Liberty Vol. I. No. 4.

Not the Daughter but the Mother of Order

Benjamin Tucker

September 17, 1881

Contents

On Picket Duty. 3
About Progressive People. 4
Doctrine of Assent. 6
Reform Made Ridiculous. 7
Religion a Disease. 8
Liberty's Weapons. 8
The Poetry of Places. 10
Enforced Education. 12
Game for the Fool-Killer. 13
To Walt Whitman. 13
The Agriculture Crisis. 14
The Farce of Popular Sovereignty. 16
Switzerland's Double Shame. 17

"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."
John Hay.

On Picket Duty.

Society has no rights.

Morality is the science of mutual rights and duties of human beings.

Liberty attempts to promote unanimity by consent, and succeeds; authority attempts to promote it by compulsion, and succeeds — in retarding it.

"A Socialist," who lately joined in the New York "Truth's" hunt for the "Somebody," is on the right scent when he says that the right of property as defined by Proudhon must be superseded by the right of possession.

Some political philosophers — D. A. Wasson for instance — are carried away with the idea that man's only right is to do his duty. The contrary is the truth. In the political or civil sphere man's only duty is to respect others' rights.

In the Cramer murder trial now attracting so much attention at New Haven, a Mr. Bush, one of the prosecuting counsel, described himself as "the representative of a cruel monster — the State." We are glad to know the State has one servant so well acquainted with his employer.

On the day appointed for public prayer for the president's recovery an aged clergymen of Hingham, Mass., was stricken with paralysis while in the act of supplicating the deity, and died a few days later. Probably a just judgment of Providence on the insinuation that the Almighty does not know his own business.

Emerson has somewhere said: "If you wish to know what a boy will do, strip him naked, place him in a ten-acre lot, and set the dog on him." We quote from memory, but give the pith of the advice. Liberty will translate it to striving mortals that stand about. *Don't be so afraid something is going to happen that will bring you death and destruction. Strip for the contest, take all odds, defy the dog, and BE somebody.*

The indomitable Félix Pyat, dramatist, radical, and advocate of regicide, banished from France not many months ago for publishing a revolutionary daily newspaper, no sooner finishes his term of exile than he starts another in his beloved Paris. His former journal was called "La Commune." The new one is "La Commune Libre" (The Free Commune). Being a graphic writer, his paper is sure to be interesting; being an earnest thinker, it is equally sure to be valuable.

Has coercion coerced? We fear it has in the case of Mr. John Dillon. Released from prison, he announced his intention of withdrawing for a time from the land agitation, giving as his reason therefor that the Irish people are determined to try the Land Bill, and that it is best to let them try it without interference. We add our protest to the "Irish World's" against this course. If Mr. Dillon is a true man he will not desert at the very crisis of battle, but his voice will be heard in the thick of it, up and down the Irish country, warning the Irish tenantry in unmistakable terms that they will deserve no sympathy if, having beheld the Sun of Justice, they shut their eyes to its splendid rays, and that they cannot too soon be deprived of *all* the benefits of the land they occupy if they consent any longer to periodically transfer any portion of them to the thieves and loafers who call themselves landlords.

The truly great thinker never shrinks from the consequences of his own thought, but accepts all its conclusions fearlessly. "If your ideas were to be realized," objected a timid soul to a seemingly startling proposition made by Colonel William B. Greene, the author of "Mutual Banking," "They would shiver the planet." "Well, what of it?" answered the colonel, nothing daunted; "there are other planets in plenty, I believe."

The "Magdeburger Zeitung" reports that a young man was recently sent to Bismark with a letter of recommendation for having successfully played the spy in a family where he had been engaged as private tutor, by stealing the contents of a certain threatening letters to majesty. Commenting on this young man, the "New York Volkszeitung," in a paragraph which loses half its richness by translation, says: "This patent mutton-head is just the tool whom 'Bismarck, the old stud-horse' Willhelm, and the whole tribe of German Philistines need, to instruct them in the dangerous tendencies of social democracy, to the end of securing severer strictures on its propagandism."

Liberty is sent regularly to the Boston Public Library that it may be placed on file in the reading-room. We are informed that the trustees have voted not to place it in the reading-room, but to hide it away in the recesses of Bates Hall. Despotism is still at its old tricks. It knows that its only chance for continued existence lies in keeping the light from the people. "You shall not learn to read," said the slaveholder to his slaves. "You shall read nothing but lies," says capital and government to their victims. But their efforts are in vain. Light has a penetrating power that is irresistible, and is bound to make its way. Liberty will be seen and read and understood more and more as time goes on, and will eventually force its way to a place of honor on the shelves of libraries everywhere.

The London "Truth" thinks that "the best use to which a woman can be put is to be made the honest wife of a good man, and the judicious mother of healthy children." It is high time that Editor Labouchere, who claims to be a radical, found out that woman is not here to "be put" to any use whatever. Like man, she has her capacities and her preferences, and, like him, she also has the right to *put herself* to the uses most in accordance with them. Propagation is an important function in which man and woman are factors equally necessary, but one whose usefulness is entirely incident and subordinate to the rest of life. Its value depends wholly on upon its power to produce human beings good for something more than the mere perpetuation of the race. The man who should be told that the best use to which he could be put would be to be made the honest husband of some good woman, and the judicious father of healthy children, would consider himself insulted, and with reason. Why should not woman, too, feel the insult of being degraded in others' estimation to the level of a mere sexual animal, with no brain to speak of above her cerebellum?

About Progressive People.

One of the forthcoming volumes in The Epochs of Modern History is Mr. Justin McCarthy's monograph on "The Epoch of Reform," from 1830 to 1850.

Professor John Fiske, of Havard, is to be one of the essayists at the third biennial session of the Ministers' Institute to be held in Princeton, Mass., in October.

Mr. John Morley's "Life of Cobden" is so near completion that its publication within three months from the present time is confidently anticipated. One volume is already in type.

The cost of erecting Voltaire's statue on the open square bearing his name and that of Etienne Marcel, on the Place de l'Hotel-de-Ville, will be defrayed by the Paris municipality.

The Nihilist journal, "The Will of the People" makes known for the first time that the man who threw the bomb which caused the death of the czar and himself was named Grenevistky.

Castelar, the champion of Republicanism in Spain, declares that both the Carlist and the Christine factors in Spanish politics are daily losing ground, and gives it as his opinion that the dawn of another republic and his country is not far distant.

Walt Whitman, the poet, has been visiting the scenes of his early life, on Long Island, in company with Dr. R. M. Bucke, of Ontario, who is writing a life of Whitman. The title of the book will be "Walt Whitman: a Study." It will be illustrated with a picture of the poet's birthplace, and an etched portrait. The book will be divided into two parts, one biographical, the other critical, and will be published next spring.

M. Clémenceau, the French Radical leader, has a benevolent habit which no other politician probably ever possessed — he gives medical advice gratis to his constituents in Montmartre every morning between 8 and 10. M. Clémenceau has mobile features, with deep-set, dark, and most expressive eyes. His mouth is curved by a constant smile, in which sarcasm and good humor are ever struggling for mastery, and above it grows a short-clipped black moustache which corresponds with his hair. He is a man short in stature and of nervous, muscular frame.

Arrangements for the enlargement of Mr. Ruskin's St. George's Museum at Walkley, near Sheffeld, Eng., which were interrupted by Mr. Ruskin's recent illness, have been resumed again since his health was restored. An architect is already engaged in preparing the plans for the galleries, one of which will be two hundred feet long. The present building stands in somewhat extensive grounds, on the brow of a hill overlooking the valley of the Kivelin and the country beyond it. When Mr. Ruskin purchased the land there was not a house upon it, but it is now almost surrounded. Mr. Ruskin, who was again suffering a short time ago, has been well enough to offer the hospitalities of Coniston to several friends at the beginning of the country-house season. He will very shortly resume at Amiens those studies which produced the exquisitely beautiful essay, "Our Fathers have told us," published in the spring.

At the recent anti-clerical congress in Paris, Mlle. Maria Deraisme was the lioness of the platform. In argumentative power there is no orator in the French chamber the superior of this lady. There is a tinge of acrimony in her style, and a subacidity which gives it zest. Her fingers are slightly awry, her face is long and pointed, and her forehead wide, high, prominent, and very smooth. It rises above pencilled eyebrows and bright and feverish hazel eyes. Mlle. Deraisme is a woman of some fortune, keeps a carriage, has a town and country house, and will never marry as long as the status of the married woman is based on the Orientalism of the Christian religion St. Paul, who was the exponent to the Greek and Roman churches of the Oriental ideas on woman, is the pet hatred of Mlle. Deraisme. There is not a grain of eccentricity in the manner or the method of this oratress when she is on the platform or on her feet at a banquet. She dresses richly and in excellent taste, wears sparkling rings on her slender fingers, flirts a fan worthy to figure in an art museum, gesticulates with ease and sobriety, and astonishes by her intellectual force. If she only sacrificed to the Graces,— but that she will never do,— she would be a peerless speaker.

"A free man is one who enjoys the use of his reason and his faculties; who is neither blinded by passion, nor hindered or driven by oppression, nor deceived by erroneous opinions." — Proudhon.

Doctrine of Assent.

At a recent convention of social philosophers the air, as is usual on such occasions, was full of protest and lamentation over the despotic manner in which majorities ride over the will of minorities. More especially, however, were the heated protestations directed against despotic minorities, who, armed with coercive legislation and artillery, contrive to enslave whole peoples without their consent, yea, against their universal *dissent* and protest. Russia was cited, where one irresponsible autocrat rides rough-shod over eighty millions of people without their assent. Ireland was especially quoted as a down-trodden country, where three million tenants are made virtual slaves comparative handful of land monopolists in the face of protest bordering on revolt. In short, all the prominent reforms were represented as hinging upon a state of things where people are being ruled without their assent.

Hearing this representation of the case constantly reiterated, one of the philosophers arose and expressed his utter astonishment that thinking people should suppose that any of these classes and peoples are ruled without their assent. On the contrary, these classes and peoples not only assent to despotism in every case, but they invite it, take off the hat to it, and make the most elaborate arrangements to receive and welcome it. For how, he maintained, could one man oppose eighty million without their consent and affectionate assent, and how could two though absentee landlords enslave three million of people unless the latter cordially assented to it?

It is not necessary to enter into a philosophical analysis of what is embodied in the term *assent* to see that the statement of this latter philosopher is perfectly true. With perhaps the exception of the Nihilists, the people of Russia assent to the domination of the czar. The convincing proof that the elephant really assents to being tormented by a troublesome and persistent flea on his eyelid is that he does not brush the flea off. If it be alleged that dissent would be of no avail, with his huge trunk chained to his legs, the question naturally suggests itself: How came he to allow a weak mortal biped to chain him, when one gentle sarge of his great body would have ground his master to jelly? Ah! The answer comes unbidden, — his ignorance and superstitious reverence for the office of his keeper makes him a slave. And that is what makes the people of Russia slaves, the people of Ireland slaves, the women slaves, and humanity in general servile.

The writer was once an eye-witness of an incident which bears very significantly on this matter of assent as it pertains to Ireland's degradation and oppression. A rude Irishman had been long pestered by a burly priest for not attending mass and contributing to the usury-box. One day, as he was swaggering along the street, half intoxicated, and savagely bidding for a knock-down fight, he was accosted by his priest, who berated him severely for his shortcomings. His answer not exactly suiting the ecclesiastical functionary, the latter suddenly lifted a huge cane which he carried and felled the man to the ground with one blow. Half stunned, and with blood streaming down his face, he arose to his feet, his fists clenched, and inwardly boiling with

rage. He partly raised his arms to retort on his brutal antagonist, but one look from that priestly visage disarmed him, and, with a burning pang, he exclaimed: "Ah, yer riverence, I'll not strike ye; but, by the holy virgin, remimber it's only yer holy office that proticts yo!"

Yes, and it is this reverence for office, holy and unholy, that has kept Ireland in chains all these centuries,and still nurtures that foul ulcer, the czardom, on the face of humanity, which the Nihilists alone are ready to tear out by the root and bury it out of sight forever. Success to the Nihilists! They are the only men and women in Russia who do not assent. Liberty honors their deeds and their memories, without fear and without equivocation.

But we by no means would have it inferred that ecclesiastical office is the deadliest bane of progress. The whole tribe of priests are simply the left wing of despotism. They are adjuncts and co-partners in the game of social fraud, along with emperors, kings, presidents, diplomats, and other uniformed and titled operators who perpetuate all the studied tricks on the bill. *Behind all despotism, whatever it may be, there is some underlying superstition which inveigles the masses into passive assent.* This superstition find its expression in an office of some kind; the office perverts men's wits and consciences, and forestalls revolt.

It is the purpose of Liberty to get to the bottom of all things, except the bottom of its purse. Government is a machine invented by a few designing schemers to excite discord and war, and profit by the spoils. The main trick by which conspiracy is perpetuated lies in keeping up superstitious reverence for authority by cunningly decorating it with official insignia. This induces the masses to give practical assent to that which persecutes and enslaves them. Once get the lever of Liberty under the keystone of superstition, and the arch of despotism will tumble into ruins.

Reform Made Ridiculous.

One of the most noteworthy of Thomas Jefferson's sayings was that he "had rather live under newspapers without a government than a government without newspapers." The czar of Russia proposes to make this alternative unnecessary by establishing a national weekly journal to be distributed gratuitously in ever village, whose carefully concocted news paragraphs, severely sifted political items, and rose-tinted editorials shall be read aloud on Sundays by designated officials to the assembled multitudes. This absurd proposal is no more absurd than that of a delegate to the state convention of the Massachusetts Greenbackers, who desired that the government should add to its functions that of the collection of news to be furnished gratuitously to the daily journals. And this, again, is no more absurd than some of the proposals actually endorsed by a majority of the delegates to the same convention, nearly all of whose measures and methods, in fact, are quite of a piece with those of the aforesaid czar.

For instance, one of the resolutions adopted (and we grieve to say that is was introduced by no less a person than our excellent and earnest friend J. M. L. Babcock of Cambridge) asks the legislature to compel all corporations to distribute their profits in excess of six per cent. among their employees in the proportion of the scale of wages. Saying nothing of that fact that this resolution seriously offends Liberty by denying equitable distribution of property which the labor movement seeks must result, not from legislative enactment, but from the free play of natural laws, it also offends Equity by admitting that capital is entitled to a portion of labor's product, and that the producer is entitled to exact a profit from the consumer. Yet we are told that only one man in that whole convention had the brains and the courage to rise from his seat and

proclaim the great truth that, if labor can claim anything, it can and should claim ALL. What wonder that this half-hearted, half-headed Greenback party excited among intelligent people no sentiment higher than that of a pity akin to contempt! Mr. Babcock's resolution would take the labor movement off of its basis of rights, and degenerate it into an unprincipled scramble for spoils by which the strongest would profit. Take the half-loaf who will; we shall never cease to reiterate that the whole loaf rightfully belongs to those who raise the wheat from the soil, grind it into flour, and bake it into bread, and not the smallest taste of it to the sharpers who deceive the unthinking masses into granting them a monopoly of the opportunities of performing these industrial operations, which opportunities they in turn rent back to the people on condition of receiving the other half of the loaf.

Religion a Disease.

When one reads a religious journal, or even one which, like our own Boston "Herald," is only occasionally given to religiosity, he is pretty certain to be reminded of the sick-room, and Swedenborg's doctrine of correspondences gets new proof. That the religious atmosphere is the atmosphere of the hospital, full of sickness and of nursing, is painfully revealed to him. Low, suppressed speech, solemn wailing, and forms prostate or bending; awe-struck, blind, believing, fearing, prospecting, entreating, coddling, soul-nourishing with sip of wine and crumb of bread; priests, deacons, and pews, — ah, well, the reminders are too many, — everything but health! And therefore it is, when an old error, a bad superstition is assailed, the truly religious editor cries out: "Oh, spare the blow; leave it, leave it; touch not a single folly; they have sheltered, protected, comforted; the world will never give them up. Never! never! ever!" All of which may be set down to mean: "The world is sick; the world is in a hospital; it can not bear strong food; from the light it shrinks. Leave it there, shrouded in the 'dim religious light;' leave it to the divine mercy, to the providence that tempers the wind to the shorn lambs."

But with all due respect to whom it may concern we say: — Not so; the world isn't sick, — it's frightened. It is stupid and dull, but not sick, and is sadly in need of *exercise*. It requires good sense, wholesome truth, and the general breath of Liberty. Don't be afraid; the world will not die. You can't kill it. It is full of grit, has plenty of courage, and can face all the *Facts* of this universe with entire equanimity.

Ah! thou poor, religious, skulking world, awake! arouse! arise! Take up thy bed, cast it away, and *walk*!

Liberty's Weapons.

Our methods are methods of peace. Liberty is not the advocate of force. Speaking for itself, it hates murderous weapons of all descriptions. It enters into no planning, plotting, or dark and secret measure of assassination or revolution. The French were to call their statue in New York harbor, "Liberty enlightening the world." And that is Liberty's proper function. Compared with the light that is to come, the world sits in darkness. Liberty is the torch we bear aloft, convinced that Liberty's light is to lead the world to heights and into a fullness of life beyond the heart of man now to conceive.

With old, dead, and decaying ideas; with shows and shams; with half-heartedness, hypocrisy, and pious, moralistic, pharisaic pretension; with all the hinders, cripples, dwarfs the human intellect and the robust heart of mankind, — Liberty fights; but with the ploughshare of thought and the lance of freest criticism, disbelieving in all other weapons — those that are death-dealing and not life-giving.

And yet Liberty finds words of approval for the Hartsmanns and the tyrant-slayers who in secrecy plot the revenges of fate. Why? Because Liberty is forced to choose between one class that slays to oppress and another that slays to free.

Is there not a difference?

You know there is, you editors who mouth about assassination, and, if you say there isn't, why, we take the Liberty to say the truth is not in you.

Some of our friends are in a great hurry for a full and systematic explanation of Liberty's philosophy and purposes. They are very anxious to know "just what we are driving at." Patience, good friend, patience! You will get it all in due season. But Liberty's philosophy is a comprehensive one, and cannot be compressed in a day or in a column. The contents of a little fortnightly journal like this, hastily put together as they are in a few spare moments of an otherwise busy life, must perforce present it in driblets, a little here and a little there. Only follow it closely, in all its applications, and you will finally find that it fits everywhere and is deeply rooted. But to a certain extent Liberty, like the rest of the world, floats with the tide, and the development of her philosophy is governed by progress of affairs. Where we shall next branch out, we can no more tell than could John Ruskin, who answered a similar criticism for his "Fors Clavigera" in these words: "As well please with a birch-tree growing out of a crag to arrange its boughs beforehand. The winds and floods will arrange them according to their wild liking; all that the tree has to do, or can do, is to grow gaily, if it may be; sadly, if gaiety be impossible; and let the black jags scar rend the rose-white of its trunk where Fors shall choose." Meanwhile, we are scoring one point, and for the present the most important one, in arousing people to the fact that *we are driving at something*.

The Marquis of Waterford, foreseeing the inevitable, is endeavoring to stave it off by posing as a philanthropist and a reformer. He offers his tenants a permanent reduction of their rents, and to those whom he has evicted a reinstatement. If his tenants show themselves base enough to accept this bribe, they will become neither more nor less than compounders of felony, and will win the same disrespect from those who thoroughly understand the nature of theft that is now accorded by those who know only theft as defined by statute to the merchant who compromises with the burglar by whom his safe has been robbed. "Rent under any circumstances is an immoral tax," says Michael Davitt, boldly and truthfully. No compromise with it, then, is the only course for honest men to follow.

On the strength of the favorable symptoms in the president's case immediately following the so-called "nation's prayer," Dr. J. L. Withrow, who now fills old Dr. Beecher's pulpit at "Brimstone Corner," made the rash announcement last Sunday that the prayer has been heard in heaven and

speedily answered, little knowing that, as the words were leaving his lips, the wires from Long Branch were saying to the newspapers that an abscess had formed on the president's right lung, greatly endangering his chances for recovery. Probably Dr. Withrow will hereafter maintain a judicious reserve until the final designs of Our Lord are manifested in a way that no longer leaves room for doubt.

Uncompromising Steven Foster, the old-time abolitionist who died the other day at his home in Worcester, was one of the most useful citizens that ever honored this country by living in it. Thoroughly honest, devoid of personal ambition, anxious only for the good of his fellows, fearless, logical, and persistent in his maintenance of their rights, he has left behind him a record that will grow whiter in the eyes of generations better able than this to contrast it with the blackness of the sins against which his life was one long battle. Liberty honors his memory as one of her truest soldiers.

Liberty knows no difference whatever between the rights of man, and the rights of woman. Therefore it is eternally opposed to woman suffrage.

A minister has preached an hour; then he remembered: "Another wide field opens from the subject in another direction." Just then an old colored saint ejaculated, "Please, Lord, put up de bars."

The Poetry of Places.

BY WILLOUGHBY WIGGIN.

"Places," observes the dramatist Pythagoras, "are often poetical, and poetry is sometimes local." Great hearts, like Spenser's, are frequently attached by cords which they cannot sever to a garret, a cellar, or a hovel; but their furniture and other valuables have sometimes been separated from them by a still stronger attachment. Poets seldom go to law; the law generally goes to them.

The poetry of places if often very charming, sometimes even more so than the places themselves. It may be divided into two general classes, namely, I-am-bic and the You-dam-bic. We will omit the consideration of the first for the present, and proceed to examine the second. You-dam-bic poetry was almost unknown to the ancients; and, though it may be found in a rudimentary form in other countries, it has been chiefly cultivated in the United States, where it may be found in its highest perfection. The extreme delicacy of this species of poetic composition admirably fits it for a place in the literature of a free county. So frail and tender is its constitution that it has never been known to flourish among the rigors of despotic governments like Great Britain

and France. It droops and fades beneath the blighting shadows of oppression, but blossoms out in all its beauty and glory when caressed by the atmosphere of freedom, and nourished by the encouraging rays of the sun of republican liberty. Here, where great cities spring up as if by magic, there is a true local rivalry, never before equaled in intensity, that fires the heart of enthusiasm and arouses a poetic frenzy in the breast of the humblest inhabitants. Take, for example, the following pathetic lines, which we recently found in the columns of a St. Louis newspaper, the able "Cube-Courtier:"

There was a Miss Blank in Chicawgah
Who started a courting, but maugre
    She pleaded her cases
    In satins and laces,
She couldn't earn pretzels and lawger.

Alfred Tennyson himself never gave us a verse like that, and we hazard the prediction that he never will. He has, perhaps, surpassed it in mere melodiousness; but poetry is more than bare music: it is sentiment rhythmically expressed. And the exquisite perfection of the verse before us culminates in a refined and tender human sympathy, which, like an atmosphere, envelops and permiates the entire stanza, but whose efflorescent bloom is completed in the closing line. Take another example, which I find in an Eastern paper, accredited to the Chicago "Nadir-Zenith:"

There was a young man in St. Louis
Whose doctor confined him to brewis:
    He lived for a season,
    But soon lost his reason,
And married a pawnbreaking Jewess.

This, though scarcely so delicate as the other verse, is remarkable for the intellectual grasp it displays, a grasp combined with subtle refinement of thought and unusual purity and depth of emotion. It evinces the classic serenity of Bryant united with the turbid grandeur of Byron; the simplicity and repose of Longfellow with the abstruse profundity and even the inimitable punctuationality (there ought to be such a word) of Mrs. Piatt. The second line is, by far, the most affecting: the heartless decree of the unfeeling physician, and then, — the meagreness of the diet, and in such a country! But the logical necessity of the catastrophe and final *dénouement* is not paralleled within the entire range of modern art. You can see the whole scene before you: the loan-office filled with all sorts of trumpery, the three gilded balls over the door, the anotely crowd hurrying by on the street, and, at the far extremity of establishment, the ghost-like figure, a mere shadow in the dim gloom of the apartment, leaning mysteriously forward ever the anoque desk in the very act of making out a ticket! Or again, what could be more touching than this from the "Daily Diary"?

Folks in Chicago
Try to make hog go
  For venison, rabbit, and beef;
But something they find
It's nothing but rind,—
  And then the poor cats come to grief.

Matthew Arnold says that Homer is noble, and, on the whole, perhaps he is right, with certain important qualifications; but genuine nobility was almost unknown to the ancients, and has been fully developed only by the lofty school of bards whom we are now considering. Has Mr. Arnold ever examined the poetry in question? The *naiveté* with which he asserts that Homer is noble plainly indicates that he has not. He means, no doubt, — and so far he is correct, — that, if real nobility of style and thought had been known to the Greeks, Homer would probably have been noble. But just here we wish to caution Mr. Arnold, and the flippant English *littérateurs* who take him as a model, not to be rash in their assertions; for callow literary criticism is almost certain, sooner or later, like the unhappy felines of Chicago, to "come to grief." A man like Mr. Arnold cannot afford to lose his reputation by a slip, a mere *lapsus pinguis*[1] like the one to which we have just referred. But we digress. We quote the following from the "Weakly Weekly," which, save in critiques, admits verse to its columns only in those rare cases where extraordinary merit absolutely forbids exclusion:

> Down in St. Louis
> All they can do is
> Make shoes for their girls' clumsy pedals;
> Their feet are so large
> As an updriven barge,
> With ankles as slender as needles.

Note the temperate moderation of these lines. The true poet is always easy and natural. He never exaggerates, never strains a point. And observe how he condenses. A mere versifier would have thinned out the tropical luxuriance of this passage into fifty or a hundred lines. The most skillful chiropodist could not treat this delicate theme with more tenderness, and the description of the ankles is Spenserian, or rather, it is, by far, a *finer* simile than Spenser ever conceived. Spenser wrote tolerable English for his day, but he was too matter-of-fact for subtle and refined concepts. Still, he deserves our gratitude, for, like a true poet, he died of starvation in a garret. We sincerely hope the noble bards on whose writings we have been descanting may all speedily have an opportunity to imitate his example; and we will conclude by suggesting to all young aspirants, like the poet of the "Weekly," that the female form divine is the best figure to begin with, for, in the words of the classic couplet of the gentle poet of Florence, Macchiavelli,—

> "In the vast scope of lore, divine and human,
> The noblest study of mankind is woman."

Enforced Education.

EDITOR LIBERTY: — Thanks for the copy of your most excellent first number. Count me as one subscriber, with hope of others. "The Anatomy of Liberty" is the best article on the subject that it has been my good fortune to read. The first four lines of the extract from "L. Verite" regarding liberty of parents are sufficient to convince any rationalist of the fallacy of *compulsory education.* We run no great risk of contradiction in saying that the public-school system is deficient, that the course of study is ill-advised and, in many respects, unwise, and that the teachers

[1] *Lapsus pinguis,* a slip, or want of fulness, that is, knowledge. See Kikero, "De Senectati," MDCXL, 2, 3, 4, 5.

do not fully comprehend the scope of education and the field to cover. If it becomes compulsory, common schools become degraded to the level of educational jails. We lower the character of every pupil in her or her own estimation the moment they enter the schoolyard. We insult the spirit on intelligence and common sense in the American people. Children would not as readily learn if they felt they were driven to school by law. Incentive would be blighted, pride hurt, and ambition distorted. Compulsion is any form is antagonistic to the spirit of our institutions, and if a foothold is obtain in the public schools, it will establish an undesirable precedent.

With these premises we may assert that the *necessity* that compels parents to send their children to shops, stores, factories, etc., should be removed. If parents are to be *compelled* to send children to school, the community owes the parents two things: first, that the school be *fit* to send children to; second, that the father, by industry and thrift, be *enabled* to allow his children to go to school. Love of esteem; ambition; pride; the influence of good example; the advantages to be derived from education, — these and other influences combine to induce parents to send children to school without the aid of compulsory measures. In fact, the true business of the American legislature is to go behind the returns, and see to it that the conditions are such as to lead the people to accept *voluntarily* the benefits and advantages of common-school education. The question of compulsory education will be solved by the solution of deeper and broader questions behind it, present reference to which would intrench too far on our time and your space.

EL-D. L.
Philadelphia, August, 1881.

Game for the Fool-Killer.

Though man, pricked by a stupid arrogance, strives often to break the reins of government, he never escapes having to obey someone! Very necessity compels, in every association of men, and in every community, that some shall be at the head. Without a head, or chief, by which it may be governed, any society, defrauded of the aim for which it was framed and formed, goes to pieces, and can never avail. — *Pope Leo XIII.*

The "Somebody" of the present hour is always a thrifty, lively, industrious, temperate, farseeing individual, that is always looking for the main chance, and always ready and eager to seize and improve it when he finds it. It matters not whether he is a merchant, a mechanic, a professional character, or a corporation, he is invariably found the possessor of the same intellectual elements and capabilities. That 'Somebody" is a great financial, social, or political tyrant is utter nonsense. The door is open to every American citizen to be a "somebody" instead of a nobody. He has his choice and ought not to complain. — *V. W. B., in New York Truth.*

To Walt Whitman.

At last, O Walt, you are endorsed; no more
  Your muse of the shadow of neglect will feel.
  The "Atlantic Monthly" squirts have their seal
To your credentials: your probation 'a o'er
Be happy, then, O bard, and drink galore;

Your "yawp" is classic now, if ne'er before.
'Tis true that long ago the great Reviews
Of Albion hailed with joy your new-world muse
As native here and to the manor born.
The "satin-and-patchouly" bards their scorn.
Still vented on your long, unmeasured little,
Ruffled in wrath their borrowed feathers fine
At "Leaves of Grass" and mention of your name,
Though Tennyson, their master, owned your fame.

B.

The Agriculture Crisis.

The following article, written in France and for France by French journalist signing "D. G.," applied more or less appropriately to all civilized countries, and states truths especially important to students of the Irish land question:—

To exhaust industry under the pretext of cheapening products, to kill finance by stock-jobbing and agricultural by usury, rent, and expropriation, and then to shout, "Let us protect and encourage industry and agriculture, and improve our financial condition," — such is the economic programs of certain men who treat French labor as a simple stock-exchange value and speculate by turns on the prosperity and ruin of a great nation.

In that which concerns more particularly agriculture and the protection which it merits we know what complaints are made daily to the authorities by farmers and especially by land proprietors, who, to the exclusion of other country people, have a voice in the matter. Now phylloxera is the trouble, now American competition, now the bad crops. And the government promises a decrease of the land tax, agricultural instruction, agricultural credit, etc., which sound very well in electoral programme.

It is beyond question that agriculture to-day is passing through a crisis. What is its intensity and what is its cause? Generally, in judging these economic revolutions, we commit the error of consulting statistical tables alone and of considering only the quantity or value of products, without reflecting that it is not true that, in the present state of landed property with us, the progress of agriculture is a problem that cannot be solved.

It is known that out of twenty millions of people devoted to agriculture, seven or eight million are proprietors cultivating their own land; they are found generally on small or medium estates and live in comparative ease, provided they do not allow themselves to get entangled in a meshwork of mortgages. As to the other twelve millions they are composed, first, of farmers submitted to the pressing and extortionate conditions of a lease, and then of laborers whose pitiful conditions, sometimes worse than that of the workingmen of the cities, seems less glaring because not as familiar and because among this class of disinherited any cooperative union, any collective demand for justice is impossible.

Whatever they may do, these twelve millions of men will never become proprietors. Let agricultural schools be organized! Result: a decrease in the cost of production, a larger product. But the inflexible theory of net product always confronts the farmer; they will sow, but the harvest will benefit the proprietors. Let the land tax be reduced! The reduction will not yield them a cent.

Let the city tolls be abolished! The cities will offer to the products of the country a larger market, whence will result an increase in the value of the land for the proprietors and an increase of rent against the tenant. The advantage is then offset by the loss. Whatever reform may be attempted in the direction which it is now proposed to take, on whatever side the professed reformers and pseudo-philanthropists may turn, they invariably bring up against the theory of rent: the landlord proprietor always taking the excess of the gross product over the cost of production, in a word the whole net product, and the tenant scarcely recovers his investment. As for the farm-hands, servants, and other agricultural laborers, they only receive contemptible wages. The proprietor speculates on the farmer, the farmer on them, and often their situation is so precarious that they are forced to the factories to avoid starvation, as the emigration from the fields to the city forcibly proves.

Let political economy strike up the usual strain about the benefits of economy. Its teachings and advice, always addressed to those who do not need them or cannot profit by them, seem like a cruel jest to those men, workers in city or country, who cannot economize.

Admirers of achievement, the economists have codified abuses and given the name of science to this collection of general principles which regulate the exploitation of man by man. No more on this question than on those of industrialism, free trade, taxation, have they been able to grasp the difference between demanded rights and existing facts.

It is said on all sides, and with reason, that, to develop agricultural forces of a country, it is necessary to make use of new processes and especially not to fear to devote large amounts of capital to the cultivation of land. But who will furnish this capital? The tenant, for land that does not belong to him? He will guard well against that, and, if he has saved something, he will consider rather the purchase of a bit of land. The Landlord? Better worth his while to invest his capital in manufacturing enterprise and to speculate; for — and there lies the evil — land is less profitable than the stock exchange. Instead of improving the soil and applying to it the best systems of cultivation, the landed proprietor, who generally does not even know his estates and who, and in any case, has no experience in farming, will content himself with receiving his rents which he will try to raise, little by little, so that at last well-cultivated lands will be found only among those who themselves add to the value of the soil which they own.

And this observation comes to the support of the complaints of the economists against absenteeism, as if absenteeism was not the forced result of the present form of property in land, and as if every proprietor not a cultivator was not necessarily an absentee. Further, by the periodical demands of rent, the proprietor forces the tenant to exhaust the land, an event that generally occurs toward the expiration of the lease, hence an evident loss for society. There lies an evil which no legal remedy can alleviate and the cause of which must be sought for in the constitution of landed property itself.

It must be confessed that of the problem now before us the French Revolution has furnished no satisfactory solution. It has destroyed feudalism, but what has it put in its place? Another feudalism. "The land of France is free throughout its whole extent," says the law of September 28, 1791. But is the peasant free? Is he free when, in law and in fact, he can be evicted, without compensation, from an estate the value of which he has doubled? On this point, the Revolution did not complete its work. Its principles suffice to organize government, or rather on the ruins of government they build autonomy; but, to organize labor, they are insufficient. The Revolution abolished the personally inequality of rights; real inequality survived it, and it has been forgotten that privilege is organic in a society when some can rest and consume without working while

others can labor without hope. "The liberty of the proletaire," said Proudhon, "is the right to labor — that is, to be robbed — or not to labor — that is, to starve. Liberty now benefits none but the strong."

It is then outside of the Revolution itself, and by devoting itself to the study and accomplishment of what the Revolution did not study and accomplish, that social science must henceforth do its work. In the place of the feudalism of the nobility we see to-day an industrial and mercantile feudalism, more powerful than the other. Industry has led to industrialism; so agriculture inclines to become industrial; the machine will hunt the peasant from the field as it has hunted the workman from the shop. The proprietor, the capitalist, will alone remain. Everywhere will be effected a concentration of capital accompanied by a corresponding impoverishment of the masses; for, even when the total wealth of a country increases, the number of the poor may increase also. And that will last until the day when the antagonism in economic society shall have reached that degree of bitterness which, in 1789, made inevitable and fatal the overturning of political society. Excess of abuse leads to reforms. But so rarely does society adopt means of prevention that in social progress it is necessary to exhaust each of the series composing it, and that it is never noticed that the bow is bent too far until it breaks.

The Farce of Popular Sovereignty.

The letter from the Paris correspondent of "Le Révolté" from which the following is an extract was written prior to the late French elections, but the facts to which it alludes have not lost their significance:—

A fresh act of absolutism on the part of the *bourgeoise* Republic has just exhibited, even to the least clairvoyant, that hollowness of universal suffrage and the little heed that governing classes may with impunity pay to the pretended sovereignty of the people when they find it for their interest to do so.

In the fear, no doubt, that too long an electoral period, by raising on every hand political discussions and exciting public opinion, would shed too much light on the secret intrigues of the ministers, — intrigues likely to end in fatal catastrophe in Tunis, Algeria, or elsewhere, — the Ferry ministry has brusquely decided that the general election shall occur August 21, instead of September or October as was generally expected. And when this unexpected stroke provoked protests from the most moderate, and certain deputies, finding their own interests threatened and their little plans upset, demanded an explanation, the president of the cabinet answered, in tone admitting no rejoinder, that the malcontents were wasting their time and their complaints, and that the election would take place at the appointed date, "such being his good pleasure." Perhaps those were not the exact words of his declaration, but they certainly do not pervert his meaning. An absolute monarch would not have spoken otherwise. M. Jules Ferry, nevertheless, is a representative of the people, one of the elect of universal suffrage! Which proves that the origin of power does not modify its dangerous character, and that it is of small consequence to the people whether the masters who make laws to govern them are masters imposed upon them, or masters chosen by themselves.

French citizens, then, are to go to the polls without having had time for mutual consultation, adoption of platforms, or close scrutiny of the innumerable candidates who solicit their votes. All

will be settled in a fortnight in a slovenly, blind, hap-hazard style. And it is this sorrowful farce that is called sovereignty of the people!

But the proletariat, it appears, is beginning to understand how they befool and befog it. Never, indeed, has an electoral period agitated opinion so little. Without doubt meetings are as numerous and exciting as ever; without doubt committees multiply, as well as candidates and professions of faith. But this agitation is wholly superficial; it has not penetrated, as formerly, deep down among the masses and anonymous crowd; and were it not for the motley which covered, until they have become an eye-sore, with veritable rainbows of posters, no one would detect that the destiny of a great nation — the fate of people now depending of the cast of a die — is under discussion.

Has government absolutism produced this indifference, which may culminate in the near future in vengeful discontent and virile passion? Or is it not due rather to anarchistic reaching, which, thought it has hitherto done little more than speak without *acting*, pursues slowly and mysteriously its undetermined work, like the water which, falling drop by drop, finally wears away the hardest rock? Possibly the result is attributed to both causes, but certain it is that the Anarchistic ideas are gaining ground every day, more ground perhaps than its most ardent champions imagine. Take one example among a thousand. A few days ago Comrade Emile Gautier, being present at an electoral meeting in the Pantheon quarter at the hall of Vieux-Chêne, took the floor to develop the revolutionary theories before the large audience attending. But one of the chief leaders of so-called radicalism in the quarter, the young Pichon, an editor of M. Clemencea's "Justice," broke out in violent protest, pretending that the Anarchists, from the moment that they preached abstention, has no right to attend electoral meetings, much less to speak at them. Unfortunate words for the young *bourgeois!* From all parts of the hall went up protests, and these cries, "Citizen Gautier is right, "Voting is a game of see-saw," were uttered by a large number of citizens whose faces were unfamiliar and who are not accustomed to frequent our circles or our groups. They were so many unknown friends. So numerous were they that, a few minutes later, the president having denied the floor to Comrade Gautier, and the latter having answered that he would take it in spite of him, as he did not recognize the president's authority (which led to the resignation of the officers of the meeting), Comrade Gautier, *although an Anarchist*, was chosen president by a large majority. He made haste, however, to decline the position, but the event none the less showed that the strike of the electors lends more favor with the people than the minimum radicals like to admit.

Switzerland's Double Shame.

Read the outspoken utterance of Henri Rouchefort's journal "L'Intransigeant," on the Kropotkin expulsion:—

A letter from Berne informs us that our friend, Prince Kropotkin, one of the most distinguished men in the Russian revolutionary party, has just been expelled from Switzerland by a decree of the federal council.

They accuse Pierre Kropotkin of having called himself Levaschof, which, it will be admitted, is not highly criminal; of having been editorially connected with "Le Révolté," which was his indisputable right; of having expressed no regret at the death of Alexander II, who had robbed him of his property and banished him; of having remained resolutely true in his republican faith

and socialistic convictions; of having maintained sympathy for Sophie Perovskaya, Ryssakoff, Mikhailoff, Jelaboff, and their heroic friends hung at St. Petersburg on the fifteenth of last April; and, finally, of having taken part in the London revolutionary congress, which, it would seem, is England's affair alone.

It is evident that the ridiculous reasons alleged by the federal council in justification of the expulsion of Citizen Pierre Kropotkin only the more clearly reveal the odious character of the measure of which our friend is the victim. Switzerland refuses its hospitality to this proud republican in order to court the favor of Russian authority.

As long ago as 1878 the Swiss republic expelled Paul Brousse for a few newspaper articles; to-day it expels Pierre Kropotkin for a few words spoken at London or Geneva, a double shame will rest upon its shoulders in the eyes of all free peoples.

Ministers, as a rule, know but little of public affairs, and they always account for the action of people they do not like or agree with by attributing to them the lowest and basest motives. This is the fruit of the pulpit, always has been, and probably always will be. — *R. G. Ingersoll.*

The Anarchist Library
Anti-Copyright



Benjamin Tucker
Liberty Vol. I. No. 4.
Not the Daughter but the Mother of Order
September 17, 1881

Retrieved on August 17, 2020 from www.readliberty.org
Many thanks to www.readliberty.org for the readily-available transcription and
www.libertarian-labyrinth.org for the original scans.

theanarchistlibrary.org