If the World went Right.

The delight of beholding delight! A thing that should be if the world went right—Scope for all fitness and merriest might.

And oh, the delloir of looking on pale, Pure heart that extinguishes life in vain! Brave powers all bent that your rules restrain.

If the world went right t’were a world of bliss: If everyone dealt with the task that’s his, No whirlower, smaller world than this.

Let your blood out of his cage, nor fear; If he’s a bullfinch, as mine is here, You’ll laugh at his comic, dismiser laugh: Ay, and what’s more, if his food be there, He’d go back to prison without your care.

Not that he means it—it’s natural, quite; All the live things are scarce to do right If you trust them enough, and enjoy their delight.

Freedom! You’ll see what a man can be When his fellows are happy, as happy as he, When the whole white world is at work and play! When the folks are last which have led to this strife And the envy with which the sad earth is rife Shell yield to the Natural Order.

—L. S. Bevington.

Constructive Anarchy.

I.

This political question is best approached through the economic. So long as people’s ideas of practical everyday life do not rise above the commercial principles of the present, so long it will be absolutely impossible for them to conceive of Anarchy as anything but the so-called capitalist “individualism,” or, as a variation upon that idea, promiscuous brigandage of the Penny Dreadful (or Dime Bloodcurdler or whatever the American equivalent may be) type. And so long, if all established political authority were done away with, the result would certainly be according to their ideas, though on the whole I doubt if it would not in practice be an improvement on existing conditions, if it could last. This, however, is precisely what would be impossible, inasmuch as some of the capitalists or brigands would speedily form a coalition, and impose their authority upon the rest of the population.

Proceeding a little further in the evolution of ideas, we find people who quite realize that the effects of the present system are immoral, but they are utterly unable to conceive anything radically different. All the “reform” they can imagine is to have only one capitalist, namely a legal fiction called the State. The people are supposed to compose themselves as an imaginary capitalist, whilst at the same time they do not possess his “rights” and privileges. Thus, they are individually utterly destitute—have not the least right or freedom to use anything, do anything, or be anywhere. All this is nonsense to us, but to a person who has never been able to conceive of anything—but capitalism and who does not want private capitalists, this absurd idea of State capitalism, commonly called State Socialism, appears the only alternative. To him the abolition of the State appears to mean nothing less than his eternal subjection to private capitalism, tempered at most by turbulent brigandage and expropriations followed by new appropriations.

The individual, however, who is able to conceive of something quite different from the capitalistic principle, who is able to form a new conception of social life, who can think of himself and his fellow beings as existing in a world where the idea of ownership is unknown, and where if possession is respected the reason is simply that around them find it practicable to consider the convenience of the particular owner without doing injustice to others favor him, where the established idea—not outer form merely—is simply for people to act for the best satisfaction of their own needs whilst committing also the needs of others, and to respect and help to satisfy each others’ needs with fair regard for right; and where there are no so-called “rights” which are only the definition of prohibition, to be shifted, cut up and pieced together at every step, and where the man who helps another without exercising an ironbound contract of reward, is not thereby lessening his own right to welfare and happiness: the individual who is able to conceive this, is able to conceive of a form of society of which government is not a logical consequence or accomplishment.

Unfortunately the faculty of “scientific imagination” is little developed in the average human being. He is scarcely able to isolate a single impression from the combination in which it comes to him; still less to develop a new conception from the elements of what he knows. In order to conceive he must perceive something which is already very similar to what he is to conceive. If he could conceive the ordinary everyday aspect of Anarchy as the Anarchist conceives it—that is, the economic side—he would have no difficulty in coming to the conception of Anarchy itself; but in order to conceive that, he requires to perceive it in practice, or to perceive at least something sufficiently illustrative of it as a general condition; and therefore argument will be comparatively useless unless it is supplemented with proper inducement, that is to say, the example of an Anarchist social system brought into practice to at any rate sufficient extent to familiarise him with its working.

It is here that the difficulty comes in. Attempts are sometimes made to organise communities, in these whatever Anarchist relation may subsist between members is obscured by the commercial relation maintained collectively towards the outside world, and by the very fact of their being withdrawn from external society; besides, there is an artificiality about these attempts, which appear more like endeavours at acting a drapery of Anarchy than applying it to real life. On the other hand some reliance has been placed on ordinary co-operative associations, Labor Exchange, etc., to educate the people; but these are merely expedients for making the best of the Property system, and I cannot see that they tend in the slightest degree to afford a conception of a purely Anarchist form of society. Certainly, while there is even the so-called Individualist property, the fact that two acres of land of poor quality are less favorable to the occupier than one acre of double the richness, because he must do twice as much work to get the same crop, will tend to produce a situation in which some sort of authoritative regulation will appear inevitable; and will the question of inheritance, which nothing but the Communist principle sets with safety; so also will the problem presented by different sized families in regard to education, for instance; and so will indeed the whole relation between parent and child, and between the sexes. Possibly the necessity might not be apparent to those who call themselves “Individualist-Anarchists,” but it would halt the people who are not of that temperament very promptly.

The solution appears to me to be in the organizing of private solidarity, somewhat after this method — At the Anarchist meeting place, or at the Trade Union or Friendly Society lodge room, at the Labor Exchange depot or at any convenient rendezvous, there should be a list on which whoever had any abilities or time which he would willingly devote as a matter of fraternity if he knew where they were required, or who had anything of no particular use to himself but which he thought someone else might find useful, would make an entry of the help he was waiting to give; and a list on which anyone who had occasion to want would enter an inquiry for such help as he needed to find. By looking over these lists people would be enabled to know what needs and what capacities corresponded to their unsatisfied capacities and needs and would place themselves in communication with the entries not answered at the place where posted could be placed on the lists at other places and the advanced papers could help by printing such entries, or arrangements might be made for a special circular. This way would also answer for the working of communitistic relations between groups and societies as well as individuals. I think that even as things are it would be capable of considerable application and do much to make life more comfortable and of a healthier tone, whilst giving the resources it would use in principle, as the whole mechanism of communistic society. There seems no reason why people in general who are not yet Anarchists should not adopt the plan readily enough, as it is simply a circulation of inquiries and offers; and while at first it would apply to small miscellaneous matters it would no doubt bring about a more healthy confidence in one another, a better spirit of solidarity would be developed and thus the scope of the plan would tend to broaden and increase; it would then be a good practical illustration of a condition of society for which everyone could see that authority was not required—at all events in the working of the every day economic affairs; inasmuch as this could be seen, the rest would be easily enough carried by argument.
such lines were already familiar to them, these lines would be extended immediately, and produce a general economic condition which would not suggest the adoption of a new government to replace that of the past and be destroyed. On the other hand if the people were not familiar with such lines as practical means of social organization, they would certainly fall back upon the old.

Can the ideas be brought directly into practice, a larger scale—at least on a scale more comprehensible than the mere fragmental socialization of miscellaneous services? Can it be applied to give the same development to nearly the whole everyday life of those who are Anarchists, at all events Anarchists in spirit if not in spirit only, yet in reason and doctrine? Of course this to be possible requires that the comrades shall be sufficiently numerous, sufficiently in contact to be associated or in relation with each other for the everyday purposes of life. We can just as well establish our own principles among ourselves as the whites could come to America and hold their own usages through, perhaps, conforming to Indian customs while in the midst of large aborigines, not to speak of the Chinese who can their own usages, among themselves, into America and Australia. There is no more need to form special and isolated communities for that purpose than for the members of a Friendly Society to do, so long as there are within easy reach of each other to a workable number, according to our circumstances.

The question may now be put thus: Granted that a sufficient number of Anarchists exist in a given area to recognize the practicability of establishing and maintaining a condition of Anarchists among themselves; Granted also that they possess between them about the average amount of resources per head found among the rest of the population, excluding the very wealthy at least, or enough to afford a basis for subsistence and improvement; And granted that they wish to make no such difference between themselves and the rest of the population as exists between the members of a commercial society and the non-members, whilst on the other hand they have to preserve their independance and protect themselves against such persons as might take every possible advantage through them without reciprocating; What would be the expression of the methods adopted and how far the form of government thus made, fit for the information of whom it might concern? This I shall answer in the next article.

J. A. ANDREWS

The God-Idea of the Ancients.

ELLA BURT GAMBLE, author of "The Evolution of Woman," has written in the "Saturday Review" of April 7th, that "during an earlier part of the development of human religion, man created his own gods; they are powerless to change him."

A few quotations from the earlier chapters of the work under consideration will give a good idea of its scope and of its great value as an educator. It will be seen that these are not mere abstract speculations, or dry summaries of the beliefs of antiquity, of no practical or educational import.

"The duty of religion is to promote the development of human nature by assisting the community to maintain the fundamental fact not only in the operations of nature but in the construction" of these duties. "This idea of the development of religion is based in man as the essence of the religion. Man creates his own gods; they are powerless to change him."

"A few quotations from the earlier chapters of the work under consideration will give a good idea of its scope and of its great value as an educator. It will be seen that these are not mere abstract speculations, or dry summaries of the beliefs of antiquity, of no practical or educational import."

"The sexual, political, and economic institutions of our time are directly connected with the old conceptions so tacitly set forth in this book. I quote from the first chapter of the book under consideration: "The conception of a deity originated in sex, or in the creative agencies female and male which animate nature, we may say instinct to find, in the history of the development of the two sex principles and in the notions entertained concerning them throughout past ages, a tolerably correct account of the growth of the idea of a deity.""
3. Neither Klemencic nor Matjžals claimed that the banker was killed “in the name of Anarchism,” or that it was “an act of consistent Anarchy” (see Comrade Anarchist). But Anarchism justifies the killing of a man for the simple reason of having the quality of shrewdness, brutality, etc., by reason. Byington knew this before he quibbled (and so does Addis), but when such an act was surreptitiously, rob and to infest their brutality and shame (as for instance in Spain at present), then we are justified to resist by all and many. 

4. If millions consent to be robbed and exploited, does it follow that they have consented of their own free will? I thought Byington did not believe in “majority rule.” Certainly everybody ought to have the liberty to enjoy the products of his own labor, but that is just what the bankers would not let Matjžals enjoy; on the contrary, they robbed him of his labor and enjoyed themselves without labor—not asking him for his consent.

5. Here Byington lets the cat out of the bag. It is not the murdering he condemns, but he is indignant because the blow is supposed to have been struck against deceit. What logic displayed in this paragraph! If you meet the police with a bomb it is your duty to run away, for you strike at the man that hires the policemen it is wrong. 

6. Is a government an abstract thing, or is it composed of individuals? If the latter, I say again, Matjžals struck the man that hired the policemen to make his robbery secure.

7. Yes, Matjžals was working for freedom by showing that the people’s real enemy is the man that “lives and reaps the sweat of thousands.” On the other hand I say with George Orwell: “Although it may sound like a paradox we perform no act, good or bad, no matter how insignificant it may be, which we are not forced to perform, since every act is the result of a relationship which exists between one or more sensations arising from the environment in which we live and the greater or lesser power of assimilation which they may encounter in us. Then, since we cannot be responsible for the greater or lesser power of assimilation which we possess with regard to some order of sensations, nor for the existence or non-existence of influences arising from the environment in which we live and for the sensations which result from it, any more than for their relationship to each other or for our greater or lesser respective faculty or force of resistance, neither can we be responsible for the result of this relationship that is independent of ourselves in what we will, in fact, determine our will.” Thus, if Byington cannot conceive of any other state of society but fraud, shrewdness, brutality, etc., he must expect the same phenomena he opposes now.

A. I. Egoism.

In The Free Word of April 18th under the heading “Things and Thoughts” “Zadnak the Dreamer” was written:

“Why do some individuals continually rant about the non-existence of altruism? Is it that they are so proud of never having a kindly feeling for a fellow man? Is it that they can so easily do good for others even if it cost them a trifling inconvenience? Or is it that, having sufficed all such feelings, they are envious of others who are not so wholly selfish and self-centered? If by any means they beheld the characters of those who dare prove themselves men and women of nobler minds than their own? Because you are false, is no man true?”

The individualists do it because they are bad. Why do the Communists do the same thing?

The accusation of Byington is that Klemencic indicated the attack was to be a sort of kaffir war, and that the wording of the note left room for that accusation. The reason assigned for killing him was that he was the sworn fiend of shrewdness, brutality and infamy. The logic is this, to kill men who are shrewd, brutal and infamant to Anarchism, which I deny, it was for this reason, that you let me criticise to condemn kraube.

Here are a few quotations from "Anarchist Morality" by Peter Kropotkin. I am sorely I cannot quote more fully, but so as to take up too much space:

"It is easy to understand the astonishment of our great grandfathers when the English philosophers, starting from the moment, the Encyclopaedia, in opposition to these primitive ideas, that the devil and the angel had nothing to do with human action, but that all acts of man, good or bad, useful or baseful, are the work of a single motive, that of the "infinite"

"The whole religious conformity, and, above all, the numerous sects of the pharisees shouted "immorality." They covered the thinkers with insult, they insulted them. And when later on, in the course of this century, the same ideas were again taken up by Bentham, John Stuart Mill, Tchermerisher, etc., then those thinkers began to affirm and prove that Ressouz for pleasure, is the true motive of all our actions, the misjudgments redoubled. The books were burned by a ceremony of silence; the authors were treated as devils.

And yet what can be more true than the assertions made:

"Here is a man who snatches its last mouthful of bread from a child. Every one agrees in saying that he is a horrid egoist, that he is guided solely by self-love. But now here is another man, whom everyone agrees to recognize as virtuous. He shares his last bit of bread with the hungry and strips off his coat to cloth the naked. And the moralists, sticking to their religious conventions, say to us that this man carries the love of his neighbor, the spirit of devotion, that he obeys a wholly different passion from that of the egoist. And yet, with a little reflection, we soon see that both have been but the parties to the two actions in their result for humanity, the motive has been still the same. It is the quest for pleasure."

And now before we close let us say a word concerning those two terms altruism and egoism, outcomes of the English school, which continually grate upon our ears.

"Until now we have not even mentioned them, for the simple reason that we cannot see the distinction between them which the English moralists have striven to establish."

"The distinction, therefore, between egoism and altruism is absurd in our eyes. That is why we have said nothing of the compromises that man, if we are to believe the utilitarians, is always making between his egoistic and altruistic sentiments. Such compromise can have no existence for the man who knows his own mind."

"You don’t know why Kropotkin wrote this, whether it is true he never had a gang, or because he stiffs them, or because he wants to bemoir the noble minded Zadnak, or because he is false."

"Zadnak the Dreamer" wakes up long enough to ask Kropotkin these questions. I am willing to bet he will lie still and pretend he is still dreaming.

H. C. H.
Hunger and Cold.

While the music fell and rose, Alice crept toward the caryatids. Wherever her round of costly woes. Fashioned I behold with shuddering fear. Wolves' eyes through the windows peer. Little droplets of gold they are, Hunger and cold!

God has plans you must not spoil. None were made to startle and tell. Some to whom the wine and oil, W.

Devil's theories are those. Stillling hope and love and peace. Framed your According to advice—Hunger and Cold.

—James Russell Lowell.

A Queer Customer.

By FELAS CRANCE.

The manuscript of which a copy is given below is supposed to have been addressed to the editor of a prominent Republican paper, in an eastern city, by a woman resident of the town from one whose editor believed to be capable of giving it. The manner in which this paper came into the hands of the correspondent who has forwarded it to The Firebrand is not disclosed.

Mr. Editor— I have heard and read of some very strange things happening to men's minds by reason of accidents that injured the head, but I never heard of anything just like the case of a man in our neighborhood, and it seems to me that you would be interested in it. You asked me to write to you about it. It may turn out to be quite a story before I get through with it, especially as I am not very sure of myself, and may not be able to tell it in the best way, and I hope Mr. Editor that you will see to the punctuation and proper arrangement of the matter if you should think it worth printing, and of course you know that I will make any changes that you think best to put it in the right shape. I don't want to hold this man up to ridicule in anyway, as he really seems to be a very good sort of man, takes good care of his family and seems to live very well, and I don't want to use his real name. But as it will be the easiest of course to call him by some name I think I will make the name Hoback, as that seems an unimportant name, and I don't think there should happen to be a man of that name who will of course know that I don't mean him, so I don't think it best to use the real name.

Well, this is the way it was: Some weeks ago Mr. Hoback came to my house to tell me about the sanitary sergeant calling on him to warn him to have his slop barrel emptied. He seemed to be so vexed and surprised about it, and sort of mystified, that I couldn't make out at first what his trouble was. Mr. Hoback has always kept his yard cleaned up and kept things neat and trim in the place, and he said he had been much offended that anybody should take the liberty to call his attention to a thing of that kind. The man did not tell him at first that he was an officer, and Mr. Hoback hadn't thought Mr. Hoback would see his star and understand it.

Then Mr. Hoback asked him where he lived, and the officer told him. It wasn't anywhere in our neighborhood, but quite a little distance off in another part of the city. Mr. Hoback asked him what business it was of whether the slop barrel was emptied or not, and he began to get mad at the interference of a person who he thought had no business there. The officer told him there was no use in talking about it, that he didn't empty his slop barrel he would be pulled into police court and fined. Mr. Hoback didn't want to lose his temper, so he said he would look into it, but he would see about it, and the sergeant went away.

This happened, as it appeared from what Mr. Hoback went on to tell me, several days before, and Mr. Hoback had asked his near neighbors if his slop barrel had offended them in anyway they all agreed it had not, and he asked me if I thought it would be in any way. Now the neighbors that he spoke to before he did, or after he did, just what he said, or if it was simply because they did not want to get into trouble with him, or hurt his feelings. But I told him just the truth when I said that I had not noticed it at all, although his house was near enough to make the aroma from the rear end of my lot, and I might have noticed it any time that I went out to go and carry or embers. I couldn't see any more than I could smell, I guess.

Then he wanted to know what business this man that called himself sanitary sergeant had to do with it. I told him of course that the sanitary sergeant was an officer of the city, and that he had to see that certain ordinances were kept. He went on to ask me and I was greatly puzzled, and at first thought he was fooling me, because he did not seem to understand at all. "I was talking about when you spoke of the city government, the common council, the police court, and such things. I was inclined to get angry at the way he talked, as I thought he was insulting me, but after awhile I began to think queer as it was that he really was honest in his ignorance. After he went away I had some talk with my wife about it, and she went to see Mrs. Hoback to find out more about her if her husband was just right in the upper story. Mrs. Hoback said her husband was certainly all right, and acted some as if she wanted to break friendship with anyone that thought he wasn't. But my wife was soon satisfied she did not mean any unkindness. Then Mrs. Hoback said that her husband used to be quite a good deal pasted in for a while. The city election was held he paid no attention to it at all. She thought strange of this as it was so different from what it had been before, and when she asked him on election day if he wasn't going to election he said he thought anything of it and just went about his work as usual. She did not know that anything had happened to his head, only that she noticed that he did not talk any more about the officers and who was elected, or anything of that sort.

Well, however it happened, it certainly seemed that everything about the officers and government, and all that he used to be so interested in, he kind of passed out of his mind, although he knew just as much about everything else as he ever had. Now the common council, the sanitary sergeant was something like this, leaving out all the part about his seeming to be fooling with me, and so on. When I came to believe that he really did not understand about government, it went on about like this:

"Who gives the sanitary sergeant his orders, tells him what he is to do?" he asked.

"Why, that's his city council then." Of course his ignorance on these things puzzled me all the while as I have said, but I don't see any use of repeating that over and over, so I shall suppose it to be understood.

"The city," I told him, "is a certain district in the state, and the people living in that district.

"What makes the common council then?" "Every year or so the people elect the members of the council from different parts of the city." "How do they know how many to elect, or from what parts of the city to elect them?" "The state law tells them that." "State, that's something else ain't it? But we'll stick to the city now and try to find out about the State later. Then the people of the city every year or so, as you say, in some way who shall be their bosses, is that it?"

"No," I said, "of course not. The council have to do just as the state laws say."

"But if they don't do it?" "Why, if anybody don't like it he can bring a law suit, or have them arrested and find out if it's right."

"Ah, a law suit—how do they do in a law suit?" "They have to come into court, and the judge determines what is right."

That was another kind of city, or city council, or what?"

"No, it is a man learned in the law, elected to try law suits."

"But doesn't he ever make mistakes?"

"Sometimes people are not satisfied with his decision, and they can take it to a higher court and have it tried over."

"What if they are right?"

"No, not quite. They can go to the supreme court of the state, if the decision of the appellate court is not satisfactory."

"Then that ends it?"

"Why, no. Sometimes they go to the supreme court of the United States."

"Now I begin to learn something," said Mr. Hoback at this. "Your city government may make a mistake, and the judge may make a mistake, and the supreme court of the state may make a mistake, but there is a supreme court of the United States, and they can make every- thing right. But this takes sometime doesn't it?"

"Yes," I told him, it takes a year or so, perhaps. I'm sure I don't know just how long, quite while away I go."

"But does it cost something, who pays?"

"The judges have salaries, but each party has to pay lawyers that is," said I thinking of his strange ignorance, "there has to be some ones that learned in the law to argue the questions before the courts."

"Well, now it seems that all those parts of what I believe you call government can make mistakes, but with considerable time and expense it may be determined what is right and what is wrong."

"Yes, I said, a little dazed, but not seeing how it is with no other."

"And while this is being decided in the courts, the city officers may go on making the same mistake in other cases, and perhaps sometimes making new mistakes."

"Yes," I said, not knowing what else or anything else to say.

"Now then," went on Mr. Hoback, "it looks like told me that there were some people in the supreme court of the United States that you tell about, who suppose I don't live right about here, should have to say what it is that we are in this little place to do."

"Why," said I once more, "they must decide according to the law. The law is put down in the books, so that anyone can see the law, and the court decides according to the law, and that settles it."

"Well," said Hoback, as though there was something very strange about this, if the laws are plain and are put down in books that anyone can read, how can I know what it has to be decided by this court, and that court and two or three more, before it stands?"

Well I don't know just how I explained this. Of course you know Mr. Editor and readers know, and I am not writing a primer for your instruction or for theirs, so it is not necessary to go over all this ground. I am only trying to tell you of the oddities of our government, and how it can be so difficult and surprising enough. Our conversations on this subject came up every few days as we chanced to meet, and there is no use in my telling how we came to meet every time, how the conversation occurred, so I will go on and put down each things as I can remember just as though it all took place at one time."

"About the law that you were speaking of," he said, "what makes the state make these laws?"

"Well, every two years the legislature meets at the capitol of the State and passes the laws that are needed. They consider what it is the people want and make it into law, and that stands to guide the people."

"The State?" he said looking at me queerly. "The legislature?"

"Yes," said. "The state is a country that has a good many cities, counties and towns, and these cities, counties and towns send up each a man to make up the legislature, and when they all get together they make the laws for the whole state, as I told you."

"Well, but don't some of the cities want laws different from some of the others, to regulate some matters of their own that may differ from the state of things in other places."

"Oh, yes, of course that is true. Each city has a little legislature of its own as I told you about before, the common council, and this council makes the laws that regulate the cities generally, and then the common council makes special laws in each city for that city."

"Then," cried Hoback, "we are getting on famously. So the people choose their members of the legislature for the state and their members of the common council in the cities, and get the laws just as they want them?"

"Well," I felt bound to say, "it don't always turn out exactly like that. Sometimes one set of people
want a law or laws that the others do not agree to, and each tries to get its members in the legislature and those that get the most members they have it.

"Then it seems one set of people bosses the other set.

"Oh, yes, but if they don't make laws according to the constitution then the courts knock them out, say they are unconstitutional, and they don't stand.

"Can't the officials do it?" he asked again seeming to be much astonished.

"Why, when the State was organized the people got together and made a constitution, and that makes the rules that the legislature and the courts must go by. The constitution that the people made themselves is the great law over everything, which we obey, and if we are to do with, unless the people decide themselves to change it.

"Then when the courts say anything is not according to the constitution the people see just how it is, and everybody is satisfied!"

Well, of course you know Mr. Editor I would have liked to have told him that this was so, but I couldn't do just that, so I was obliged to tell him that sometimes the people were not altogether satisfied with the decisions of the courts. Then he wanted to know what could be done about it, and I told him that sometimes the legislature could pass a new law that would very nearly (if not quite) reach the same object without running against the constitution or the court. In extreme cases they could change the constitution and get a new one that would suit the old one, and sometimes they had to go to war about it, and get the matter settled in that way, as our civil war settled the old question of slavery in the South.

He listened quite awhile, and then he said he thought there must be a good many questions that it was hard to get decided satisfactorily, and that would make a great deal of trouble. Then he gave me quite a lecture on the subject, and kind of asked me what they did when a case came up that was not provided for by law. Well, I know that the courts never give up any conclusions that are put to them, but they have been so ready to think that I had never thought of it before, had always supposed there were laws to fit all cases, but I guessed this might not be so, therefore I put him off until I could talk with a lawyer friend of mine about it.

The next time I had a chance to talk with this lawyer friend I told him about Mr. Hoback's question, and he laughed a little and told me that was "the easy one!" wanted to know if I hadn't any harder than that. Well, I told him, this was hard enough for me, and I asked him to explain to me how this was.

Of course I can't remember all that he said just as he told it to me, but I got the idea into my head some way that there are two kinds of law; perhaps there are more, but I think the only two are at least two that are taught to that common people can get some little understanding of. There is the statute law, the kind that is made by legislatures, by congress and so on, and there is something called the common law. The common law is the way people generally have of regulating their affairs, and settling questions among themselves not just that, or that, or that, or that is what it is supposed to be, although I can't remember that my lawyer friend made it very clear that the judges took good care to make sure that what the customs really are among the people are just the same as the things of the kind that I got interested in this question myself, and as my lawyer friend can make out my lawyer friend told me that the decisions that had been made in the common law for hundreds of years were kept in books, and when judges went back to the books to tell how to decide the case that came up, and the decisions in the books and the decisions that the judges make from time to time are just the same as the laws made in the legislature.

Still it seemed to me that there must be cases coming up quite different from any that had ever been decided under the statue law, but the lawyer who wrote that bill had done it, as there might be cases in which the people had no customs or practices whatever, and how could the judges make their decisions according to the customs and practices of the people that practiced the law? Perhaps sometimes had to make up the laws themselves to fit the case, just according to their own ideas, and in some cases even where there had been a good many cases decided one way before they had to make law the other way to fit some cases, and decide as it was wanted to.

"Why?", he said, "you know that damned Anarchist case in Chicago, a few years ago. Those fellows deserved to be hung and had to be hung, and lawyers stood by the court solely at the time. But the law was made for some case that judges had to decide on, and they had to convict Herr Most and the rest of them, and had to have the law to do it. It was Herr Most they convicted, wasn't it?"

I was a little uncertain about this, but I couldn't tell for sure so I let him go on.

"Why?", he said, "those fellows were convicted of murder, not of conspiracy, but there were some of them who had scarcely any acquaintance at all with others; and they were denied separate trial, were all tried together so that every particle of evidence against anyone stood against all in being hanged, and they brought in books in German when some of them knew nothing about the German language at all. Then they convicted them for exciting (maybe he said inciting) some one to a riot where a bomb is thrown, and they didn't prove it was that or not, or whether he thought he was or not. They threw the bomb, or whether he ever heard say of the speeches those fellows made or not. In fact they gave up long before the trial was over trying to prove who threw the bomb, but the judge said he be hanged a little bit, but said of course the judges had to make law sometimes because they had to decide every case that came up, whether it was anything they had before or not.

"Then", said I, "the judges or courts can decide any case just about as they please, can they? Or can't they?"

He shook his head, and didn't like to answer this, but he seemed by the way he spoke to think of some case that hadn't gone to suit him in some court, and he finally said, "You see, the courts can decide any case they want to. They can decide on the law or the other just as they please, and there are so many thousand cases in the books that they can find presidents (or precedents perhaps it was) to support their decision whatever it is.

I can tell you I got a good deal of light on the law from this talk with my lawyer friend, but I didn't give it all to Hoback. He was already cranky enough, and I didn't want to make him any worse.

Every time I met him I expected to find that he had come to himself, and would have no more foolish questions to ask me, but he was in this for he kept on just the same as ever. And he must have been thinking about the things of which he talked with me a great deal of the time for he always brought them up very soon after we had had this talk about law and the courts he came at me something like this:

"If the judge can decide the law to be just what they have a right to, why not let the courts make up their own heads, people are pretty careful who they get for judges ain't they?"

Hoback has seemed so curious and so sharp too that I have got to think what I say to him, but I want to answer all his questions as fairly as I can, because I am wondering all the time where he will come out. Of course you have got some good republican, but I didn't dare say republican and democrat to him for he would want to know right away what they mean. I know the republicans are all right enough, but it seems to me the difference between republican and democrat, and I am sometimes a little confused and I might not be able to tell him off-hand. The republicans always choose their judges, the democrats choose theirs, and most honest men that can be found and they always do just what is right. But the democrats have put up some lawyer that has been an excuse for the democrats elected the most ignorant and meanest men that could be found, and the pops--well it's no use talking about the men they put up. But of course I had to say something to show that I knew what I was talking about, and I said this:

"Why a good share of the judges are certainly the very best men, but sometimes the people make a mistake and get some not quite so good, and this makes trouble. But then we must always allow the courts for the palladium of our liberties. I don't know at all what that last part means, but I have heard it from our political speakers so often I know it is a good thing, and I thought it might kind of start Hoback and settle the matter with him.

But", he says, "if as you say the judges and courts can decide any law, what happens to the work of your legislature and so on by declaring it unconstitutional and then the people have to submit to it, isn't it true that the courts and judges are the government and the other parts don't amount to much?"

Now it had never struck me just that way, but it was the way as if it was when he put it to me so straight.

"I should think it did make trouble", Hoback went on, "but you said the other day you said you and all the rest of 'em were going to war with each other to overturn the decisions in regard to slavery in the South.

"Well", I said, "of course it don't come to that very much, and everybody doesn't see that the decisions of the courts are not always right it is best to uphold them so that things may be settled instead of having confusion by criticism of the courts and trying to change the decisions."

I remembered that my lawyer friend had said something like this when I was talking over the matter with him, and it was the best thing I could think of just then but I must say it seemed kind of weak to me.

"Don't they criticize the courts sometimes, and talk pretty strongly about the decisions that are made?"

"Why, of course", I answered, "there are some foolish people, Socialist, Communist and Anarchist agitators, dirty, beer-guzzling foreigners! (that's what my lawyer friend said)" he exclaimed, "they want to overthrow the courts, but the best citizens always sustain them, even though they don't altogether like their decisions in certain cases."

"It seems to me," he went on, "I saw something a few days ago about a decision the courts had made about railroad pooling, and I think the people who were criticizing that decision were not foreign, and as nearly as I can guess they were not any of the other kinds of people you spoke about.""

"Oh, of course, that decision about the railroads didn't affect anything. The great mass of people know how to carry on their business, and it is all foolishness for the legislators or the courts to try to run them.

"I was kind of careless in saying this, but the way he spoke just pulled it out of me at the moment. He took advantage of me right away, for he seems to be getting sharper all the time.

"Oh, he," he said, "then it seems it ain't the courts that boss after all. Maybe it's the railroads!"

Of course I know I ought to have had something to say to this, because I feel that it is all right to maintain the country's rate, and that

"The ballots fall like snowflakes on the sod, and do the bowdler's will by god,

as the poet says; but before I could get my breath Hoback began to talk again.

"Then I think I read something a little while ago about an income tax decision, and if I recollect right there was quite a good deal of criticism, and they said the courts had made the income tax case differently, and could they have been disposed to."

"Then I can tell you I was a little afraid he didn't stop with his criticism about the Anarchist and Communists, because I could not have answered that easily at all. I know they are a very bad set because I have met them, and the Anarchists and the Communists, they really are, that is what they believe and what they are trying to do I haven't any idea at all. But just then I happened to look at my watch, and said I hadn't just talked to one man with whom I had important business."

Now Mr. Editor I wish you would tell me what you think about my friend Hoback, and you can help me answer some of his questions (which I know are dead easy to people who are just a little smarter than I am) it will be a great relief to me.
Note and Comment.

J. T. Fox has donated 25 copies each of parts I and II of his pamphlet entitled Religion and Labor to The Firebrand, and "Ireland" has donated 50 copies each of its periodical conditions and character, James Tochanni donating the postage on them from London.

There is now no saloon in Lafayette, Or. It is not a prohibition town, but the business did not pay, so the one saloon in the town was discontinued by its proprietor it is to be leased for prohibitionists. But the demand and the supply will stop, it is hard to stop the supply while the demand continues.

Travel across the continent to discuss a proposition with a few other comrades when the same discussion can be carried on by letter and in our periodicals. The discussion when carried on in the periodicals becomes a public discussion, and in advertising the convention, from something else. Windbags make the others worry, and clear understandings are seldom, if ever, reached. Detailed discussion, points of view, and appeals from discussion of the chair make up the bulk of the proceedings, and the average delegate goes away more muddled than he came.

H. M. KELLY writes us, from Chicago, protesting that the young man who claimed he had paid him (Kelly) a dollar for The Firebrand, has not spoken truthfully, and that he has not taken any money from anyone in any city in London, or for The Firebrand, and demands that the young man make his name known. We think nothing but right that the accused should make his identity known to the accuser. We assume that he has paid the money to Kelly. We want no one accused wrongfully, nor do we want The Firebrand misrepresented. If people contribute to the support of The Firebrand we are anxious that they should have it, but we know that a comrade might forget a name, or lose the paper on which it was written, and an error of this kind occurs without anyone intending to be rascally, and I think it unwise for either party to call names or indulge in bitter denunciations until both have a full understanding of the case.

Free Trade in Ballots.

Assumes government by a majority to be right; assuming that in a Republic a man has a right or even that it is his duty to vote; assuming that a man has a right to property as his own—he has a right to vote and he has a moral right to vote in the abstract right to do so, for the following reasons. His vote is his property to dispose of as he pleases or elect for his own good if he is en-dropdown (and all men are) for the good of his country if he is altruistic (as he should be). The sous probid are devoted upon those who deny him the right to sell his vote, to show why he has no right, which cannot be done—popular as the idea is, and easy as it may seem at first thought to do.

Let us analyse the proposition before coming to too precipitate a conclusion to his right to sell his vote. Suppose he has with all the power of mind he possessed, during the whole campaign last summer and fall, tried to determine which he should as a conscientious citizen vote for, or on any known or having heard, heard discussions in favor of both candidates, is utterly unable to form a conviction in favor of either candidate. Mark Hanna comes along and offers him $1 to vote for him, change his mind; he is $1 better off and Hanna gets the worth of his money. The transaction is a mutual trade. Both are satisfied with their conclusion. Can a jury be found in the United States (unless it be a picked one) that will decide that any one has been wronged to the amount of one cent by the transaction? Hoppin says it would be legal and has plenty strong convictions that way, but Hanna offers him $10, and he, being a poor man, (as most men are) takes the money and votes for McKinley. Can it be proven that he has wronged any one out of a cent? Suppose he decides to vote for McKinley and Hanna gives him $5—is anyone worsted? Hanna is satisfied or he would not have given it to him. But you may say that the money is not a general purchase of his votes, that the money being put in connection with the purchase of his votes, then the business of selling the votes, an election would depend entirely upon the respective size of the purses. So it would; but does it not now? Does not an election depend on the respective sizes of the purses of those who are willing to pay them? is not every dollar expended in regalea and torch light processions for the purchase, but appeals to the passions of the ignorant? Is there any argument to the fact that in a party contest the question is as to who can spend the most on the campaign? that any man ever did sell his vote against his convictions? Who can blame a capitalist for buying a vote for his country?

Then why exact laws against free trade in ballots? It only increases litigation and humiliates the purchaser and the seller of what he intuitively knows to be his right. It is worse than a war; the result is that it exercises a stealthiness to evade the law, which fosters immorality. Every law made to restrict people in their rights, makes villains of the people.

Mrs. B. of Omaha Replies.

It appears to me that my letter is misunderstood and if I do not reply soon, some women may ask in the near future if my husband has not murdered the children and myself, and therefore I want to make it clear that such epithets as "brute", etc. he does not deserve. Let me tell Comrade A. E. K. (No. 12 of The Firebrand) that I am a married woman, and A. E. K. and myself is very lame. I never was a sexual slave and was not even so ignorant as Mrs. A. I never have and never will pray a man to "let me alone"; when I did not feel like it, I told my husband so, and he never tried comparison.

That we had so many children was not any more his fault than mine—our ignorance was the fault. The same things happened in the children were not loved as in the present. I love children very much, because we were not able to take proper care of them. My husband would have been satisfied with one child or none, but since the children were here and a home was here it was the greatest trouble of it that he could not, or very seldom, find employment. This is one of the reasons that he left us.

Furthermore, I want to explain that it was not the knowledge of "free love" why we lived together at first without being married, we had not the least conception of free sex relations. We simply resisted the laws in general, but we were soon threatened with arrest and so we got married. "According to law." But this fact (of being legally married) was neither beneficial nor desirable to us. We had no more obligations than before marriage, neither did my husband, but it was the economic side that confronted us, and it was not the vedlock that deprived us of the means of supporting our family among the unemployed—it was our internal economic system. And as I said before, we were utterly ignorant on the sex question, consequently it was ignorance that prevented us from leading a more happy life. Only of late, after reading The Firebrand and Ruscellauch's book I have conceived a better idea of sex relations, as the German—I am a German—Anarchist and Socialist papers and periodicals never treated this question. (Except Der arme Tscheif often speaks of free sex relations, but never in an explanatory way, at least I never could conceive the proper idea.) In short, we were radicals in regard to religion and economics—that was all. About 18 years ago I read Owen's book, in which he pictures a free society and all these children adopted by the community and I could easily conceive of free sex relations in a free society, but not how tree love could be carried on.

I am not an angel, neither is my husband a devil; we all have our faults. It is rather our ignorance and the prevailing conditions that all us are our "bad angels." Our own ignorance has given us to meddle, but those supporting ourselves, belongs to myself; without him we would probably have starved.

Mrs. B.

Clippings and Comments.

Whatever the individual cannot do without a general or special law empowering him to do, is properly a function of the government.—(Fustenauer Kas-

There is nothing necessary to human happiness but what the individual can do without any law empowering him to do it.

The following was clipped from a Chicago paper at the time the A. U. strike was in progress and very well illustrates the intent of the Freight Managers’ Association in precipitating that strike. The role the government took in it. It also shows that many of the capitalists are perfectly conscious before hand of the results of their acts, and commit them knowing the ruinous effect it will have on the people. It proves again the theory that capitalists constantly contended: that it is impossible to successfully combat the capitalists without coming in conflict with the government, and that the parent government rules all of us in the government. It was written by the banker Henry Clews.

"For the past week, the chief influence acting upon Wall street interests has been the disorganizing of business arising out of the great Western strikes. The remarkable fact is that with such great numbers of the working classes in open hostility not only to capital but to the United States Government, and with the threats of labor leaders to carry this disorder to the utmost extent the numbers of their followers made possible, the financial center of the country has remained calm and values have been comparatively unaffected. European holders of our investments have shown some uneasiness at this spectacle of organized revolt against capital and the laws that protect it—which is only what might be expected from the discerning European investor. But there has been some consequent selling by the London market, though barely sufficient to visibly affect quotations here.

"The cause of this confidence in the financial markets has been the conviction, entertained from the first, that the disturbance could only be temporary—so brief indeed at barely a chance for a fearsome financial "attack on the country." This confidence has become so familiar with labor disturbances as to know surely how well to value them.

"The firm attitude assumed by the Government in the financial field, affirming that the "law" is the final arbiter in all strikes of a sectional character, was fundamentally antagonistic to the financial interests of our railroads and other large corporations, as against the lawless interruptions of labor from which the country has suffered so much, and by which the business world has been surrounded with very serious risks. In brief, Wall street regards as the crowning battle between the employing class and the employed class, in which the former has had the advantage. The result has been a complete and well understood freedom of contract in the employment of labor. The result of this victory is no small value to the future stability of our industries and the estimate put upon it is a key to so many excellence of the financial markets amid so much confusion.

"Another result of much value to the railroads has been cut down on the strike. Under the past depression of business the general fall in prices, has lacked the regular percentage in wages, and yet they have hesitated to enforce it lest it should produce a labor disturbance. They have now an opportunity of replacing their past employees, and are doing so upon a generally reduced scale of wages. A valuable opportunity has thus been afforded for the railroads in conforming their scale of expenses to the market, and probable permanent, reduction in prices. Thus what has been dreaded as a possible great national calamity turns out to be a valuable contribution toward meeting the present crisis of financial difficulties, of which our material interests are now undergoing.

It's No Good.

The Colorado Legislature adjourned a few days without passing an appeal bill, and promptly called together in extra session by the Governor for this sole purpose else there would have remained another opportunity for the tax payer to this session. Our own Representative from Loveland, when asked his opinion of the Legislature as a means of relief for the people replied in a "dugusted tone"—"No good—it a perfect fraud."

Youth's Department.

What Liberty Means.

By Libby we mean that there shall not be any rulers. Every person, having equal rights with the
I have just finished reading the book "Join's Way. A Domestic Radical Story," by Elmina D. Blinker. This book is about a woman's advocate for Secularism. It is like most of the Secular works that I have read, always gets after the church and Christians. It tells how a town was turned into liberalism because two of the flock left the church. How the preachers tried to prevent them from spreading liberal ideas and declared them insane. They kept them from playing their tricks etc. It brings about a great change in a community of people. This is, I think Mrs. Blinker makes a mistake. She brings the change about too easy. If it should happen that a Christian be turned into liberalism by reading this book it would make the Church more secure. What the person or persons would work for just for such a change is shown in the book. But such changes as pictured in this book, very seldom, if ever, happen, such a change could not be made in so short a time. Still, it would make the anxious persons less afraid and then they would work for liberalism altogether, and let things come as they will. It is an interesting story for people who already know that such changes cannot be brought about so easily. But if I was trying to spread the cause of freethought I would prefer a different work. She also advertises her book and in order to keep interest up, there has to be government and this is the main obstacle in the way of progress. The price of the book is 20 cents, and those that are interested should write to Elmina D. Blinker, Snowville, Pulaski county, Virginia.

A LITTLE ANARCHIST

LITERATURE

We are glad to welcome to our table, and place on our exchange list, The Philistine.—A Periodical of Freethought for Every Little Spirit. It is published by the Society of The Philistines and published by them monthly. Subscription, $1.00 per year. Single copies 10 cents. The Society of The Philistines is "an association of men, women, and boys who wish to stir and paint. Organized to further good fellowship among men and women who believe in allowing the widest liberty to Individuality in thought and expression." Address: The Philistine, East Aarons, N.Y.

We have received the following French books and periodicals which we recommend to our French comrades everywhere.

Bibliothèque de L'Anarchie, par M. A. Wattis. Paris. This is a 280 page biography of the Anarchist movement, given the periodicals, persons and incidents most conspicuous in the rise development and growth of Anarchism. Every student or people who wishes to understand Anarchism should buy this book. $1.00. Address: Brussels, Belgium, Bibliothèque des "Temps Noirs," 51 rue des Eponniens.


Hérodotox Economis vs. Orthodox Proflitis, is a new juvenile magazine, No 2 of which has reached us. It is a 16 page, neat, magazine intended especially for the young. Price 4 fr. in France, 50 cents in foreign countries, per year. Address La Jeunesse Nouvelle, Rue des Monnaies, 33 bis Ly. France.

PERIODICALS

The Firebrand

before me. In it the author shows quite elaborately, that "net profit" is a phantasm, and that what is called "net profit" is merely a "misappropriation of working capital." The book shows beyond a probability of odd that net profit is a form of robbery, and must of necessity lead to the bankruptcy of the vast majority of those who engage in business.

There are some funny things in the pamphlet, for instance hints on how to make them use the word god, and the claim that what he is contending for is "Christianity," the assertion that the only way out of present chaos is through the International Socialist Labor Party.

The Bar Sinister and Lith Love, the first bluenose proceedings of the Legitimation League, of England, is a book of over 300 pages, containing a brief outline of the objects of the League, portraits of Edith Lancaster, Lillian Harman and the Vice president of the League, C. S. C. Spencer, and the letters, addresses, etc., that were read and delivered at the meeting of the League. It is interesting reading to all who take an active interest in the question of marriage, and sincerely believe that they favor greater freedom in matrimonial relations.

The Dawn of Civilization, by J. C. Spence, is a fine satire on present conditions, and prevailing notions. He writes as though he were a historian, writing in the year 2288, and his pictures of present conditions in a darkeyed world big with ideas then held, form a wonderfully satiric arraignment of things as they are. He places the dawn of Civilization in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and says that our laws and our obvious conditions to those of civilization, to the influence of the new ideas of equality and freedom that are now growing so rapidly and spreading over so much of the world, is it well worth your time and attention to the type of present institutions held up to view in all their grotesqueries. And it is a dangerous pamphlet. The Bar Sinister, are both printed on good quality paper, and with an attractive design, and the book is very cheap. It is a valuable work and is a fine book and paper. And it is a book you cannot afford to miss. I am glad of your collections of your noble work, and I will send a copy to those who can afford it. I will send for more books in the near future.

O. P. Victorian, Hillman.—I was very sorry to see you come out in only four pages again, last week. I was still more sorry to see that I had not made any contribution, and not being able to do so, now in your time of distress, I have to beg you, and beg him to let me have a few cents for a sacred purpose, and here! here is a year's subscription. But I do feel a little ashamed of sending 50c for a paper I have to beg you for. I have not heard of you since I seen it before. I hasten to enclose the sum of 2.00 for which please send The Firebrand—two copies every week—to my address, and send a copy of "The Old New and Information." I will send for more books in the near future.

A. L. Eastman, Lopes, Washington.—I have been reading The Firebrand for some time and although it was a new idea to me I saw very soon to use it to a rather high degree. I am not one of these who see now, plainly, we are being crucified between two thieves; namely, Church and State. And now the sex question. I do not know how I stand on that. The problem of it all is how to be better to those who are to be provided for; or will you say they will know how it can be prevented. It seems to me if there is anything on earth that humanity ought to know, it is this. I was interested in a few of the pages I have lived has dozens of poor families, raising children like rats; the mothers in poor health, and the children sickly. Thousands of women who ought not to give birth to a child, but when one or two at the most, give birth to six or seven scrawny, barley nourished objects of pity, and, as far as I have 

[Notice]

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Anarchism and the State. By H. May. (50c)


Life of Albert B. Pansu, with a Brief History of the Labor Movement in America. Bound in sewing and handsomely bound in cloth and 184 pages; paper cover. (50c)

The two books last named are slightly damaged, but readable.

Bomba. The Poetry and Philosophy of Anarchy. By W. A. Bone. (50c)


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Radical literature of all kinds, including English periodicals, can be found at the new stand of comrades I. Rudick, Cor. East, East, New York City.

Pamphlets in English, Hebrew and German languages can be had for twenty-five cents.

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