Right of Way.

Proclaim for me the law of redemption: I do not hold a sword across the common road, I demand that you withdraw yours. We are as seed in the earth whonm no grain of reluctance may retain below the proclamation of freedom. I do not ask to be thrust forth, I ask on your behalf to go forward— I may to will to stay, doubtless part of me will always be. Ever content respected and protest respected, but my draught must be honored whatever its speedier hour, Giving me right of way.

What does it mean to have right of way? It means your shambles, burial and restoration. It means universal fulfillment, man in his heart as the need in the ground. It means to achieve loyalty through rebellion, It means to sign no single power away more... to accept obedience, It means to give tyrants everywhere notice to quit. It means to take all titles of servility from purses and vest rolls. It means that months shall go unfed only when no one has food, backs go uncovered to the cold only in the general nakedness. Oh you poor, O Lamentable Vagantes, once our masters! Now I am at last relentless, I declare that the social order is to be succeeded by another social order, I know the quality of your folly when you go about the streets looking in the dust of noisy oratory for the complete state. I know very well when the complete state appears it will appear because you bring it to others, not because others bring it to you. And I know that you will not bring it as a burden upon your back but as something unscrolled within. I declare to all the rest of you that it is your business to put aside all other purposes but that purpose which contributes to my individual success, Until that is done nothing is done, You have choked your graneries with grain, riches are and to spare, yet are graneries and riches empty, You have found that your peak measure had no bottom. Towards me you will concentrate all power, you are bound to see me through, I, having right of way.

What does it mean to have right of way? It means standing ahead of all origins. Are you willing to step aside? Let us make a compact: From this day forth let us scrupulously keep out of each other's way. You need the whole of your heritage, I need the whole of mine. In summers of years on harvest fields gathered by free hands we will make a common fund of diverse hurry. You have never trusted me because you have never trusted yourself, Into my life you have read the hesitations, failings, cowardices, shame, of your heart, I have retaliated with even hand, you have carried the dead weight of my errantry, in this day's delivery we will be quits with suspicion. This is not mysterious, it is not a secret on sale for gold. This is not a promise with which the baffled fancy is forever tantalized. This is a tangible reality inviting the touch of your fingers. This is Horn, Bible, Zend, law of vision, law of joy, This is your nameless yet opened, unbudded self. Right of way is mine, I assume it without arrogance yet with unfrustrated will, I cleave a brutal deliverance in the press of the crowd, I must to the outlet, I must have air, I ask no conscomer favors, I trust to my own feet, I ask for space: O right of way!— (Heron L. Trubel, in The Conservator.)

Patriotism.

Much stress is now being laid on patriotic education, and all that can be, is now being systematically done to encourage patriotism in the minds of the young. The reason for all this effort at patriotic education is plain enough: Patriotism is necessary if the government, and its many privileges and pet institutions, is to continue. Not many generations ago there was no need for any special patriotic training, for everyone seemed so imbued with it that it acted like a disease that is both contagious and infectious. Everybody was patriotic, and if someone did get a faint idea that the government was not as worthy of enthusiastic adoration as it might be, he either kept silent about policy sake, or was quickly shut up by the patriots. They had immense demonstrations on the Fourth of July, and grew wild in contemplation of the glories of the old flag. It was spontaneous on the part of the majority, provoked by a sentimental view of things and the belief that they were all free and happy as a result of the existence of their government. This sentiment of devotion to, and unquestioning trust in the government, as an abstract something—something apart from the administration, something apart from the officers—is what is termed patriotism. Some call it love of one's country, others say it is hate of the other fellow: both are right! If I recognize political boundaries, and work myself up into an attitude of love for the region on this side of a boundary line, I must, at the same time, learn to hate the region on the other side of the boundary, and be ready to march across the boundary to carry death and destruction to its inhabitants for the love and glory of my own beloved land. How the boom swells, and the blood tangles as it courses through the veins, as the silver-tongued orator pours his eulogies and panegyries into the ears of the faithful! How the fists clenched and the teeth gritted together as he pictures the tyranny that others have to endure and how the air is shaken with wild bursts of applause as he points to the stars and stripes and asserts that never while that emblem floats above can tyranny lay its paralyzing bands upon us. (The next day he is putting up a job to secure some special legislation that will rob the people of some of their liberties and much of their substance.) Thus the two emotions of love and hate blend in one overwhelming passion that stops not to reason or to querry why, that rings aside all other considerations, all other promptings and seeks only to follow the lead of some superior who is supposed to be in the service of the government and working for its maintenance and glory.

To the patriot, human life is of little worth, and the security of the individual is unworthy of consideration when the safety or glory of the government is in question. The anguish of parting from loved ones, the despair of the prospective mother when she sees the father of her unborn torn from her and marched away, probably never to return; the devastation of fruitful fields, the destruction of towns, the burning of houses and the impoverishment of those who have toiled and suffered to secure themselves against want; the sight of mangled and bleeding bodies and of ghastly corpses; the loss to women and helpless children of their mainstay and source of support, and filling the land with grief and woe. All these count for naught to the patriot when the Secretary of State has fallen into a quarrel with the Prime Minister of some other government and the "honor" of the nation is in danger. No! he overlooks all these and, with his eyes fixed on "old glory", saws the air with his arms and hurrahs himself hoarse, with a fierce desire burning in him to do the rescue of the old flag, to follow its colors anywhere it may lead. Out into the burning sands of the desert, or over the perilous deep, he is willing to go and endure any amount of hardship, exposure and labor in his real to honor and increase the glory of the flag he follows. A terrible disease, when possession of him, a form of insanity paralyzes his brain and blinds him to everything save the one hallucination that drives him on, on into dangers to his life, into acts of cruelty and destruction that would make him faint with horror if in his right mind.

This hallucination is patriotism. It spreads a glamour over the most atrocious crimes and makes them appear as acts of nobility and valor. It includes the producer into willingly giving up his products that a set of loathsome parasites may live in luxury and ease. It takes the young, the strong, the vigorous and energetic away from their plows, their work benches and their occupations of utility, and drills them in the art of wholesale murder, destruction and pillage. It makes servile dependents of the producing, useful classes and pompous, patronizing masters of the useless, non-producing class.

The patriot willingly pays his taxes and stands ever ready to assist in foreing others to pay theirs. He may swear at the administration and howl with rage because the party in power does not do things to suit him, or imposes unjust taxes upon him, or violates pre-election pledges, but ever in his mind there exists the idea that the government is all right, is grand and glorious.

Patriotism is an insanity that attacks old and
young, great and small, strong and feeble, learned and ignorant. It attacks the foolish, but never affects the wise.

Patriotism has never added one iota to human happiness, or secured to the toiler the result of his labors. It has filled theaven and harbored between peoples or hushed the voice of strife with an understanding and agreement of good will.

Somehow late patriotism has been on the decline. So marked has been this tendency that much has been written and said concerning it, and the patriotic system of values and ideals referred to venture further decline if possible. The flag is raised above every schoolhouse; school children are compelled to celebrate Washington's birthday, and listen to long eulogies concerning him, and to high praise of his personality, which is called the father of our country. The immense Fourth of July celebrations are held and everything that can be done is done to arouse in the breasts of the masses that same old enthusiasm that used to animate them and cause the air to ring with their shouts. But the attempt is vain.

"The increase of taxation, the assumption of power on the part of the officers, the impoverishment of the toilers and the recognized vileness of the ordinary politician and patriotic orator have been so constantly before the minds of the people that they no longer believe in patriotism and give it much attention to the harangues of those who (while thinking of the next election time) shout for patriotism.

It is well that this silly sentimentalism, this insanity should decline. It were better if it should cease to exist.

When people have ceased to be patriotic and learned that political boundaries are but means of enslaving the producers; when they have learned that presidents' cabinets, as well as monarchs' courts, and all those "central directing authorities" which we call the government and patriotism for their existence, exist only to curtail their liberty and plunder them of their substance, they will free themselves from all these parasites and all institutions which build up and maintain distinctions in artificial character and they will see that a comprehensive, indubitably recognized brotherhood of mankind is far preferable to the dividing of the earth's surface into political divisions which breed patriotism and cause war, destruction and pestilence. When patriotism will have passed like a nightmare, then will dawn upon mankind a peace such as the world has never known will prevail. Love for mankind will take the place of love for one's country. Flags as emblems of authority will no longer float over the cities and the battle of the war drum will be hushed forever.

No longer will men march against their fellowmen and burn his house, destroy his grain, kill him and bring woe and anguish to his loved ones. The ships that sail the seas will carry cargoes of the products of the earth and not of death and destruction. No companies of young and strong men will be drilled in the art of killing by wholesale when patriotism no longer exists, but the arts of peace, science and philosophy will thrive and prosper and the universal peace and universal security will follow the course of the sun around the globe filling all minds with gladness and a sweet realization of the grand possibilities such as has never yet been known.

Away with patriotism! Yield not to its seductive charms. It is the first form of slavery, a caricature at every opportunity. As long as men are patriotic they will hold themselves and others in bondage, so we can afford to turn our attention to a thorough anti-patriotic education among the young generation, among the people, and especially among the officers of the patriotic education that is being carried on in the public schools, in the Sunday schools and churches, and in clubs and secret orders. Point out the horrors of war, the folly of obedience and the necessity of self control and independence from all mastership. Show them the possibilities of a world without mastership and war; free from domination and from that strange and subtle insanity that supports all tyrannies—patriotism—and they will grow up free men and women.
learned from you. It seems that while the constitution is supposed to have been made sometime ago, and to have settled things because it says it is constitutionally right, the laws that have been settled exactly like that just right, yet in fact the courts are making over and remodeling the constitution all the time by interpretation and application. Are no provisions made for amending the constitution as it is supposed to have been made originally, that is amendments by the people themselves, or for making a new constitution?—Yes. Even in congress an amendment may propose amendments to the legislatures of the states and when they are ratified in a number of states they go into effect; and provisions are also included of holding a convention to make an entirely new constitution.

To what extent has the constitution in fact been amended under the provisions to which you refer, and do you think the public at large are under the false impression that the amendments have been made since it went into operation. There was considerable opposition to the constitution when it was first presented, and ten amendments were adopted at once. Since that time the only important amendments have been those growing out of the civil war, which it may as well be admitted were crenellated down the throats of the southern states. Those are forty or more, and it is certainly no easy matter, in fact is practically impossible to make any change in the constitution.

Do you think the way of this constitution which we have been talking have any model to guide them in developing the principles of government for this country?—It is generally said that they did not, but in truth they are not so much to be admired as to be admired as in the English government, excepting only the monarchy.

You said the "powers regarded as established," had England then no document of a similar character to which appeal could be made?—No, she had not; that is she had no written constitution, and has not now. Is there then no power in England to declare legislative acts unconstitutional?—No, there is none.

"Will of the parliament," it is said, "is the constitution in England." Is it? If so, the people with the proceedings of any parliament they can elect a new parliament to undo them.

It seems then pretty clear that the people at large have no control over the government, and that they have in this country. Here we have a constitution formed by a lot of people who have been dead nearly a hundred years ago, and the courts you tell me that they are the acts of congress by an antiquated constitution, and if they can discover or choose to affect to discover discord, the acts of representatives of the people came to naught. This you tell me that we are doing from doing the same thing, and hastily which may be regretted afterwards, but it strikes me that it may work quite as often to prevent undoing some mischief already done, as to prevent an anticipated evil. Well, tell me now something of the general organization of the government.—The government is divided into three branches or great divisions legislative, executive, and judicial. The legislative or law-making, the judicial applies the laws, that is decides controversies determining whether laws that are claimed by either party to govern in certain cases, do in fact apply, and the executive acts to carry out the laws generally, putting into effect the acts of congress or other legislative bodies and in cases of controversy executing the duties of the courts. Each has its distinct and separate province, and neither branch has any business to interfere with either of the others. Not even if it is "restricted to the end of the street?—Why, there are always men who are unwilling to work and to get their living honestly as others do. They steal, they cheat, they attack men on the streets and get at other people's property, they steal themselves.

Well, what does your government do about this?—Its officers arrest men, capture them and lock them up as criminals. But they may then be tried in court and if they are found guilty they are sent to prison for a term of years as fixed by the laws.

These things you speak of are bad of course, and the men for such things are to be condemned. Are these all the crimes for which men may be arrested and imprisoned?—No, whenever congress or the legislature thinks anything is likely to work harm in the community they pass a law against it, and affix penalties to its violation. I should think there would sometimes be a difference of opinion about such matters, that sometimes laws would be passed making things criminal that did not appear to be so. I cannot say so of course this is true to some extent, and some things are made crimes which many people think should not be.

When the government pass laws the legislature can say they cannot be laws in relation to which there is considerable difference of opinion, are they branded as criminals the same as those who rob, steal or kill?—The people who uphold laws make them, and are not always so regarded in the community generally, and are often looked upon as martyrs to their opinions and because the public is not so well informed as it is in the case of those who violate them. They are not always so regarded.

Are there many of this class of laws, I mean laws that are regarded by a considerable part of the people as unnecessary, making crimes of things that are not generally condemned?—Yes, there are quite a good many such laws.

To what extent are such laws enforced?—Many of them are given very little attention, and they simply send in a report that the law has been broken. The inspections are kept as private and secret as possible. Some are taken up by zealous people and made nuisances. One of these is the law which allows a negro to be whipped for a certain pest in the woods.[1] Where no court anywhere can get into court anyone who publishes or sells a paper, periodical or book that he disapproves of. Sometimes the court upholds him and sometimes it doesn't, and if it does not it sets it at set as light as possible. It largely depends upon the judge, and scarcely anyone thinks less of a person arrested under the Comstock law, whether they are convinced or not. But wouldn't that be a more serious thing than this? Ought there not to be care in making these laws, so as to attack only real evils?—Perhaps, so is only telling it as it is, which sometimes be its very virtue and correctness. I should think so. Suppose someone differs from an officer of the government in regard to the enforcement of any particular man, and how he regards the law, or have any friend do it for him and defend himself against a charge without expense?—No, he can not do that; he has to have a lawyer act for him.

And are lawyers officers of the courts, who serve freely?—They are officers of the court, but they do not serve freely. They have to be paid according to their learning and ability, and some have very large fees.

But is it not possible that someone may differ with the government about the policy of a law without actually breaking it? That may be, but every one has to obey the law whether he likes it or not, and if he violates the law he has to suffer the penalty that has been fixed for it. So if a man from difference of opinion from that of the officers he has to go into court single-handed, and fight the whole power of the government even though it is most effective in some places, but in others it is only in the courts.

Is there in fact less crime in those communities where government is most highly organised and where the law is most effective?—Certainly yes, than in other districts where there is less of government?—Yes, certainly.

Is there less of crime in proportion to population and wealth?—It is less in less populated parts of the country than in newer places, less in larger cities than in smaller places, and less in towns generally than in the country?—Well I can hardly say that is so, but there are other conditions and it is perhaps not worth while to try to go into it.

Well, in the cities or larger places, where it may be assessed that many others are stronger, do people rest secure in the protection it affords, not distrusted from their ordinary pursuits by the necessity of protecting their own property which might be the subject of crime, as you say?—No, I can't say that is so altogether. Officers can't be everywhere, can't do everything, can't go to all crimes. This is quite a city, government must have existed here for many years and be pretty well organized, yet I find my neighbors extremely watchful in the care of their lives and belongings, and so is everybody and fastening them securely. I read of people carrying guns and pistols for their own protection, some-
The Firebrand: An ordinary family living can be done on the "Luscan" Knobs in the Appalachian Mountains. For a family of four, it is possible to live on less than $3 a week. The family includes a father, mother, and two children. The father is a miner, the mother is a homemaker, and the children are attending school. The family lives in a small wooden cabin with a fireplace for heating. They grow their own food, raise chickens, and catch fish in the nearby river. They use solar power for lights and heat. The children attend school through correspondence courses. They read books, listen to music, and play games together. They are happy and contented with their simple lifestyle.