restraint from action, except in cases of necessary defense against aggression, is tyranny. Where a vote is taken on any proposition and a majority votes in one way, and compels the minority to abide by their decision, it is tyranny. A majority may vote to prohibit the use of beer, and by enforcing that decision tyrannize over the minority who wish to drink beer. On the other hand the majority might vote that every one should drink so much beer every day. That would be tyranny to those who do not like beer, but it would be no more tyranny than to prohibit those from drinking beer who desire to do so.

Every attempt to regulate "public affairs," or to control the conduct of others, must be done by appeals to superior brute force, direct, or to "majority rule." The former is generally recognized as tyranny, and the latter is, logically, equally so. A few, for instance, do not wish to go to church on Sunday, but prefer to spend the day, or part of the day, in the woods, in a park, on a river, at a theatre or at a ball game. The majority do not want to spend their Sunday that way, and by right of their power, as the majority, prevent the minority from following their desires. It may be that out-door exercise is necessary to the health of some of the members of the minority, but by the decision of the majority they must go to church or stay at home, and this may be as galling and tyrannous as if the majority compelled every one to go out-doors and stay away from church and from home.

The majority may think that a certain form of association is "right and proper," and by the means of compulsion at hand force all to conform thereto, but that form of association may be very obnoxious to the minority and its enforcement extremely tyrannous.

In groups or societies formed for special purposes the principle works the same. If the majority rules, then the minority may feel tyrannized over, and as much restricted as can well be. The minority may want to work in a certain manner, or at certain occupations, but if the majority says they shall not, but must work in a certain way, and occupy their time in certain employment, then they must do it, and it becomes tyranny. Even in secret orders, and voluntary societies the rule of the majority often becomes very disagreeable to the minority, but the minority has no rights that the majority is bound to respect, so they must submit, or withdraw and lose what they have in the institution, and in some instances be persecuted unbearably for so doing.

So we see that everywhere majority rule breeds tyranny, is tyranny, and can be nothing else. If all agree there is no rule in the matter, but if one disagrees then the compulsion begins, and the tyranny of majority rule manifests itself. In essence there is no difference between a minority composed of one individual and a minority composed of one half minus one individual. If the lone individual has any rights in the matter, his rights are equal to the right of each other one, or of all the others together. If he has no rights in the matter then, one half of the people minus one have no rights in the matter.

The philosopher may think out a better plan for carrying on a certain work, or the scientist may make discoveries that do not accord with accepted notions. A few will be found to give each of them a hearing and to adopt the new method or accept the newly discovered fact, but the majority will be a long time in doing either. If it were put to vote to determine whether the new method should be adopted, or the newly discovered fact be accepted, in nearly every instance the majority would vote "no." If the will of majority, in this instance, becomes the rule of action, then it would become tyranny.

Thus we could elaborate indefinitely, and in every instance it will be found that majority rule is tyranny. It is always the expression of the thought and will of those who lag behind; of the conservative ones.

It is evident, then, that all argument in favor of majority rule is only an argument in favor of one form of tyranny, and all our "reform" friends who call so loudly for true majority rule, are calling merely for a change in the form of what they complain of—tyranny—and not its abolition. Why not stop demanding another form of tyranny and demand the abolition of all tyranny—all rule?

Bread or Power?

The present stir in political and economic fields of activity is rapidly becoming one of conquest. For years Labor Unions and Workingmen's Associations of various kinds have sought to bind the toilers together for purposes of mutual assistance. Generally they only proposed to assist each other in time of need and to present an unbroken front when called upon to resist the encroachments of employer or scab. But in the evolution of industry, and the growth and intensification of present conditions, they have found that they must become conquerors, or be driven from their last refuge and made the abject slaves of their oppressors—their conquerors. Dimly recognizing this, the question of political action has been more and more noticed, and gained more influence among the various labor organizations as the years went by, and the necessity of a decisive struggle grew upon them.

Here was the politician's chance, and true to his instinct he saw it and began his operations to foist upon the workers the necessity of political action, never forgetting that he was the man best qualified to guide them in the attempts to conquer the powers of the State. "New Trades Unionism," as it is called, pushed on by the rulers of the S. L. P., appeared upon the scene, destined as its promoters believed, to take the place of the old Trades Unionism. Its purpose is the same as that of the old style Unionism with the "conquest of power" attached. Should the fond hopes of the promoters of this kind of workingmen's association be realized, the entire body of union men would be organized in a close corporation ready to march to the polls on election-day with banners flying, drums beating, and deposit their ballots according to the dictates of their union—in other words for the Socialist Labor Party.

As industrial evolution has progressed, the displacement of human labor by machinery, the substitution of child labor and woman labor in occupations once exclusively the occupations of men, the monopolization of all lands and all the machinery of production, as well as the growth of intelligence, has tended to point out to the more thoughtful that the conquest before them must be the conquest of bread. "Bread is freedom, freedom—bread," has been said, and many there are who recognize this saying as a fact and wish to conquer for bread, not for power. They see the

hard struggle necessary to gain possession of the powers of the State, and the many pitfalls and snares into some of which the victorious politician, be he ever so honest, is sure to fall. Seeing that power can be upheld only by violence, and that the instruments of power must ever be a constant drain upon the products of those who toil, he turns resolutely away from the conquest of power and seeks only the conquest of bread, for when the freedom to produce and consume his bread in peace is secured he is conqueror of the ills which now beset him so thickly.

The Populists have set out to conquer the powers of the State, hoping, oh how fondly, but how vainly, to make use of that power in bringing about a betterment of conditions. With a zeal worthy of any cause, they began their campaigns of conquest and succeeded in conquering the powers of the State in Kansas, Colorado, South Dakota, and partially so in Nebraska, Minnesota and other states. What has been the result? One after another of those placed in power by this struggle of the producers have found themselves unable to remedy the present evils and given it up, or they have fallen a prey to the same spirit of "thrift" that has ever prompted office holders to "fix" themselves while they had a chance. Still the attempt to carry their conquest "on to Washington" and gain possession of the general government is continued, and while much of the revolutionary fire which characterized the early history of the party, has died out, electioneering tactics like unto those of the old parties have grown up, and only the conquest of power is now their object. In the hope of catching votes they have become conservative, and the starving widow, the honest man losing his home, and the denial of the young the chance to be and do on an equal footing with all others, is lost sight of in the constancy of their gaze, fixed as it is on the conquest of power.

One fraction in the great family of agitators, one fraction alone, stands out boldly advocating the direct and immediate conquest of bread. They see that all energy and time expended in conquering the powers of State is only wasted. They see that it is only swapping masters and that the struggle is not ended by patting the lash into the hands of a new set of masters. The Anarchists alone taboo the idea of gaining freedom by the conquest of power. They it is that boldly proclaim for freedom; for bread for all, and in abundance. At first reviled and persecuted, represented as the enemies of labor and the paid tools of plutocracy, they have continued the propaganda which is so obnoxious to the self-seeking politicians, and little by little the beauty and sublimity of the conquest of bread is dawning upon the minds of

the toilers, and they begin to see the uselessness and folly of conquering power for others to use; of wresting the lash from the hands of some and placing it into the hands of others, and as knowledge takes root and spreads amongst the workers, the power of the State will wane and the conquest of bread gains in strength and certainty of success.

Brothers! the struggle is on. We must sink in deeper depths of servitude or conquer the world for freedom. The history of our race shows all too clearly that all conquests of power have finally resulted badly for the useful classes; for those who labor and produce the necessities of life, as well as its comforts and luxuries. Power once acquired requires constant effort to be retained. In fact, so much effort is needed in maintaining it that there is no time for anything else.

Time and again the downtrodden have arisen and wrested the powers of State from their oppressors, but in every instance where that power has been left intact, or some new form inaugurated, its possessors have made use of it to their personal advantage, and its exercise has grown oppressive as of old.

Seeing then that slavery or conquest is before us, which will we try to conquer, political power or bread—freedom? Wisdom and all the lessons of experience show the futility of the conquest of power. Before us lies the world fruitful and abundant. The cool streams laughing and joyous are ready to assist us in grinding grain or weaving cloth, while the constant change of seasons insures abundant yields of fruit and cereal, if our attention is turned to conquering the obstacles that lie between us and the free and untrammelled use of all these natural bounties and latent possibilities.

If “bread is freedom,” then the greatest conquest of all time, the conquest which is paramount and most urgent, is the conquest of bread. A conquest that will sweep away all forms of oppression and, giving full freedom to all, thrill the world with new life and send it onward to unknown realms of progress, peace and pleasure.

“Let the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing,” but so sure as the rolling seasons bring their changes in the appearance of the earth’s surface, just so surely will the Anarchist propaganda bring a change in social and economic arrangements. When we have conquered the powers of State we have only made masters of former slaves. The conquest of bread will rid the world of both masters and slaves.

Crime and Punishment.

The fear of crime and the question of punishment are two bugbears that stand in the pathway of a good many individuals, when they contemplate the proposition of setting men free from State interference. The same bugbear frightened the conservatives when skepticism began to question the correctness of Christian dogmas. Not longer than twenty years ago men stood in the pulpit and boldly asserted that without the fear of hell to restrain them men would rush head-long into all manner of crime and vice, and pitiable indeed would be the world. Today such assertions are received by all intelligent persons with a smile of derision. It is now known that the fear of hell is but a poor preventative of crime. But true, by the history of mental evolution, most minds have transferred their faith in the fear of hell as a preventative of crime, to the fear of punishment here and now. One is as foundationless as the other.

Minds beclouded by ignorance and besotted by superstition may be so terrified by vivid descriptions of eternal tortures as to quake at the thought of committing crime, or may be restrained from some acts by fear of punishment, but as knowledge sheds its light abroad, all restraint by fear vanishes. Bright minds are not horrified by threats of hell, and are always ready to take chances on evading the law, and thus escape punishment if they desire to do that which the law prohibits.

To deal with the question of crime, with any hope of solving the problem, it is necessary to inquire into the cause of crime. Those who depend on the fear of hell believe in the depravity of the human race; in the myth of "the fall of man" by the sin of Adam. The upholders of the State, of punishment to prevent crime, may deny a belief in this fallacy, but their attitude shows that the idea still dominates their thoughts. They never inquire why men commit crime, in fact they seldom even stop to enquire what crime is, or what effect punishment has on the one punished. All they want is to retaliate, to practice revenge, and to set an example to other erring ones, hoping thereby to deter them from committing crime.

But let us inquire into the cause of crime and the right of punishment.

Has any one the right to punish another? If so, where do they get the right? If individuals have no right to punish others, what right has the State? If the State has the right to punish, from whence comes that right? I

deny the right of the State, or of an association of individuals to punish anyone. I call for any argument that can be brought forward to substantiate the right of punishment, and know of none save the "might makes right" argument.

Many acts are called crimes, and denned as such by law that I will not admit are crimes. I deny that it is criminal for anyone to take possession of any unused natural opportunity and use it. I cannot call it a crime for anyone to take that which they need for their own use, or the use of those dependent upon them, when such taking is necessary to support the life of the one doing the taking or those dependent upon him or her. There are many other things commonly called crimes, that I will not admit are crimes, but that I will not stop to discuss.

Let us inquire for a few minutes what is the cause of crime. Most crimes at the present time, that is most all acts classed as criminal, are violations of what is termed property rights. Most of the remainder are the outgrowth of jealousy, which in turn is due to legal marriage, and superstitious beliefs in regard to sex matters. Children are badly born because their parents have not had opportunities to develop what was in them, nor to gain the requisite knowledge to become the parents of healthy and intelligent children. Then, too, heredity is not the only factor to be considered. All persons act as their surroundings impel them to. When opportunities are restricted and persons find it difficult to provide the necessities and comforts of life, they have but little time to cultivate the artistic, to foster fraternity, and to enjoy the society of their fellows. All this has a degrading and stultifying effect upon the people. All around they see others, human beings like themselves, who have not only the comforts they crave for and are denied, but also such luxuries as they have never dared to dream of possessing. Is it any wonder that so many say to themselves: "It doesn't matter how you get it, the only thing to live for is to get money!"

Nothing can be plainer than that the present economic system, the outgrowth of monopoly, which in turn depends on the State for existence is the chief, if not the only, breeder of crime. Having driven persons to the commission of crime the State immediately becomes a still greater criminal by punishing its victims for doing that which it has forced them to do. The State denies equality of opportunity, fosters privileged classes, creates monopolies, and commits innumerable crimes against individuals; forces them into crimes and vices of all kinds, and then builds jails, prisons, and

erects gallows and electric chairs in order, so it is said, to suppress the very crimes and vices of which it is the direct cause.

With all these facts in view it is the height of absurdity to pretend to fear freedom, lest crime should go unpunished and increase beyond human endurance.

II.

In the above article I showed that the State was the chief cause of crime, and that it was the greatest of all criminals, hence its abolition meant the cessation of nearly all crime.

Now, in the event that crime is committed, after the State has ceased to exist, what is to be done about it? That is the question that seems to bother a large number of persons. At least they will ask that question and look troubled. I will endeavor to point out what crimes might occur, and what would be done about it.

In the first place, the incentive to crime will be reduced to the minimum, and we can reasonably expect that crime would be of rare occurrence. Most crimes today are crimes against property. The reason for that is plain enough. The resources of the earth are monopolized. This prevents the majority from using natural opportunities, thus forcing them to work for wages, or not at all, if no one who owns these opportunities cares to hire them. This immediately creates a distinction between different individuals, creating enmity, jealousy, envy, hatred and all forms of discord. Not only that, but it makes the struggle for existence so fierce amongst the propertyless, or poor, that they are forced to resort to various "questionable means" in order to provide themselves with the means of subsistence, or a few of life's comforts. That easily leads to the commission of "crime against property." Then, too, others are driven to the commission of "crimes against property," by hunger, or the sight of suffering.

Some crimes are the outgrowth of envy, jealousy and hatred, we are told, and I admit it. But it is easy enough to see that all these are the direct outgrowth of the distinctions that grow out of privileges granted by the State. Once these evil frames of mind are engendered, and the conditions that produce them continue, they grow upon themselves, destroy the ability of those possessing them to view life fairly, or on the bright side, and cause them to look upon every one else with suspicion, or with evil intent. This frame of mind is fostered by political aspirants and trades union agitators,

and labor fakirs generally, who hope by setting race against race, nationality against nationality, or unionist against scab, to lift themselves into office, or some position of trust and emolument. This, you see, is in turn due to the existence of government and monopoly, and will vanish when these two causes are removed. So we need apprehend no crime as a result of such things, in a condition of freedom.

Jealousy will continue, we are told, and love will cause men to kill each other then as now. But is this true? Much of the trouble that now occurs between the sexes is due to bad industrial conditions, while a great deal of the jealousy that now exists is attributable directly to the frame of mind created and upheld by marriage laws. "This is my wife," is the excuse of many men who act criminally toward the women so designated, or some person for whom she may have formed a tender regard. The idea of woman's right to control her actions, and to determine for herself with whom she will associate sexually, is growing with, and is inseparable from, the thought of freedom from State interference. When men and women have learned to respect the rights of all others, including their associate, the one they claim to love, then crimes as a result of jealousy will disappear.

Thus we see that in a condition of freedom crimes of all kinds would become scarce, to say the least.

"But if crime should occur, what would you do?" is a query that is constantly forced onto the advocates of freedom. In the first place, it is impossible to state what will be done, in any case, until the crime has occurred and the surrounding circumstances are determined. For this reason it is nonsense to demand an explanation of what will be done with criminals in supposed cases. In the event of the commission of a crime, it would be of no use to punish the criminal, for in so doing it only draws those into the commission of crime who administer the punishment. If a man becomes insane and undertakes to "pick off everybody on the street with his revolver," as some authoritarians claim, would happen, then there is no question but that very sudden and effective means would be taken to stop him—not as a matter of punishment, but as a matter of protection.

It is not punishment that prevents crime, or can prevent crime, and it is worse than useless to try to care crime by punishment. Protection is always in order, and there is no question in my mind but that means, adequate to the end, will never be lacking.

Communism.

There is one subject about which there is much confusion of thought; one which is much misunderstood, or which is unknown to the majority. That subject is Communism.

The most general conception of Communism is that of the small states, or societies in which the tools, laud, buildings and products of the society are the common property of the members, or of the government of the society. Usually in these societies, or states, a common kitchen is maintained; the vegetables are all raised together in a common garden by the united effort of those assigned to that work by the management of the society; individual preference is supposed to give way to the preference of the majority, and a regulation of activities carried on by the central authority. This is the old-fashioned authoritarian Communism which still prevails to a limited extent. This is the kind of Communism which most persons picture in their minds when the word is mentioned.

While this kind of Communism has many advantages, such as united effort and the increased productive power incident thereto, the saving incident to the abolition of all the unnecessary weighing, measuring, accounting, book-keeping, etc., yet it is objectionable on account of its authoritarianism.

It is from this kind of effort that most persons draw their conception of Communism. Many who oppose Communism base their opposition on the assumption that these little socialistic states are the true models of Communism, hence their antipathy to such arrangements.

Fun is poked at the "community toothbrush, towel, bed," etc., by those who answer argument by ridicule. No one believes that there would then be any greater communism in these things than now exists, if he will stop and think a minute. In every hotel and boarding house these tools of cleanliness are used by thousands of different people. In every city there are Toilet Supply Companies who furnish a combination towel-rack, looking-glass, comb and brush-holder, and take the dirty towels away, leaving clean ones every morning. In this way tens of thousands of hands and faces are wiped on the same towels in the run of a year. Bat the present promiscuity in the use of articles of various kinds is too apparent to need elaboration. Yet it is warmly championed by the ridiculers of the "community towel."

Many imagine that all persons would live in big houses where the meals would be served in a common kitchen. This is another unfounded supposition. For that matter see the millions who do eat in common dining-rooms, each getting his roast beef, macaroni and cheese or ham and eggs, cooked in the same vessels, by the same cooks, cut from the same roast or ham. All these things occur, not because of the communistic genius of present institutions, but because of the opposite tendency. The desire to supply our needs or wants cheaply gives birth to such arrangements and customs. The one who can combine the efforts of a number of persons, in his given line, judiciously, can supply his wants more cheaply than can be done otherwise.

So we see that the principal objections brought against Communism are invalid. The first, the charge of authoritarianism, cannot apply to true Communism but only to miniature State Socialism, usually called Communism; that of promiscuity can be brought with terrible force against the present methods, or any other methods that propose cheapness as the guide to preference. Neither one can be laid at the door of Communism, as I propose to show.

In the first place the Communism proposed as a social and economic arrangement by the Anarchists who no longer love the fierce struggle of competition, and the wasteful methods of commercialism, is a condition of affairs where all exercise of authority is absent. In such a condition association according to taste would be the rule. All the resources of the earth being then common to all, that is to say, free for all to use but not to monopolize, there would be no necessity to associate with others in productive work, or in social matters, when such association was not pleasant. Persons who because of similarity of taste desired to work in the same kind of undertakings would then associate in their occupation of production or distribution because it would give them pleasure to do so. In social matters the likes and dislikes, attraction and repulsions which wield such an important influence in society today, would have full play, and association of a social character would be pleasant because desired by all persons concerned. Under these conditions crime, vice, and contentions of an unpleasant character would be reduced to the minimum, for all these things as they exist today are the direct outgrowth of the restriction of liberty, the strained and unpleasant association and relations resulting therefrom.

Essays on the Social Problem

The common house, towel, etc., would be matters for each one to decide for him or herself. If any number of persons wished to unite their domestic affairs and live in one common home, using the same dishes, spoons, towels, etc., they could do so. Those who wished to live the most exclusive lives, having their own houses, towels, dishes, linen, etc. made expressly for him or her, and never used by or for anyone else, would be equally free to do so. Those who saw fit to go to neither extreme, but desired to retain much of our present method in these arrangements could go on with their domestic relations as they are today.

Wherein then, you may ask, is the communism? Simply in this: Production would be carried on, as before stated, by those who voluntarily associated themselves together for that purpose, each according to his or her desire. The land and tools of production, buildings necessary for production and exchange, the means of transportation, communication and distribution, and the products of united effort would all be held in common, and the right of everyone to use to the full extent of their needs and desires would be recognized. It is a well known fact that if all able-bodied persons were occupied in production for a very few hours per day, an abundance of everything desirable could be produced. If all were assured of plenty, then no one would have any incentive to take more than they could use and enjoy.

In Communism there being no money, or other representative of value, there would be no opportunity to hoard; for the man who would carry home a hundred hats, or fifty umbrellas, or twenty suits of clothes, when the store was well supplied all the time and free for him to help himself, would be ridiculed and laughed at so much that he would surely refrain from any further exhibition of the hoarding proclivity. The sense of security which would prevail would be a sufficient safeguard against anyone taking too much.

Cheapness would never be thought of. Utility and beauty would always be the objects sought to be attained in all lines of production. Shoddy would be unknown. No thought of adulteration of food would ever enter the head of anyone, and only the best of everything would be sought for. Buildings would be erected with the greatest care and substantial enough to last many generations. Roads would be made level, straight, wide and with substantial foundations; their surface would be kept constantly in repair.

All the necessary and useful occupations of every description would be carried on by voluntary groups, each group doing that particular work for

which it was formed. When any work has been accomplished the group doing it would dissolve into its component parts, the various individuals that had composed it uniting with others in other groups for other and different purposes, as the necessities or expediencies of the times called for united action.

Thus the most infinite variety of combinations for specific purposes, either of utility or pleasure could be formed, accomplish their purpose, and go out of existence, and all the necessities and luxuries of life could be provided without curtailing the liberty of any, and the highest individuality now conceivable be attained.

In this condition, above all others that have ever been proposed, would the true equality of the sexes be attained. No woman would feel dependent upon any man for her support, even during her inability to provide for herself, at the period of childbearing. Full knowing that she need never suffer from want, she would scorn the thought of submitting herself to the sex embrace of any except the man she loved. Nor would she bring unwelcome children into the world. Love alone would draw men and women into the intimate relation that results in parentage, and the loathsome institutions of today (prostitution and marriage) with their attendant female complaints and venereal diseases, would be but dim memories of the past.

Natural selection in sexual relations, as well as in all the varied affairs of life, would have full and unobstructed play, and would as surely work out the betterment of the human race as it now perpetuates and improves many species whose natural surroundings are more hostile than ours.

Is Anarchism Practicable Now?

It has been stated so often by those who will not oppose Anarchism on principle, but still go on advocating all manner of governmental reforms, that Anarchism is not practicable now; that we must be angels to make it so, and so on, that it is expedient to answer this argument. This argument presumes that men must be perfect in order to live together in peace. It also presumes that government acts as an equalizer and causes men to live together peaceably. Both of these propositions are fundamentally erroneous.

Can people live together in peace without government? Most assuredly they can, and do not need to be perfect in order to do so. It never has been done, some say, but that only shows their lack of knowledge of history. Some good Christians use this argument, basing their belief on the fall of man theory, I suppose. But the Bible tells us that, "In those days there was no king (or ruler) in Israel, but every man did which was right in his own eyes."—Judges, xvii; 6. "Then the five men departed, and came to Laish, and saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt carelessly, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; and there was no magistrate in the land, that might put them to shame in anything."—Judges, xviii; 7. Here is evidence from their professed guide that people have lived and can do so in peace without rulers, laws or government.

R. T. Walsh, in the Youth's Companion, some four years ago, telling of his travels in the Caucasus, speaks of the Cossacks thus:

"All Cossacks inhabit towns and villages, some of which are prosperous as well as populous communities. They retain the principle of co-operation in trades, and inherit the custom of the ownership of land in common and have equal access, as far as practicable to all the productive wealth of the community. * * * Among these people crime is almost unknown. They are too far from civilization to be tainted by the vices that mark its progress among the large cities of the world."

It must be remembered in connection with this, that these people had, after hundreds of years of defensive warfare, been compelled to lose a part of their liberties at the point of the Russian's cannons and were to some extent demoralized by contact with the governmental methods of the Russians. Prior to the treaty which put them under the Russian protectorate, they had lived in this simple manner, without law or government, even in the midst of aggressive enemies. The South Russians, too, lived a similar free communistic life, defending themselves from the government of Poland on the West, Tartary on the East and North Russia on the North, without any arbitrary authority amongst themselves, all their association for the purpose of repelling foes, wolves or men being spontaneous and voluntary, until the modern instruments of war caused them to allow the "Great Bear of the North" to "protect" them. Herbert Spencer, in his "Great Political Superstition" points out numerous people in various parts of the world, that lived peaceful lives without laws. So much for the truth of the assertion that people never lived together without laws and government.

On what grounds do people assert that none but angels can live together without coercive force, called government? On a narrow and erroneous conception of what "human nature" is. They point to every little trick, every rascally action—the result of our unequal opportunities—and assert that these are "human nature" and that government is necessary to adjust the quarrels that result from these tendencies; that people need to be restrained or they would prey upon each other, their tendency to do so being limited only by the extermination of the race. The first proposition is illogical as well as without foundation. In the first place the petty tricks and shrewd unscrupulous practices pointed out are no more "human nature" than are the most benevolent and magnanimous actions. In the second place, if such is "human nature," then the more power or authority we place in the hands of human beings, the more sure are we to suffer from these very tendencies. The more authority—power over his fellows—a man has, the more favorable the opportunity for this "human nature" to manifest itself. Thus we see that if this definition of human nature be correct, it is illogical to uphold government. The before given bits of history show that, left without government, men do not prey upon each other.

Human beings are gregarious; they associate as naturally, spontaneously and persistently as do so many sheep or cattle. In their association they have developed industry and the division of labor to such an extent that they are now interdependent. The security of each, not only in life and the pursuit of happiness, but also in the daily consumption of food, depends upon the security of all, and in turn the security of all depends upon the security of each. When this fact is understood, selfishness becomes the greatest cohesive force in society and prompts all arrangements that tend to make life, liberty and subsistence secure. The necessity of according fair treatment in order to get fair treatment in return, has ever been so well recognized at all times, that a certain amount of fairness has always characterized trade and social relations, the advantage taken -by any given person or persona being in proportion to the protection accorded by organized force—government. It stands to reason, then, that the absence of law, and the necessary equality of opportunities which absence would mean, would tend to cause all men to act toward their fellows in such a manner as to gain their good will.

With these facts in view, and the fact of our ever increasing interdependence, owing to the ever increasing subdivision of labor, it must be evident to all who stop to give that question a careful consideration, that

it does not require the intermeddling of officials in order for them to live together in peace.

Without government monopoly in the resources of the earth and tools of production would be impossible, and all would stand on an equal footing. Association would be voluntary, and mutual interest would be the guide in all affairs in which two or more persons are concerned. Why then is freedom, i. e. Anarchy impracticable now?

Through State Socialism into Anarchism.

The idea that we must of necessity pass through State Socialism in order to reach Anarchism is quite prevalent, especially among those who have recently broken their shell of reverence for the State and are still in the habit of thinking in the same channels as when they were eager advocates of "socializing" everything by law. To such an one it looks perfectly reasonable and natural to suppose that step by step all monopolies will become national or municipal properties, and that thus poverty will be eliminated, ignorance eradicated and a wiser generation thus remove the last legal barrier and usher in a condition of freedom—Anarchy.

Such a view of the oncoming events is not at all unreasonable when held by one whose trend of thought has ever been directed toward State action as the sole means of relief, but when the light of experience, the lessons of history, are turned on, grave doubts of the correctness of such a theory force themselves upon the student. To the natural thinker this view appears as a mere transitional mode of thought which will disappear with an increased understanding of the question in its various phases.

History teaches one lesson very clearly, a lesson of vast importance, but one which many seem strangely slow to learn. That lesson is this: Privileges are never willingly given up by their possessors. The king on his throne holds his place as supreme potentate until hurled from power against his will. The dog-catcher on a city's streets forsakes his job and turns his attention to other pursuits as unwillingly, his protests being less because his power to protest and the emoluments of his office are less extensive. The office holder who became a candidate the first time under protest, and

who declared he would not occupy the office longer than one term for anything, will go to the bottom of his "sack" in order to retain his position.

With this undeniable fact as our guide, let us see if State Socialism is a step toward Anarchism.

The State Socialist program, if carried out, would really increase the number of privileged persons, and these privileged persons would undoubtedly try to maintain their privileges. Thus inequalities of power and opportunity would be perpetuated and increased. The amount taken from the product of labor to provide for the privileged class from the president of the national executive committee, the central directing authority, down to "inspector of workshop, mine and home" would increase as the commissions and offices increased, and the proposition that "labor is entitled to all it creates" would be as empty as our present boast of "individual sovereignty."

Regimentation, dictation and constant espionage do not tend to make people free, self-reliant or noble. The degradation that would grow upon a people who would submit to such an arrangement would unfit them for freedom, and the constant surveillance of the masses by the privileged office-holding class would necessitate a violent and remorseless revolution in order to make freedom possible.

No! the road to Anarchy is not through State Socialism. We may be free only by breaking our bonds, not by substituting new and more numerous ones. The State, as a suppressor of crime and a protector of life, has been a sad failure, and to entrust it with the providing of employment and the dispensing of bread is equivalent to putting your purse in the care of one who has criminally or carelessly squandered your property.

The more the powers of the State are curtailed the more nearly we approach a condition of Anarchy: the more the powers of the State are increased the further we drift from it. How then can State Socialism, the governmentalization of everything, lead to Anarchy? It cannot.

If you really want Anarchy, refuse to uphold the State. Decline to run for or hold office. Refuse to do jury duty, and in every way practicable weaken the powers of the State.

Herding or Growth?

The minds of many persons who are both bright and powerful have failed to grasp the great underlying principle of growth, or development, and confound it with herding, or worse yet, with regimentation. I will say nothing about regimentation, the plan of the State Socialists, as it belongs in the category of political action—of compulsion.

Let us look for a minute at the propositions of those who propose to herd together, calling it a colony, or association, thinking thereby to solve the questions that so vex and perplex all thinking persons at the present time. They propose to “round up” a lot of persons of varying opinions, habits, desires and occupations in a certain place, and by all these persons working together form a new society, “based on justice and equity” as they put it, and thus show the world a better way to live. Their intentions are as good as need be, and they lack not for energy. Their plans cannot fulfill their dreams, however, and no matter how much they may strive they cannot succeed as they expect. The reason is simple; it is this: They are attempting to work in an artificial manner. I am free to admit that most that we do is artificial, but growth is a natural process, and cannot be made, hut must be allowed.

In order to make clear why the herding process, that of gathering people together promiscuously, is inadequate as a method of beginning the work of reconstruction, it is only necessary to point out the “law” of growth. The work and study of scientists for ages has shown that all growth is due to accretion. An atom exists. Another atom is attracted to it and they become a body. Other atoms are attracted to this body and it grows in size. Thus the work of accretion goes on as long as the vitality necessary to attract other atoms remains in the body. Little by little the growth proceeds from the simple to the complex; from one atom to many; from a single function to numerous ones. Natural process never “rounds up” a lot of atoms, nor tries to herd a lot of incongenial atoms together.

The human race is subject to the same natural processes, and each individual is, in a sense, an atom, and will unite with other individuals when attracted by them, but will fail to unite when they are incongenial. That is why the herding plan—like the Topolobampo and other colony schemes—will not work. On the other hand where a nucleus is formed, even though it be of

but a few individuals, if it contains vitality enough—has a definite purpose hi view—to attract other individuals, it will grow.

With these facts in view it is plain to be seen that in the process of reconstruction it is a waste of energy to try to herd, but directly in line with natural processes to form nucleuses, here and there, and let the natural accretion of individuals who are in sympathy with the ideal of such nucleuses be the process of growth. Then congeniality of the individuals composing the group, and their oneness of purpose, will insure harmony, and, little by little, the ideal held will become known to others, and as fast as others learn to desire the realization of this ideal, they will seek to attach themselves to an existing group, or to unite with a few others and form a new nucleus.

To make a practical application let us point out that colony schemes that propose the indiscriminate gathering of persons into colonies or associations, holding out inducements and charging admission fees, are not in line with natural growth. On the other hand it shows that small voluntary groups, drawn together by a common purpose, holding out no inducements but a realization of the ideal that prompted their union, and charging no admission fee, are directly in the line of growth, and as they grow they will develop from the simple to the complex, not only in numbers but also in occupation.

As their numbers increase the possibility of diversifying their occupations will become apparent, and one industry after another will develop in their midst. This gives rise to the hope of beginning the reconstruction of society even now, in the present vile system, for, while complete reconstruction cannot take place until the barriers raised by law and custom have been broken down, yet groups living very much nearer the ideal of Anarchists than its members now live, can grow up, here and there, and do much to prepare the public mind for the general reconstruction. Not only that, for as the groups grow up they can open up communication with each other, and the toilers in the city can supply the workers in the country with clothes, shoes, gloves and such other things as can best be produced in the city. In return the country comrades can supply the groups in the city with butter, eggs, milk, fruit, vegetables, honey and such things as the city people must get from the country folks. These exchanges can be carried on without the use of money, and thus the idea of association without money will grow up.

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By working in this way a network of groups can eventually be spread all over the country, all in touch with each other, offering ready assistance to all comrades who may meet with calamities, or come in distress; showing to the mentally lazy, by example, what can be done voluntarily and without rules, laws, or compulsion of any form. It would also tend to stimulate fellowship, that sensation which inclines the will toward generosity and forbearance; toward general good-will and kindness for all others.

In localities where transportation is a serious question the comrades can establish a system of transportation between groups that will best answer their purpose under the circumstances. If there is navigable water a boat can be built. But all these things will suggest themselves as the number of groups multiply and their sizes increase by accretion.

Many of the comrades have bemoaned their life in the present dog eat dog life of bourgeois society, and inquired concerning colonies. I hope they will not try to herd, out will co-operate along the line of least resistance, by congenial persons, no matter how few, forming nucleuses, and these nucleuses growing by the natural and permanent process of accretion—the attraction of congenial individuals.

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Henry Addis was an anarchist-communist, a co-editor of the Portland *Firebrand*, and a contributor to several of the anarchist papers published in the western United States. In this collection, part of the *Free Society Library*, edited by another *Firebrand* alum, he weighed in on a variety of subjects, from communism to natural selection, and from state socialism to crime.

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