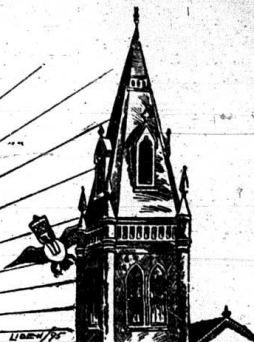
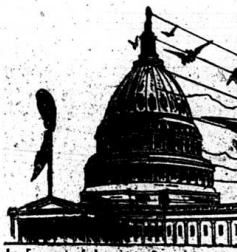


# The Firebrand

THE VOICE OF THE COMRADES OF IGNORANCE AND SUPERSTITION.



An Exponent of Anarchist-Communism: Holding that Equality of Opportunity alone Constitutes Liberty; that in the Absence of Monopoly Price and Competition Cannot Exist, and that Communism is an Inevitable Consequence.

VOL. II.

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## THE FIREBRAND

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Anarchy.—A social theory which regards the union of order with the absence of all direct government of man by man as the political ideal; absolute individual liberty.—Century Dictionary.

### The End of the World.

Comrades! the end of the world's at hand!  
Our round earth planet? Ah, no;  
The planet shall roll, and the great sun stand,  
The beautiful sea-waves break on the strand,  
The flowers and fruits shall cover the land—  
But the World and its ills shall go.

Wherever has rested the golden smirch  
White livers prepare to hie;  
At sign from the gold god's tottering perch  
See, loth and lingering far in the lurch,  
Comes Mammon's black hireling, the politic Church,  
Canting the Socialist cry.

Hear how its foolish begin to say,  
In fear of the final rout—  
"The night grows old, and the dread new day  
Requires that we follow the People's way;  
Give us your oil, ye wise, we pray,  
For our lamps are all flickering out."

The first time passed, and he died alone,  
And the deaf world held on its way;  
And priest and ruler the tares have sown,  
Mingled with wheat they have rampant grown,  
But the Harvester knows his own—his own,  
And in judgment he comes to-day.

And Houses shall fall, built on golden sand,  
And only the Truth be dear;  
The rock-built dwelling of faith shall stand,  
The glad, free people shall joy in the land,  
And heart trust heart e'en as hand helps hand,  
For the end of the World is here.

—L. S. Bevington, in Liberty Lyrics.

### Liberty and Property.

I HAVE seen in a lonely place a boat hung to an endless wire rope stretched across the river; the passenger hauled on the lower turn to bring the boat to him if it was on the wrong side. When the river was up, he could cross by hauling on the other turn; but on account of floods the pulleys were placed at such a height above the ordinary level that, when the traveller got down the bank to the boat, the rope was out of reach, and he had to punt across with a pole.

I may be the owner of such a boat. You may be my neighbor, on the other side of the river. You have a low flat, over which flat the floods rise, shutting you up on an island. My side of the river has a high hill for bank, and I live well out of reach of floods.

One day the heaviest storm known in many years pours over the district. The river rises higher than it has ever been seen before—higher than the highest floodmarks it has set on the trees—and still it is rising. Your house is washed by the waters. In a little while it will be washed away. You must cross the river by my boat, the only means available, or perish by drowning.

According to "Individualism" you have no right to use this boat without my consent. I have abso-

lute control of my products to permit or forbid their use, except in one point only—if I permit them to be used, I have no right to charge more than an equivalent for the amount of my labor capacity or labor time consumed in them.

Hence, I have the right to condemn you to death by drowning. Certainly I am not responsible for your not having a boat of your own.

If you attempt to haul the boat towards you, I am right in hauling it back and fastening it. If you have already seated yourself in it, I am right in ordering you out and shooting you if you refuse to go. If you desperately attempt to climb the wire, I am right to shoot you or shake you off into the torrent.

But if I offer to relent my deadly determination on condition that you will pay me a profit on the wear and tear of my boat and rope and pulleys, I am wrong, I am a criminal, I am an invader of your liberty, or trying to be, and consequently—

If I allow you to cross by means of my apparatus on those terms, you are entitled to kill me rather than pay the excess, which may be as one cent. But if I absolutely refuse to let you cross by means of what I own, you are not entitled to shoot me rather than be drowned or shoot yourself. To extort one cent is a mortal sin, but to deliberately insist on what I know will mean your death, for no reason whatever but that is my whim you shall not use the only means for saving your life—that is simple justice!

Nay, more and worse there is yet. For if you have already crossed in the boat, without asking my permission—even though I might have been willing to grant it without any charge at all—you have violated my property, which is, according to "Individualists," my liberty and (as embodying my vital energy) my very life.

Therefore—and this is not the "logic of an enemy," but the conclusion which numerous "Individualists" have avowedly drawn from their own principles—you have forfeited all your social rights as a man, and I have acquired the sovereign right to kill you, torture you, or hold you to work for me as my privately-owned beast of burden as long as you continue to live. For he who violates my property—be it so without his will, without his knowledge, nay, even accidentally through his efforts to avoid doing so, and even though I sustain no loss or hurt, but am benefited by his action—he who violates my property becomes my property, to abuse (except for aggressing on use and to the property of a third party) without gainsay or hinderance from anyone who is not minded to become a social impossibility, a rejected counterfeit of humanity, an excommunicated wild beast, himself.

I will not insist on this view, because there are many of the "Individualists" who do not entertain it. They would say that I am entitled to kill you in endeavouring to prevent you from using that which I own and which I am not willing that you should use; that similarly I am entitled to kill you in the endeavour, if you have already violated my property, to recover from you the ordinary exchange-equivalent with any special damages there

may be and costs of the recovery; but not to kill or torture you in mere vindictiveness or to reduce you to permanent servitude. It is quite bad enough, however, to affirm that you have no right to touch something which I may not need, or your use of which would not interfere with the benefit I can obtain from it, and that I have full social sanction to kill you to prevent you from using it.

To take away the products or possessions of another without consulting him, or even against his will, is, like any other act, moral or immoral according to circumstances. Suppose that a tree has fallen across the railway line; there is no way of signalling in time, or with any certainty of effect; in a few minutes a train will come rushing along, and hundreds of people may be dashed to death. If only an axe can be procured, those of us who have seen the danger may just be able to force the tree off the track, in time to save the train. But the only axe at hand is one whose owner is away; or the owner is using it to chop firewood, and either from stupidity or from ill temper declines to leave off and bring it to the line, or let us take it. Are we to think ourselves justified in seizing the axe instantly without his consent, to save a hundred lives, or are we to think ourselves justified in letting these lives be destroyed, to save Property inviolate? According to the answers we give we shall be acknowledging the principle of Communism or that of Property. The instinctive judgment of most people decides for Communism, and thereby condemns the Property-idea as a falsehood. The natural reason of mankind generally would justify the man who would, if necessary, kill the owner of the axe in the hope of saving the train.

It would be the same, too, if the only people on the train were the driver and fireman, or if there were only one—or nobody at all, so long as it was reasonably supposed to have somebody on it. For in the inner sense of men, human preservation is more important than the keeping of an axe, and the man who wills it otherwise puts himself outside the solidarity of humanity. He has his rights as the sheep or the wolf—but these are not identified in exercise with those of other people. The men on the train, and the men who try to rescue them, each ordinary person feels to be part of himself; but the obdurate axe-owner we can no more practically identify ourselves with than he identifies himself with us. The nature of the case makes for war, and war it must be unless some authority prevents it. War is war, and to the victors the spoils!

But the "Individualists" say this is Authority. It is not. What absurdity to talk of freedom and deny the right of war to those who find their interest incompatible! "The liberty of each limited in favor of the liberty of every other" is not liberty at all. What is the meaning of the wolf's liberty limited in favor of the lamb's, and the lamb's liberty limited in favor of the wolf's? Either a contradiction in terms, or else some such absurdity as that the wolf is not to eat the grass and the lamb is not to eat meat. Liberty limits no liberty; it is the freedom of peace and of war, in all things. Authority arises from the acceptance by somebody, of the doctrine that his will ought to be according to the dictum of some rule or

rule—whereby he hypnotises his faculty of will, so that circumstances affect his conduct in an inappropriate manner, very differently from how they naturally would if he had not so tampered with himself (or been so tampered with in his bringing up). It is nothing more or less than an illusion of disease.

Government is not authority; it is a behaviour or an institution which depends generally on authority for its possibility, and for that of setting in motion the force necessary to overcome the resistance of persons who are not completely hypnotized. But the fact of force being frequently used in the name of authority does not constitute force itself authority. It may be regrettable that conflict should ever be necessary; but so long as it is possible for people to have incompatible interests which they are respectively bent on preserving, there is only one way of arriving at a settlement without accepting some authoritarian idea to limit the development of will: and that is, for each to do what he can towards doing as he wants to.

#### VI.

People in general may be in an artificial state of mind which commits them to take sides without regard to the sympathies which the real bearings of the case tend to awaken in them for the particular occasion.

When this is so, there is law, authority, probably the State. When it is not so, then there is Anarchy.

When the artificial mental condition is such, that they are committed to take sides with the possessor of an object solely because he became possessed of it in a certain way, and no matter whether his interest in retaining it, or in preventing someone else from having the use of it, appeals to their natural sympathies less or more than the interest of another in obtaining it—the resulting hallucination is Property. Freedom from this form of mental alienation, is Communism.

If the hypnotic insanity took the opposite form of committing the patients to take sides against the possessor because the non-possessor claimed to need the article in dispute, or because he did really need it more than the possessor—equally without regard to their sympathies for the particular interests involved for the particular occasion—the name of the disease would be “What the Individualists imagine to be Communism,” alias Inverse Property, or “Authoritarian Communism.” Those who are free from this form of derangement, but subject to the other are known as “Individualists,” though the name is not strictly appropriate. Those who are free from all the forms of malady are termed Anarchist Communists, Communist Anarchists, Nihilistic Anarchists, Individualist Communists, etc. (It does not follow, of course, that some people may not be passing under a wrong term.)

The foregoing statement of the case admits of direct medical proof, apart from the obviousness that the mental conditions I have described as those of Authority, Property and Inverse Property are really mental disorders. For though the persons affected by them may fail to recognize that they are in an artificial mental condition which commits them to irrational conduct, medical experience shows that the mere fact of a person's life being closely interwoven with the practical following out of any one of these three conceptions, or rather of this one conception here stated in one general form and two special forms, is a predisposing cause to organic insanity.

Maudsley, Lombroso, and others have emphasized the fact that kings, aristocrats, etc., upon whom the authority-ideas of other people are focussed, and whose own authority-idea is turned inwardly, committing them to follow their whims in contempt of the practical sympathies which modify the will of equals—are doomed with especial certainty and rapidity to insanity and complete physical degeneration.

Religious people, who sincerely believe in the existence of a God, as a person to whom they owe obedience, are notoriously subject to insanity. This does not proceed from the belief in an invisible person merely, since a person may accept a false statement conveyed to him as to the existence of any other non-existent animal, and still be sane; it is the authoritarian character of the concept God and its associated concepts, which necessitates the mind

of the religious person being kept in a hypnotic condition, that produces the conditions for impairing the brain and bringing about organic madness.

Slaves, who have been thoroughly hypnotised by fear, in addition to the influence of their bringing up among well-hypnotised slaves, are notoriously imbecile or lunatic in proportion to their docility. Reverence for masters has always been associated with idiocy or erratic and dangerous duplicity.

Letourneau points out, in “The Evolution of Property,” that the private property idea appears to act as a total arrest to the evolution of races in a certain state of development. He describes the condition of a certain African tribe whose dominant idea is property, and the description reads like the account of a madhouse.

Millionaires have in all ages shared with princes an exceptional liability to insanity, and to the begetting of insane and deformed children.

Maudsley affirms that commerce—especially petty commerce—is a potent cause of degeneration, and assigns expressly the reason that the natural sympathies of the shopkeeper are habitually subordinated to the arithmetic of property. His is the opinion of a specialist in mental disorders.

Persons largely occupied in collecting for charities, etc., have also special tendencies to become mentally deranged.

Thieves, who steal at first under necessity, frequently arrive at a perfectly developed sense of Inverse Property. Such persons have no greed, and appears almost impossible for them to refuse a request for anything they possess, even when they need it most; but when they feel the need of anything which they have not, they take it with no compunction for the needs of the possessor. They do not resent being stolen from, but steal in turn from somebody else; if they know who stole from them they will not steal back from him, but find someone else to steal from. During my imprisonments I have studied this type; they generally manifest symptoms of mental derangement produced by frequent imprisonment, as do most habitual prisoners—especially those who undergo long sentences with much solitary confinement; but there are some characteristics which appear to be present in the derangement proportionately with the degree to which the sense of Inverse Property is developed, rather than to which the general symptoms of prison crankiness have been produced. These characteristics accord with the erratic tendencies I have found most common among people elsewhere who incline to the conception of Inverse Property.

Conversely, various forms of organic insanity develop the authority idea in all these phases. Some lunatics acquire a sense of sovereignty; others extreme and abject submissiveness to some rule or person. With some, an exaggerated sense of their own ownership is the leading feature; others acquire the most absurd fear of touching anything that is not “theirs” and when visiting a friend, before the disease has been recognized, have perhaps been shown into a room and asked to wait a little, and at the end of half an hour have been found standing up because they had not been expressly authorised to use a chair, or if asked “why didn't you amuse yourself with a book,” have answered “I didn't know if I might.” Others, again, develop Inverse Ownership; they hasten to divest themselves of their possessions, to gratify everyone's fancies, or ask for things that are in use, and consider themselves robbed if refused, or steal openly, without greed.

On the contrary, conduct answering to the rationale of Anarchist Communism so far as existing conditions admit, is agreed by the specialists to be conducive to, and a synonym of, sound mental health; which could not be otherwise, since the essence of Anarchist Communism is naturalness, circumstantial rationalism in the broadest sense, will shaped by circumstances according to their perceived bearing on the positive interest of the individual (including his sympathies with other people's positive interests) in a real sense, and not according to any metaphysical rule.

“The intellect,” says Maudsley (Pathology of Mind) “is developed out of sensation and motion; in other words, out of the capacity to receive and assimilate suitable impressions and to respond to

them by definite movements, whereby man as a part of nature takes his part in its evolution, being acted upon by it and reacting upon it, and will is the impulse which, springing at bottom from the organic life and displaying itself in desire, is guided by the intellect to affect improved conscious adjustments to the social and physical environments.” “To bring Self by systematically improved adaptation of feeling, insight, and doing,” he says further on, “into the most intimate possible harmony with nature, so as almost to lose the sense of self in the larger sense of oneness with it, must be the means, I take it, and should be the aim, of human evolution. . . . In as much as a large part of the nature with which man has to come into some sort of harmony is not what we call physical nature, but human nature, it is plain that a main business of his life will be to adjust his relations to his kind. . . . If an individual fails to bring himself into sympathetic relations, conscious or unconscious, with surrounding human nature, he becomes a sort of discord, and is on the road, though he may not reach the end of it, which leads to madness or to crime. . . . he is truly an alien from his kind, and with equal truth he is said to be alienated from himself, because it is the function of a normal self to be one with its kind. . . . If it be true that it is the aim and condition of a just development to bring the individual into sympathetic relations with the sufferings and the doings of his kind, it is plain that he who, distrustful of everyone, pursues eagerly his own selfish schemes, having no regard to his altruistic functions as a unit in the social organism, must be on the road to initiate degeneracy of some kind. . . . Any course of life, then which persistently ignores the altruistic relations of an individual as a social unit (which is in truth a systematic negation of an moral law of human progress) deteriorates his higher nature, and so initiates a degeneracy which may issue in actual mental derangement in his posterity.” Again: “The destruction of co-ordination of function” (or the faculty of acting appropriately to the real bearing of circumstances) “is the abolition of volition.” An insane delusion “has taken a predominant possession of consciousness, and there is a discontinuity of function between its tract and surrounding parts.” (This is precisely the case with the property idea; the function of moral judgement, which is naturally a function of human sympathy, is disconnected from the perception of the real facts which affect the well-being of persons, and is operated only by the perception that according to some system or other such or such a person is OWNER.) Further yet, he says of the insane, “Living together for years they, as a rule, show no interest in, and no sympathy with, one another.” (This is the very spirit of property.) “The mode of affection of the individual by events, is entirely changed by the disordered state of nerve-element.” (Again the exact definition of the influence of the Property or other Authority idea on conduct.)

I could go on multiplying quotations indefinitely, but these will suffice. I think I have sufficiently established in this series of articles that the property idea is a delusion answering strictly in its nature and effects to an artificially assumed, or hypnotic insanity; that mental freedom, in which alone genuine social freedom is possible, consists in the condition of mind which admits of actions responding to real needs (including those arising by sympathy) clear of metaphysical hypnotisation; and in short that Liberty is Sanity, the expression of Sanity is Communism, and that Property is Insanity.

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#### On Charity.

Now that the most eloquent orators are none too good to address the laborers who, as a rule, are looked upon as a set of desperados, it might be well to handle that blessed theme which Ingersoll so often harps upon, the theme of charity. There is no longer any doubt that there is something wrong in the present order of things. Even the most conservative politicians speak of life made too hard for those who create the wealth of nations. The fact that while the idlers sit at the banquet the most industrious are clothed in rags is too obvious to be denied. And remedies are now being suggested from all sides.

We are told that there is poverty, because men are not charitable. We are also told that to show ourselves men worthy of the grand-age in which we manage to crawl between heaven and earth, it is necessary to be charitable. This appeal for charity reminds me of an instance at the time of the Russian-Turkish war. That was a time when men have been sent to kill as many people as possible without any earthly reason for it. And the more one killed the greater was his fame. On the other hand appeals were made to join the Red Cross Society for the purpose of saving the wounded. The greater the amount saved the more glory that savior gained. In short, on one hand there were inducements to wound and kill while, on the other hand, there were equal inducements to minister the sick and bring the dying to life again. I can find no fault with those who did their utmost to carry out the missions of The Red Cross Society, but, I ask would it not be better to stop wounding and there would be no need of saving them? I ask, would it not be better for those who feel inclined to glorify the noble deeds of those who save the wounded, not to wound them at all and thereby spare the trouble to so many men women and children to suffer agony and then die in the most unspeakable pain? Would it not be better not to rob the laborer of his toil and then he would need no charity? What a set of humanitarians we have here! When the laborer is robbed of all that he creates, not a word is said against the robbers; when he is on his deathbed, wasting away from starvation, a plea is made to those who exploited him while he was healthy, to send him a crust of bread, it's a pity to see a man dying. I tell you, do not be fooled in this manner. The man who now pleads for that crust of bread has seen how cruel it was to let the dying laborer work, work and work and get nothing or next to nothing in return. He has seen how the iron heel of capitalism and greed has been pressed upon the brow of labor; he has seen how mankind has been crucified on the cross of gold. And yet he said nothing. He said nothing till the last drop of blood has vanished from the toilers veins. Now, when amply compensated by Mark Hanna, Robert G. Ingersoll comes to the front. Now he comes to utter kind sentiments over the graves of those who were brutally murdered by the monopolies of to-day. Now Mr. Ingersoll makes a plea to save the wounded. Laborers, do not be deceived by a kiss! It will prove painful in the end. Mr. Ingersoll is not a friend of labor even though he pities the wounded in the most elaborate orations.

Let us, therefore strip his remedy from all useless elaborations and look into it from an economic standpoint of view. You know very well, from my previous articles and a great many others that have appeared in THE FIREBRAND and elsewhere, that the laborer of to-day receives in wages just enough to keep him moving. You also know that just as soon as the cost of a laborer's living is reduced, his wages are also reduced, because wages are not paid according to the amount of labor one does, but according to the price it costs to get another one. You also know that in the present struggle for a chance to work the laborer offers himself for the lowest price he can possibly manage to exist. Ingersoll's remedy to solve the labor problem is charity. "Let's have more charity and everything will be alright," is about what Ingersoll would say. Charity assists certain persons to live on less than others by giving to some certain necessities of life for which others have to pay out of their earnings. However kind the hearts or sincere the minds of those who give to charity, may be, it is after all, to the man who has grasped the workings of our industrial system, an evil which tends to make beggars out of the wealth producers of the world. If you establish an Aid Society to give children free lodging and cheap clothing, it will act as a magnet to draw more boys to a place where there are too many boys already. It will, in the first place, tend to reduce wages by enabling the boys to live cheaper, and it will, in the second place, reduce wages because of the great competition of the boys struggling to get employment. What is true of a society of boys is true of all charitable homes the object of which is probably to help the poor working girls by enabling them, what Ingersoll is pleased to call to live economically. But this enabling of the poor working girls to live more economically has only succeeded in making it easier for the unscrupulous employers of woman to exploit them safely and respectably. By the side of the large factory, whose owner is growing rich, upon the spoliation of his women workers, it builds the Lodging House or the Christian Home, and enables the manufacturer to pay wages below the living

point. 1) The wages women get now would be almost impossible were it not for the thoughtless charity and other sources women get now-a-days. If these good-hearted people would only look into the histories of their pensioners, they would find that charity is not only not benefiting the poor, but that it also tends to degrade them. Not only does it fail to assist the industrious poor, but it actually helps the sweaters and monopolists in general to screw down the wages of his miserable workers.

Let me quote something from Miss. Van Etten's pamphlets:—"But while thus, indirectly, charity is one of the many causes which tend to depress the condition of the working women by making possible many of the exactions and oppressions under which they suffer, the rapid increase of great charitable institutions, supported by municipal or State Treasury, within whose walls are often housed hundreds of women and girls, has become a direct means of lowering wages, by entering directly into competition with the serving women, already the most numerous and the most oppressed women workers. And what an unequal competition! With all living expenses paid by the city or State, augmented by voluntary offerings of the charitable, the managers of those institutions are able and do sell the labor of their inmates far below the rate of wages prevailing outside—miserable low as that is.

It is, of course, claimed that the institutions do so small a percentage of the work done that it does not affect wages. But under the present industrial system, it is well known that a reduction of wages even in a fraction of the trade has an immediate effect upon the wages of the whole trade. In the Catholic Protectory, sheltering about one-thousand girls, shirts, gloves, men's and boys' clothing are made at a price that it would be impossible for a woman to live upon outside. Scores of sewing women have told me that, upon protesting against a reduction of wages, they have been met with the answer, "we can get work done by the sisters at these prices."

There are also numerous other institutions which, though probably intended to aid the industrious poor, have brought about such shocking results that I wonder if ever the good-hearted men and women who contribute to the establishment of charitable institutions, had considered them, would much longer keep on crying for charity. I am quite certain, that if the good sisters would only realize the crimes they are committing daily, they would shrink from the holy cause of charity. But Mr. Ingersoll, if no one else, should have been aware of the horrible threats used by the employed when their laborers, driven to the verge of starvation, protest against the still further reduction of wages. Mr. Ingersoll, if no other public politician, should have known better than to suggest charity as the remedy for the unspeakable poverty of the laboring masses. He should have known that the establishment of charitable institutions tends to introduce a cruel and merciless competitor into the labor market which causes an increase of misery, crime and degradation.

As I said at the outset, I have no objections to the charity funds thinking that it is better that news boys should sleep in clean cots rather than in dirty tenements or hallways. I do not criticize those kind women who think of their homeless sisters and provide a home for them. But economically speaking, these beautiful works of the heart are but poor products of the brain; they tend to deepen the poverty of every one who has to work for a living; even those who are aided immediately by becoming inmates of such institutions are, after all, poor degraded slaves denying themselves every thing, but breakfast, dinner and supper. And when charity is being advocated as a remedy we might think of the horrible crimes it commits against that vast army of workers who stand ready to work for any price that might be offered.

It seems a pity that helping those who are in need should so positively injure the poor and help their exploiters, yet after all it's better that it is so, for if it were possible to help the poor by charity, we might never be able to see our present system in all its hideousness. As it is, the evil of monopoly becomes more obvious every day and the day is not far distant when this monopolistic conspiracy against the human race will vanish from the earth. You may cry, "peace, peace, peace," all over the world, but there is no peace. When the laborer is robbed of his products and the robber is protected in his ill-gotten wealth by the State,

1) See "The Conditions of Women Workers under the Present Industrial System" by Miss Ida M. Van Etten, published by the American Federation of Labor.

war is in the air and woe to that power that will try to uphold the coming storm. We don't want to fight, but, by jingos, if we do? We are not deceived by politicians who in consideration of a few thousands dollars try to soothe us into satisfaction with things as they are. We will not be satisfied till we reach that era when there will be no idle masters and no toiling Slaves.

HARRY A. KOCH.

### Note and Comment.

THE comrades in Chicago will hold a 11th. of November celebration at "Vorwaerts Turners Hall" on 12th street. J. Most and L. Oliver are the speakers.

ALL comrades in New York and vicinity will be interested in the announcement that the International Arbeiter-Liedertafel will hold a November 11th celebration at Clarendon Hall, No. 114-118 East 13th St. The comrades propose to charge a ten cents admission fee for the benefit of the Bergman Rescue Fund.

Washington, Oct. 26.—The resignation of Second Lieutenant Joseph R. Binn, of the Second infantry, has been accepted, to take effect immediately. This officer tendered his resignation in a long letter, setting out his belief that a collision between the people and the United States army will follow the election, and saying that he can not conscientiously serve against the people.—[Evening Telegram.

Another honest man who has arranged himself on the side of the masses as against the classes for the final struggle, which according to all appearances is not far off.

"WHAT shall we do with our peaches," is the question that has agitated the minds of the South Water street commission men. The growers in Michigan have the largest crop on record, and they are suffering from the overproduction. This is also true of grapes and apples, and they are coming to market so freely that the trade, which is not large, is insufficient to take the surplus. It is not a question of price, but of selling the fruit, that is worrying the dealers. Prices are the lowest ever known, and are so low that the growers in Michigan are in some instances forced to send money here to pay the charge on what they have shipped in.—[Inter Ocean, Chicago.

It is simply ridiculous to talk about "overproduction" when the very same papers are reporting starvation among the poor; when they tell us that a mother killed her children and committed suicide herself on account of not having bread in the house. Why don't such scribes talk about underconsumption? Let us get rid of parasites that prevent us from consuming the necessities of life, and there will be no complaints of "overproduction."

THE Anarchist leads us to infer that he believes in voluntary association, but he does not believe in interfering with the liberty of the individual to act as he chooses. Law is defined in its simplest terms as a rule of conduct. The Anarchist wants to abolish all laws. Well, now, let us see how we can make it work. We will suppose that we have reached that happy stage when all laws are abolished and all men are as free as the birds that cleave the air. A number of us agree to associate ourselves for the purpose of prosecuting a certain industry.

We associate ourselves, and the first thing we do we agree to a certain set of rules, for there must be perfect harmony among the workers or the work cannot go on. Here we institute law at the very beginning, and here we curtail liberty, for I who like to lie abed in the morning must report for work at a certain hour, according to the rules of the voluntary association.—[The White Slave.

If you "agree to a certain set of rules," you certainly curtail your liberty, and the "rules of the voluntary association" is a contradiction in terms. If you submit to be ruled (rules necessitate a ruler) you are a slave, and if an association has a "rule of conduct" it would not be voluntary. But if you choose to commence work with the associates at a certain hour you will do so with pleasure as long as it would suit you. In a voluntary association you would be at liberty to look for other associates or work alone. By writing down rules you would sow the seed for a government which naturally would become more and more tyrannical according to circumstances. Has the editor never observed that

men worked with greater harmony and pleasure when they worked voluntarily and that any kind of a rule or command always created inharmonious?

The FIREBRAND says it is funny that the Socialist Labor Party leaders are so poor and yet have so much money to spend for campaign purposes. We haven't seen much of it in this neck of the woods, but if the party has money to spend in other places we are glad of it, for it shows that the cause is growing.

The Anarchists think that because some money is spent it must, as a matter of course, be boodle. Thus the Anarchist points to himself as the only immaculate being incapable of touching boodle. Well, we don't know how it is, but if the Socialists can induce the old parties to put up money to further the cause, then surely the time is drawing near when the lion will truly lie down with the lamb.

But we suspect the Anarchist yells boodle because he is of a suspicious and jealous nature.—[The White Slave]

The editor of The White Slave seems to be very innocent in politics. In the State election of Oregon last June the republicans paid for the campaign of the populist party. Does the editor think it was done to further the cause of the radical populists? No, it was done to weaken the democrats and reactionary populists who had fusion ticket in the field. The "suckers" of the radical party voted for their principles, and the leaders got off with the boodle. And mind you, Mr. Editor, the very same man that inaugurated this boodle went to San Francisco (his residence is in the State of Oregon) and is helping the Socialist Labor Party there. "I always make more money there," he told the writer of this comment. If you live long enough you might find out that political action always will end in "boodle."

A. I.

### Correspondence.

OUR massmeeting and entertainment did not have the desired inspiration, as there are too many radicals yet in this locality who can not get over making up the "tail" of the "free coinage" movement. We stood a hard test to that effect as there was a huge parade in favor of free coinage at the same time as our mass-meeting should have been started. But, torchlight processions and brassbands have the best advantage as yet over the peoples thoughts.

We were obliged to start at about 10 o'clock with our "Program" and we got only about a couple hundred persons present who were mostly my personal friends.

Of course, we failed to reach the masses, the ones which are on the fence, that just don't exactly know what to do in the present agitation.

One thing is sure, now here in Tacoma, that we are able to arrange as fine and interesting entertainments as any one of the secret societies in this locality.

As to the moral impulse we succeeded so far that the local "press" treated us exceptionally courteous and gave a very good advertisement.

We send you also two dollars to make up our deficit, in favor of the "pressfund".

Tacoma, Wash.

A. KLEMENCIC.

BELIEVING that it would be interesting to the comrades to whom The Firebrand serves as a messenger, it has been suggested that a brief report be made, of the movement among Americans of New York.

To begin with, it should be borne in mind that owing to an unfavorable combination of circumstances, and prevalent conditions, which seem to be a chronic nature in this City, any movement for the education of the people here, in economic truth, as well as any movement or project of reform or temporary amelioration of existing conditions, has to be carried on under difficulties such as do not exist elsewhere, and judging from the past it may be reasonably inferred that these conditions are likely to continue indefinitely. Existing as we do in the immediate presence of, and close to the heart of that great vampirous monster, the Money Power, its foetid breath and malevolent magnetism seem to benumb the senses and blind the mass of the people to their own condition and to their rightful relation to the wealth of the world. For this reason I think we must look to the localities in which the people breathe a freer atmosphere and where the money influence is not so much felt, for the more rapid growth of honest social conceptions.

In consequence of the condition indicated, we have nothing to brag of in the way of a movement, notwith-

standing the fact that we have here a (very) few of the most earnest workers in the cause.

During the winter 1894-95, a few meetings were held at somewhat irregular times and under great difficulties, and owing principally to fear of interference and persecution by the police on the part of those who had halls to let, we were obliged to discontinue for the time being. We had to make better and more secure arrangements for the holding of meetings the season of 1895-96, but owing to the absence from the city of an energetic worker, the sickness of another, and various hindrances of circumstances, we were unable to hold any regular meetings last season. Upon the arrival of John Turner of England, however, in April, we took the opportunity to hold two meetings at which he was the speaker, and the very able addresses he delivered on both occasions were well received by all, including many who were not Anarchists.

Having at this time no funds at our disposal and being also without other agencies necessary for the holding of meetings, and owing to the fact that the season was too far advanced toward the hot weather when no meetings can be sustained, it was decided that as many as might find it convenient should meet once a week and contribute what they could toward a fund to be used for expenses of meetings when opportunity should present for so doing. In this way we contributed up to the present time \$16.35 towards propaganda.

Upon the return of Turner from the West, where he had made a successful tour, a well attended meeting was held at Clarendon Hall on Sept. 24th, to hear him speak upon the subject of "Free Silver." Again on Oct. 12, Turner spoke at the same place in a debate on the proposition, "Will the free coinage of silver benefit the people?" The hall was well filled, many being unable to obtain seats, and great interest was manifested by those present.

Our collection at the first of the above two meetings was \$8.53, and at the second \$9.37, which being added to our contributions, made the sum of \$34.35. Our expenses for the two meetings were as follows:—

Rent of hall, two meetings, .....	\$10.00
Printing of cards, .....	\$12.25
Postage, .....	.75
Contributes toward speaker's expenses, 5.00	\$20.00

This leaves our fund now on hand..... \$14.35

When the above method of collecting funds was commenced, I was requested to take charge of the money, which I have done, with the exception of the first two parlor meetings held for that purpose.

A. GILMOUR.

New York, Oct. 30th, 1896.

### The Letter Box.

H. W., San Francisco.—Thanks. We will send you ten copies regularly. Should some become interested in the paper, it would be well to send their names and addresses in.

E. R., Sidney, O.—Thanks for names. S. might be guilty of plagiarism, and we think writers ought to mention their source if they simply quote from books. Lately we had an article that was mostly taken from Henry George, but we did not notice it until our attention was called to it.

E. S. P., Indianapolis, Ind.—The sample copies were sent by your brother, who joined "The Firebrand family" last September and has been a great help to us. He has assisted us also financially so that we are able to rent a farm near Portland, where we will start a dairy and raise farm products. Our object is to make a home for those who are tired of being wage slaves and trying to accumulate legal property. One family has joined us lately, and we expect some women yet.

If you keep on studying the social problem, you will find that law makes monopoly, and that if we want to get rid of monopoly, we must get rid of all laws first.

### Taxidermy.

TO THE FRIENDS OF THE FIREBRAND.—For the benefit of this paper, I will send instructions for mounting and preserving any sized bird, from a hummer to an eagle without skinning, to any one sending twenty-five cents to The Firebrand and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to me.  
P. S.—After receiving it, if your conscience troubles you for receiving so much for so little you can remit something to sender.  
Address, ED GORE, Warren, Minn.

### THE FIREBRAND'S AGENTS.

The following named persons will receive and receipt for subscriptions for The Firebrand.  
Chicago, Ill.—Charles L. Bodendyke, 1140 Milwaukee Avenue.  
C. Blaetner, 289 Taylor Street.  
Omaha, Neb.—C. C. Schmidt, 66 South Tenth Street.  
New York City.—Rudash, 60 Irving Street.  
Buffalo, N. Y.—G. Lang, 29 Grape Street.  
Philadelphia, Pa.—L. R. Bohnik, 731 Plover Street.  
Baltimore, Md.—B. Moritz, 1141 East Lombard Street.  
London, Eng.—Tom Reece, 19 Field Road, Fulham Road, Sw.

### Receipts.

Piége, Wenzel, Marcus, each \$1.00. Edelman, Peterson, Cohn, Saylin, Robinson, each, 50c. Taunbaum, 15c.

### Printing-Press Fund.

RECEIVED, for the purpose of buying a printing press for THE FIREBRAND, as follows:  
Previously acknowledged.....\$91.82  
G. Philadelphia, Pa.....\$2.10  
Entertainment, Pacoma, Wash.....\$2.00

### FIREBRAND LIBRARY.

In lots of ten or more, five-cent pamphlets furnished at three cents each.

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Omaha Progressive Club meets Wednesday at 7 p. m., at 618 South Tenth Street, Omaha, Neb.

International Group Free Initiative meets at 64 Washington Square, New York City, every Monday at 8:30 p. m.

Belnicke Listy is an eight page Anarchist weekly paper, published in the Bohemian language at New York City, 266 Ave. B by the International Workingmen Association of America. Send for sample copy.

Progressive Thought is the original advocate of the Labor Exchange. A sample copy may interest you, and a year's subscription will put you in a way to learn all about it if already interested. Published at Olathe, Kansas.

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The Alarm is an Anarchist weekly paper for the workers and is published at 38 Judd Street, Easton Road, London, England. The editorial policy is Anarchist-Communist, and each issue contains twelve columns of eye-opening and thought provoking matter. One cent weekly, or sent through the post for one dollar a year.

The Altruist is a monthly paper issued by the Altruist Community of St. Louis, whose members hold all their property in common, and both men and women have equal rights and decide all their business affairs by majority vote. Twenty-five cents a year; sample copy free. Address, A. Longley, 1719 Franklin Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

The Age of Thought, published by E. H. Fulton, Columbus Junction, Iowa, is an advocate of individual liberty; of the free use of land and other natural resources; of free banking and is a privilege; an unalterable opponent of arbitrary authority and special privileges. Is eight 2x18 pages in size and printed on fine book paper. Send 2 cents for sample with terms and premium offer.

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