THE FIREBRAND

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Notes on Points.

COMMUNISM AND LIBERTY.—In the article under this heading in No. 36, Mr. Byington acknowledges that it is the basis of economic justice. He objects to any taking of products out of the absolute control of the producer, only in so far as this would frustrate, or risk frustrating, the need of the producer to have the products available. Now, Comrade Byington, what are social rights? We have all taken for granted "the rights of the wild" which include prey as well as defence; but that, of course, does not solve the question of the proper relations between people desiring of living socially together. Well, social rights, then, are simply the name for our recognized sympathy with each other’s needs and purposes. Next, if you admit that, I would ask you whether there is any particular virtue about this need of continued possession, which should make it supersede all other needs in the public sympathy? Do we sympathize with metaphysical abstractions, or with flesh and blood? The very consciousness of social rights implies the possibility that in our contact with each other some needs may have to be sacrificed, and that we are prepared to sacrifice some of our own, and act to secure that as between other people, those shall be sacrificed which create the least sympathy in us. No, we cannot reasonably assume beforehand that an absolute rule that a need of merely "continued" possession will arouse our humanity on behalf of the person who feels that need—more strongly than a need of simply possessing at all? Can we be sure that the disappointment of a present possessor will outweigh in our very nature the necessities of a non-possessor? Thus Property is to set up a fetish and declare that it is ourselves.

Of course, it is our word in this connection to prove our sympathy with the needs of the person who has suffered through his neighbor’s necessities, but that is a very different thing from making a grievance against the neighbor, by reason of the mere formal fact that he, in attending to his needs, did some destruction to some actual or possible need of the other man. The impelling circumstances of the case and the bearings of the case are needed to find out what is the objection, positive or negative, of the interests of the other man. The scheme of things is now and the bearing of the case are needed to find the judgment upon, and we cannot reasonably and with justice to ourselves and others condemn in advance a happening or sanction in advance as socially right, any conduct for its mere formal relation to one class of need or another. Anyone who asks us to do so, and is aggrieved at our refusal, is simply treating us as enemies because we decline to create laws to confer a privilege upon him. Is this plain?

COMMUNISM IN RELATION TO ABUNDANCE AND SCARCITY.—Byington says in No. 36 that he is prepared for Communism if it can be shown that there will be enough goods to meet all wants. If there is any condition in which Communism is unnecessary it is where there is great abundance, so that the limitations of property are only potential and not actually felt. Take America and divide it between 16 persons, or simply leave 16 persons to occupy it, and, in common with the other 39 persons, will there be a practical difference. On the other hand, take a room 12 feet square, containing 16 square yards, and place 15 persons in it. Now if everyone is restricted to a certain marked square yard, and may not venture off it without special permission, one cannot walk about or lie down, at least without endless trouble, and probably it is even to acquire a title to move about at will, persons will try and steal each other’s titles to place in the room, and for every one who succeeds in getting a permit or is able to accommodate themself practically to others’ presence and not to the exigencies of a formal system. What holds good of space holds good of all other requirements. Property is a reduction in the efficiency of the amount of wealth, and although where wealth is abundant the difference may be barely perceptible, where the wealth is little the necessity for it is to be not only considered, but actually used in common, is paramount. In point of fact the outcome of society when they meet in the course of their wanderings or take up permanent camps on the same ground, instinctively place their few possessions in common. Thousands of men would die annually of starvation and hardship in Australia for this, who are actually—save to the hope of betterment—so worse off than any pioneer diggers or settlers.

MORE CONCERNING METHODS.—In No. 36 W. Holmes puts a very peculiar question—virtually this: If the faculty of communicating radical thought, and the faculty of radical thought itself, could be annihilated, could Anarchy be brought about, and how? It would ultimately be brought about by natural selection and the survival of the most adaptive. The strong will exterminate the less strong; but other things being equal, those whose dispositions led them to harmony and solidarity among themselves, would continue to be the strongest of all; at their disposal for progressive purposes would be as much energy as the others wasted in mutual conflict, and they would increase, just as the others would, with fewer risks. But I don’t see that this is a ‘method’ for discussion, it is simply a fact of nature.

Provided the faculty of superstition were also annihilated, Anarchists might be brought by conquering the more inertia of habit by means of appeals to direct animal sympathy and self-interest, in spite of the absence of radical theory, because thought in the special sense, is only a more complicated mode of sensation, and all forms of consciousness result from the reality of things. In the ultimate analysis, therefore, healthy sensation and instinct will point the same way as healthy thought. I imagine that Holmes wishes to convey that this appeal to lower sensibilities should be cultivated more as a practical means to the realisation of Anarchy; that he means we should devote more attention to the promulgation of improved practice for its own sake. That is so, provided we do not at the same time ignore the fact that man does actually think as well as feel, and is therefore liable to positive error, sophistry and fallacies which will impose themselves on his practice, unless corrected by some of many generations of hereditary experience on a basis of mere practice, no matter how radical. We should not ignore the latter even if it is only shifting the lead off the gralled place, but to use it. The whole evolution work that leads to special attention to theory, and, as economy of life determines the features of society in all essentials—to economic theory most particularly.

BOODENSTEDT’S CLUB HOUSE IDEA.—In this as in many other projects the danger is of people attempting to associate specially for the mere purpose of practising communistic methods, or forms, whilst what is needed is to know what ordinary and special needs are, and then associate communistically, in order to be the convenience of the people, the convenience of better meeting those needs. The world will not ‘practise Anarchy’ for the sake of the club, but simply for the improvement of the every day purposes that exist and will go on independently of Anarchy, or of the reverse. These purposes existing independent of the system are not to be grained, forced or transplanted at haphazard. A man does not buy a tin of paint and then build a house to use the paint up. You don’t make a railway and then build a town for it to run to. You find a town first that you want a railway to, or at least a place that you want to go and build a town at, and then you make your railway accordingly. I think if Boodenstedt or any other comrade sees a way of making a living jointly, which he would prefer to his present one, and the arrangement commends itself to as many as are necessary to carry it out—that is, if they would like to go into it quite apart from considerations of Anarchy and Communism—we should simply for the sake of the inherent attractiveness which any stranger to the movement might recognize in the
Echoes from our Exchanges.

SPAIN. In the night of October 3d, last, passers by coming from the market encountered the remains of our comrades who had been martyred the night before.

The creativity which was in rages during the persecutions following the explosion in the Liceo Theatre were not barbarous enough for the upholders of law and order. The force of the prisoners to eat salt fish, without any water to drink for days, was not enough to satisfy the successors of the Jesuits. In order to have a more monstrous record they drove the prisoners, with an iron bar, to walk until he dropped dead, then he hanged them, tasing to compel them to inform on his companions.

Of course the lying press will print, in large type, that the prisoners committed with "repentance" their culpable acts for the affair.

Through confidential sources we learn more concerning the torturing in the Middle Ages style. "With an iron staff, hot to the touch, they will burn the nails from the fingers and toes; pierce the lips with spars; hang them from the ceiling head downward; break their bones, etc.

The military judges register everybody as an accomplice as soon as they can find out that they have attended an anarchist meeting.

In the case of the government intends to exterminate anarchist ideas. If they succeed in another question. He who seizes the wind will harvest the tempest.

FRANCE. There is a serious strike among the foundry workers in Marsilles. The strikers organized several public meetings and invited the anarchist exponents to give their opinion about the matter. One of the last meetings was held in the Labor Exchange, at which more than 2,500 persons were present; and speakers of all shades of opinion were invited to discuss the labor problems. The anarchists swore that the workers were the most logical, and energetic manner the most appropriate. The ideas of the general strike of 1871 are discussed by some of the speakers.

There are several thousand miners on strike, in the "Bashindo Ward" coal mining district, struggling to better their conditions.

The Belgian, Russian, and American workers, Misses, Barseca, happened to be in Paris during the stay of the Russian Imperial Majesties. Owing to an assumed resemblance between her and another lady she was given to the Police Headquarters, by a Russian sted pillion, and occasioned much trouble before she could get permission to see the Russian Ambassador, who recognized her.

The servility of the City of Paris, to the Russian hagganist, cost the producers 1,500,000 francs. The Socialistic party of the City, under the direction of the Council, Chauhan remarked this generosity of the city fathers, and made a proposition to spend 500,000 francs for the benefit of the unemployed, which proposition was accepted by the City Council. But they burned the Beggar's Plate, which really means the waste basket.

O, ye Socialist city swindlers, you show you taste! Millions for the Czar, but a sacrifice of one cent for your own countrymen. Is this the universal brotherhood you want to bring about? Rats!

BEBELA. A convention was called at Prague, the 11th of October 15th, with means and ways to abate the silly Austrian press law. There were representatives from twelve radical and independent periodicals in the country, the symbol of an Austrian press law. The periodicals with an Anarchist tendency suffer most from consecration, almost every number, having to be republished and the editors fined. But it is not the Anarchist periodical alone that suffers.

ENGLAND. The Dutch Social Democratic group, founded in London, resolved:

That the Social Democratic party is more and more degenerating into partisan quarrels between the co-operative and parliamentary party on the one side, and the Anarchist movement on the other, as long as these Anarchists in which ideas are subordinated to personal questions.

That such tactics are a menace to the propagation of the social idea, and is a menace to the life and work of the proletariat.

And it is advisable to keep away every rivalry, and place itself on the fundamental principles of Socialism: the moral and social conditions of the proletariat, by the means of complete expressiveness of the means of production and their utilization on the bases of Communism.

To reach this aim the group will use all the means at its disposal to hasten the movement of the revolutionary ideas, avoiding as much as possible the personal questions, but will investigate without delay the principles of the different Socialist schools. It invites all comrades who are ready to unite in a spirit of fraternity and to concentrate all their efforts towards the common ideal.

The groups requests all the periodicals of all the languages, and all the schools, to publish the above manifesto and send a copy to the address of comrades: Alf. Rigny, Secretary of the N. S. D. V., 57 Charlotte St., Fitzroy Square, London, W.

ITALY. The "Calcutta Enthusiasmus," of Nov. 25, contends that the home officials are completely at fault concerning the divisions of the famine, which is raging in nearly all provinces on account of a crop a little below the average, and a grain specification a little below the average which may yet result in an irremovable disaster.

ITALY. Thirty Anarchists were arraigned before the Tribunal of Milan for the formation of an association:

The youngsters had done nothing, but they held different ideas from those professed by the humbug of the Tribunal, which, it seems, is a crime in Italy.

La Fabbrica is the name of a new Anarchist-Communist periodical. Address, "La Fabbrica," forma posta, Mantova, Italy.

Il Novo Verbo is the name of another Anarchist-Communist periodical. Address, Barnaba 9, Paradisi, 54 Lanarmoni St., Parma, Italy.

Welcome and long life to the new strippers!

A. KLEINSCHMIDT.

Noto and Comment.

COMRADE Wm. A. Whittick has kindly donated The Firebrand ten copies in paper, of his splendid book "Depopulation and five copies in cloth. Any one sending us fifty cents will receive a copy in paper, or for seventy-five cents a copy in cloth.

This is a good year of the time to make presents, and no more appropriate present could be given a friend who loves to read. It will also be a great help to The Firebrand.

An obituary of comrade H. Harris, of Waterbury, Connecticut, was sent in by a comrade, but by some mishap the manuscript was lost.

He dropped dead on the streets of Waterbury, not long ago, and about forty years of age at the time of his death. He had been an active worker for, and liberal contributor to the Anarchist movement. We regret to hear of his death, and extend fraternal sympathy to the bereaved relatives and friends.

S. P. PUTNAM, and Miss May Collins were both poisoned to death by gas, in the rooms of Miss Collins, No. 47 St. Botolph St., Boston, Friday evening, December 11. The exact details of their death are not known to the rooms of the house, but that they died of poison in a room where gas was burning is agreed upon.

S. P. Putnam was fifty eight years old last July, and Miss May Collins was twenty years old, but both were known as an indelible lecturers, having traveled all over the United States in that capacity. He has done a great deal to awaken thought in regard to religion, but it has been a long and arduous task in reconstructive ideas and contributed but little to the life movements of today.

Miss May Collins was only twenty years old, but she was never a young person, and had a great ability of an extraordinary brilliancy, sweetness, and power as a speaker. She was too young for a proper estimate of her abilities to be made, but she had achieved a great reputation in non-usual eloquence as a speaker, and far reaching depth as a thinker. It is sad that one so young and so promising should be cut off just on the threshold of public work and usefulness.

The Truth Seeker vehemently denies that there was but one thing that the Sun is so bright and the Moon is so white, is that the Sun is at the middle of the earth, and the Moon is at the middle of the earth.

The government ever so called may be, but this is not the case, and the Sun is at the middle of the earth, and the Moon is at the middle of the earth.

The American Secular Union, and the Free-thought Federation will sustain a great loss in the death of these two persons. Who will take their places, remains a question.

WUU. I have no objection to all comrades who wish to do so, holding a general convention, and the mingling of ideas, and acquaintance of comrades would undoubtedly be pleasant and more or less advantageous to the movement, and I am not object to some of the assertions of the committee.

There has been a constant and steady effort on the part of the Firebrand to prove that anarchism is foremost in Social Science, and we matter ourselves that much has been done already, looking in that direction. To say that it can be attempted under no other circumstance, but that of a general convention, is to make a dogmatic assertion that cannot be proven. It is to lay an unwarranted stress on the importance of conventions, and recline the world of the movement.

While a convention might contribute a good deal toward this consumption, yet we are not justified in saying this is the only means.

If there are many things that are not discussed in the papers it is the fault of the comrades. The Firebrand has constantly urged the fullest and freest discussion of all subjects in its columns, and the movement to the movement has not been discussed in its columns it is because no one has had the energy, or enthusiasm, to start the discussion. We, of The Firebrand, hope that all the members of the movement will be brought out for free discussion through our columns.

If these subjects are not discussed in the columns what assurance have we that we will be made agreement. Let the comrades see to it that these subjects are thoroughly discussed in their circles and clubs, in the Anarchist papers and wherever convenient, and then if a general convention is held much useful arguing can be avoided.

It is a question whether a better agreement would have been reached at a general convention. Where there is no authority to dictate what is agreed to, thorough agreement is seldom reached by any convention.

Practical Politics.

In order to show what we may expect to accomplish through political action, let me call attention to a few facts in connection with this subject.

The senatorial contest is coming on. The politicians have recognized that fact for some time. They recognized that fact at the time of last Spring's election. Jonathan Bourne, one of the candidates for the U. S. Senate. He was desirous last Spring of being. He "worked" the Spring election with that object in view. He was a faithful co-worker in the campaign of Dr. Young, the chairman of the People's Party State Central Committee. Between them they tried to work a combination between the "Mitchell" republican and Populist legislative ticket.

Bourne also worked on the U. S. Senate. He "worked" with them on the "Mitchell" ticket, and "the funny business" of the middle-of-the-roaders prevented the substitution of the entire "Mitchell" legislative ticket in this case.

As manager of the Republican State Campaign he succeeded in defeating Martin Quinn for Congress. Quinn is the idol of the stanch populists, and is a cheap and free spender. Bourne's touched the key to his pet and he found it. "Necessary" means to destroy "Mitchell's" influence with the popular element sit to the legislature, with the evident intent of往年 that influence.

The object is apparent, let us go be the U. S. Senate. What "Necessary" wants may be guess-
Clippings and Comments.

When a court declares a law unconstitutional it tends the people (the law-making power) as inferiors and dependents; when it revives itself it proclaims itself an ignoramus or the creature of some interest. —Pittsburgh Union.

Why not abolish the court then? If you give men power you must expect them to use it.

Tax can be made a government of the people by and for the people by the adoption of Effective Voting and Direct Legislation—never will it all them.—(Pittsburgh Union.)

A government of majorities you mean, brother, and that means subjugation of the minority. Why not abolish all government and be free?

When the legislation of the several states and congress has been enacted, the great masses of the people will more clearly understand the necessity of the changes demanded by the Populists.—(Our Paper).

It is to be hoped that they will see the foolishness of all that and the necessity of abolishing all that expensive nonsense called law making.

Tax following is clipped from a Chicago daily paper.

Tax police have repeated their annual anarchistic outrage by stopping Mrs. Parsons while addressing an audience on the anniversary of the hanging of the Anarchists. If the reports of the hanging of "Anarchist" Mowbray last winter are a guide, the meeting was grossly misrepresented. But assuming the reporters are not inclined by the fear or favor of the police and that their report is correct, there is nothing to justify this police censorship. We who are not Archists hold that no one, no matter how just the cause, ever has a right to be refrained from aggression, he would still receive the attention of the tax-collector and be subject to military duty. It follows, then, that we must extend the protection of the law, which we compel them to obey, or our whole scheme fails to the ground and we prove the Archists case. Once admit that one or two lesser rights that any other and there is no stopping point of charitable slavery. The police should be restrained from annually committing this assault, because it is disorderly conduct and because it is a dangerous assault on free speech, which the southern slave power crushed for a time, but which triumphed when the "scare" rules were abolished in congress. Mrs. Parsons must be acquitted of the crimes she was brought to trial and punished. If she is not guilty, the public is intoxicated and outraged by her persecutors. Mrs. Parsons has said nothing which has no relation to the vent of Anarchists, and has secured the position of any other.... —(Chicago American.)

Gov. Altgeld is as fit a subject for police assault as is Mrs. Parsons.—(George A. Bebee, Chicago II.)

The foregoing is a just statement of the Chicago police policy and attitude against the menace of the word Anarchist. The Chicago police never act anarchistic. If they did they would go home, burn up their clubs, throw the big pistols in the lake and hang themselves.

The following numbers should send two cents: 1, 2, 39, 85, 90, 91, 154, 199, 267, 347, 475, 507, 521, 525, 533, 569, 607, 795, 890, 1017, 1026, 1082, 1102, 1187, 1265, 1268, 1279, 1286, 1287, 1285, 1290, 1311, 1325, 1329, 1342, 1344, 1354, 1368, 1461, 1466, 1477, 1478, 1483, 1501, 1502, 1503, 1504, 1505, 1506, 1507, 1508, 1509, 1510, 1511, 1512, 1513, 1514, 1515, 1516, 1517, 1518, 1519, 1520, 1521, 1522, 1523, 1524, 1525, 1526, 1527, 1528, 1529, 1530, 1531, 1532, 1533, 1534, 1535, 1536, 1537, 1538, 1539, 1540, 1541, 1542, 1543, 1544, 1545, 1546, 1547, 1548, 1549, 1550, 1551, 1552, 1553, 1554, 1555, 1556, 1557, 1558, 1559, 1560, 1561, 1562, 1563, 1564, 1565, 1566, 1567, 1568, 1569, 1570, 1571, 1572, 1573, 1574, 1575, 1576, 1577, 1578, 1579, 1580, 1581, 1582, 1583, 1584, 1585, 1586, 1587, 1588, 1589, 1590, 1591, 1592, 1593, 1594, 1595, 1596, 1597, 1598, 1599, 1600, 1601.

Correspondence.

Very Satisfactory.

Covers of The Firebrand are received. The terms Commonism and Anarchism, owing to our natural Americanism and the scathing of the press, will probably be lost in the maelstrom of words, but the doctrine of monarchy, has prevented a proper examination of the ideas you advance.

In the issue of Oct. 18th, the article Liberty and Property did not exceedingly satisfactory, because it brings the ordinary mind to a knowledge of its true relations, to itself and others, which is so important in adjusting our present financial system. The next edition is now in press.

I shall send subscription for it, because it indicates ability to go to the primary causes, and clearly trace them to their legitimate or natural effects, which our political reform leaders have failed to do.

How futile to yel oppression, poverty, tyranny, gold bugs; and provide no remedy. The living are held in chains by us and by our customs, until living thought has become largely a thing of the past. In my opinion, "The law is as it is, civilization and moral endowments have become such that it is impossible to reorganize the old rules of conduct, and get all these adjoined to our individual and public, or general wants of the present. In his acts, both public and private, we learn that man is ever disappointed, and trying to improve and change Nature's laws, thinking such acts to be his advantage.

The solution The Firebrand assumes is one of vital importance, and of sufficient magnitude to occupy the best minds of the present.

It is possible that some minds will be able to concentrate all discovered good into simple, clearly defined rules of conduct, as in the days of Moses and Christ.

The acts of men are based on different principles, and the present is it time to repeat the good of the past. Can you do it? You may answer, I can try. Very well, let's try it. In my next I will dwell on the error of advancing the idea of a golden age in gold.

Alphonse H. Thibout.
 Dayton, Ohio.

Literature.
The OLD and THE NEW IDEAL.
A SOLUTION OF THAT PART of THE SOCIAL QUESTION WHICH PERTAINS to LOVE, MARRIAGE and SEXUAL INTERCOURSE.

The above is the title of a new book, by Emil F. Rauschenberg. It is a neat volume of 347 pages, printed on fine book paper, large clear type, and bound in cloth and paper. Cloth edition one dollar, paper fifty cents.

Many books have been written on the subject of "love, courtship and marriage," and sold in large numbers. The pulpit has roused with sermons on these grave questions, philosophical and other lecturers have roused all over the land with their sermons and lectures on these topics—generally behind closed doors, lecturing to each sex separately—and discussions have been held on the question. It seems to us the subject has been well neglected. But in all this discussion there has been a sad lack of knowledge, of courage, and of plain presentation of facts and ideas. We have not been able to find what is called a "delicate subject"—one which cannot be treated with the same disinterestedness as other questions. Many, it is true, have claimed to be free from superstition, reverence, from the influence of dogmatic training, and from fear of social disapproval, but their expressions have no root. This assumption of a thing so-called—have raged around demanding the right to think and to speak, but have drawn back horrified when the free discussion of sex matters has been permitted and raised their voices against this process when true freedom of thought, speech and action has been proposed in connection with sex matters. While denouncing Christ for His proposal to substitute "secular" marriage, which in practical operation amounts to the same thing.

Many men and women have had the courage to denounce moral law, and declares that interference by the State was unjust as by the Church. Others have called for complete liberty, but in nearly all cases this means that, "the one woman," as Colonel Ingersoll terms it, dominated their utterances, and their actions, and no satisfactory solution of the vexed question has yet been reached.

The above book is a new attempt to solve the problem, which is a revision and improvement on a book in German, by the same author, published about one year ago, and a half ago in America, and is written in a calm and deliberate style, and there
Final Information Concerning the Convention.

At last we are able to impart the rather unpleasant information that the intended Convention for the 1st of January cannot take place. The New York comrades held a meeting to discuss the question and they have thus decided. It is clear that we started to agitate for it too late, and hence we did not make it generally known, and the result has been that we have not sufficient people to discuss the question and decide how they should act in the matter. Withdrawing this we are pleased to note that the reports to our inquiries have been collected and we are advising the people to give a fresh discussion on the matter. From the Chicago and Philadelphia we were informed that they will send delegates to the Convention, from New York, New Jersey, and other places. The people are sure to be represented by delegates. On the whole we think that the conclusion that an Anarchist-Communist convention in the United States is a proper and necessary thing at the present time is perfectly justifiable, and that the good resulting from it can be accurately estimated.

It may be observed that peculiar conceptions and fanciful notions are not the thing. The Convention have worked their way into the minds of a great many of the comrades, and if their fallacy and error on the one hand, and what little truth there may be in them on the other hand, is not known, all the more important than it is to be understood. We feel certain that our theories would become much clearer, more comprehensible, and more like scientific reasoning if we were not being under the conditions of the discussions for the Convention and if that much was accomplished it might have contentedly disbanded in the hope of meeting again and accomplishing as much in the Convention as is not possible. If we were not to have reports from all over the United States, we would know how we stand, what influence we have on the people. With what effect we progress or regress, whether we develop or decay. We could exchange ideas, we’d have heard each other’s opinions, and I don’t feel that it is not the least surprising to find great variations in our conceptions of Liberty, Liberty, Communism and the like. The reconciliation of these differences of opinion ought to be a matter of extreme importance in it and we place Anarchist-Communism foremost in Social Science and Society.