

Egoism Vol. II. No. 7.

Georgia & Henry Replogle

November, 1891

Contents

Pointers.	3
The Philosophy of Egoism.	6
XIV	6
Mental Lassitude.	8
I Review the Reviewer.	9
News From Nowhere.	11
The Solution.	14
Managerial Experience.	15
Straws in the Breeze.	20
A Cheap Ranch.	21
EGOISM'S PRINCIPLES AND PURPOSE.	22

Pointers.

About the most promising business opening for morbid and somewhat attractive overripe girls is to take advantage of the monogamy monotony of wealthy men through matrimonial advertisements and work the damage suit blackmail racket. It is a big pull financially and a progressive propaganda as well, as it helps expose the ridiculousness of legal love.

EGOISM is even later this month than last though with a better excuse, being a lack of money to pay the cash expense. The type was up nearly on time, but sickness and scarcity of work together prevented our securing the necessary gold to have it printed sooner. Each number will come in time but perhaps not always on time, unless interest enough can be generated to cause each subscriber to add at least one subscription besides his own to our list.

Hugh O. Pentecost has done several neat hits lately. One, upon entering the legal profession while opposed to law, was his apology to Mr. Tucker of "Liberty" for having censured him for taking copyrights when he is opposed to such "rights." Another was Mr. Pentecost's review of Theosophy and Mrs. Besant. However, Mrs. Besant's "essence of things" and Mr. Pentecost's "union of beings" in our eyes bear a resemblance as close as that of the same individual of a pair of twins.

We have never seen the mediocrity of the average caucasian so painfully illustrated as recently when witnessing the enthusiastic delight of an English-speaking Chinaman to whom the compliment was returned when inquiring after the health of a "good citizen's" family. The ideal of the yellow man of the stationary race is an income and family. So little more can be said of the average caucasian that the Chinaman's ready recognition of their mental level was even more painful than surprising.

Those State Socialists who fondly look forward to the time when the efficiency of State control will be so far extended as to determine for them the amount of potatoes required for a year's consumption, that they need not raise too many, can get another pointer on such efficiency in the fact that the government has accepted a new cruiser so top-heavy that she must have fifty tons of cement placed in her bottom to keep her from turning bottom upward when answering her rudder in an ordinary sea.

The latest book published by Benj. R. Tucker is "The Anarchists," by John Henry Mackay, translated from the German by George Schumm. We have only sketched it hurriedly here and there, but feel safe in advising *all* our readers to order it as soon as possible. None are too conservative, none too radical to regret ordering and reading it. On another page will be found an extract from it. It contains 315 pages and sells at \$1.00 in cloth binding, and at 50 cents in paper cover. We will have it in stock by the time this reaches the reader.

Private enterprise in New York is introducing and popularizing a parcel delivery service for the State to confiscate, as it out' rivals the postal service in price, convenience, and speed. Parcels weighing from an ounce or less to fifteen pounds are delivered anywhere in the city within three hours for fifteen cents. Large steel boxes for receiving the parcels are located at convenient distances and are emptied every hour. Stamp stations are located near the boxes, and each stamp

has a numbered receipt to be detached by the depositor of the parcel, so that it may be traced if miscarried. This receipt also contains the company's contract to deliver the package.

The difference between the sentiments of a man in power and out is nicely illustrated in the case of Ex-Chief of Police Bonfield of Chicago. He loudly condemns the late invasion of the Socialists' meeting by the police at that place, and declares that a bitter experience with these people has taught him to respect human rights. That much is well. But who paid for his valuable lesson. It is only a reflex pang from public conscience, however, and not the result of consistent thought, for in the same breath that expresses his sentiment on human rights, he holds that the late outrage and the Haymarket affair are not parallel at all. If not, where did he fail to respect human rights.

Protective America raises a great howl when its own policy is carried to a consistent conclusion by the Chinese in their country. These people want home religion and home possession of wealth as badly as ours pretend to want home manufactures. They know too well that white people do not live in China for society or for their health, but in conquest for gold and religious prestige. And in the absence of the American opportunity to legislate against it, they are practically as justifiable in resorting to force before such legislation as we would be after it. To be sure the spirit is that of superstition and conscious weakness, but the same is true of all *governmental* interference with industry and commerce.

California has a brand new law which provides for the collection of taxes twice a year for the purpose of allowing the "poor" taxpayer the use of half his taxes for six months longer. It turns out that poor men cannot afford for six months' use of so small a sum to lose two days in which to pay taxes, so they pay it all the first time, while rich ones, whose taxes amount to a considerable sum, gladly avail themselves of the use of its half for a few months longer. This is a fair example of how law can help the poor, to whom it bears the same relation that feed does to a horse. The wise legislators perhaps failed to remember that the poor pay their taxes to their employers, landlords, and the capitalistic handlers of the products they consume.

One of EGOISM's and also "Liberty's" Oakland readers has lately succeeded in injecting a dose of anti-paternalistic ideas into one of the most orthodox universities in the country. In one of its routine debates Nationalism was to be discussed, and the negative came whipped-in-advance to our friend for some pointers on the "weak places," in the Nationalistic doctrine in order to make as good a showing as possible. He loaded the members up and hung so many rounds of ammunition in the receptive gray matter of their mental belts that they not only made resistance but carried away the honors by storm, completely routing the champions of paternalism. Thus the work goes slowly but steadily ahead. A solitary warrior here and there with the tactics of science and the irresistible shafts of logic picks off the enemy's strongest men, and breathing into them the breath of liberty adds recruit after recruit to an army that knows no commander, breach of discipline, or defeat.

The enthusiastic solicitude with which EGOISM's every suggestion is seconded by its readers was faithfully exemplified when we sent out a request for sample names, and a solitary subscriber responded. They are under no obligations to us and seem to know it, but the policy for themselves is a poor one. If they would escape the exaction of "Duty" by others and by the community in particular, these others and the community must be convinced of the inexpediency of "Duty" exaction. This is accomplishable only by getting such people to read and appreciate the soundness of the Egoistic idea. Sample copies or subscriptions distributed among the most apt is the only way to do it, and the sample method is far the cheaper, if not the more effective. To do nothing

may be immediate self-defense, but so would it be to eat seed wheat and corn. Ultimate self-projection in this matter, as in seeding, lies in foresight. Selfy motive and consciousness must necessarily go together, but as much cannot always be said of consciousness and sagacity.

The Philosophy of Egoism.

XIV

Duty is that which is due. I ought is I owe or I owed. Some duties I assume for duties assumed by others toward me, this is reciprocity. Some alleged duties the Moralist tells me that I ought to acknowledge and perform from a sense of Duty. If I then say that it is a superstition he perhaps severs himself for the moment from the superstitious crowd and claims that it is only a generalization, meaning fitness, saving tiresome repetition of analysis; it is my interest after all. He is somewhat disingenuous here, for if it be only my interest embodied in a thought-saving generalization, it will bear analysis and always come out as my interest. But he has the “social organism” in mind, to the preservation of which my individual welfare is to be subordinated, according to his idea. The “social organism” idea has captured him and he is using decoy argument to obtain from me a sacrifice of myself to his idol, his spiritual monster.

A man is hired to do certain work, and that is then called his duty; or exchange of services grows into a mutual understanding; the debt is first on one side and then on the other, and what at any time is expected, to balance the account or to turn the scale as usual and create another claim so as to continue the mutually advantageous arrangement or understanding, is also called one's duty. Where service is compulsory it is likewise called duty.

Moralism, when it has gained enlightenment enough to reject slavery to a person, under the subjection of mind overawed by physical force, denies that the slave's duty is Duty. But if the slave has yielded his mind to his master the phenomenon is clearly that of Duty. When the Egoist is conscripted he does not argue that his assigned duty is not Duty. It is servitude contrary to his interest, and this consideration is enough. The fact that some slaves are governed by a sense of Duty furnishes the plainest evidence that Duty is mental slavery.

But the Moralist will claim for Duty that it is not always mental slavery. It is true that he can confuse the issue by using the word Duty to describe all those habitual actions in the doing of which no immediate benefit to self is thought of; but let us keep to the plain sense. Duty is what is due. The domination of a fixed idea begins when one admits something due and yet not due to any person or something due without benefit coming to one in return; and of course when a return benefit is calculated upon the idea is interest.

When interest is sublimated so as to lose sight of self it assumes the form of love in the absence of oppression. Evidently the presence of fear in the causative circumstances corrupts the sublimating process and results in the oppressive sense of Duty. It is possible for the Moralist, finding a series of admirable actions which are well-nigh perfect love or gratitude, to call these Duty, on an examination which will show that were the doer to study his conduct he could find in it the elements which would serve to construct a wise scheme of reciprocal duties. If the Moralist talks of Duty when the fact is spontaneity,—whether gratitude, love, overflowing pride and generosity advancing to aid all that is seen to make for our good, he talks at random. His system of thought has predicated that men need to be controlled by a sense of Duty. Let him stick

to that or leave it. We deny it. The doctrine of hell-fire was long upheld under the same idea that it was needed to control men. Moralistic Duty is the hardened dregs of fear. Generosity is the overflowing fullness of a successful, satisfied and hopeful individuality.

"I ought" is no stumbling block to the intelligent Egoist. Two persons are playing at draughts and a bystander says of one: "He ought to have captured the man to the left, not the one to the right." There is no sense of moral obligation conveyed in the remark. It is assumed that each player is trying to win, and the words "he ought" introduce a suggestion of what was wanting to produce the result. A pirate endeavoring to capture a merchantman and taking the wrong course would say: "I ought to have sailed on the other tack." To whom was the obligation? To himself. So men speak of their duty to themselves, meaning the attending to supplying what is lacking to their welfare.

These words *duty* and *ought* are not words to be rejected. They are in constant correct use in every day life, and it is not the use of the Moralist, but it can be observed that every humbug political harps on the "sacred duty" of the citizens to do this or that,—something that he and his party are interested in and that he cannot readily prove to be to the interest of the citizens addressed, or he would do so instead of trying to get them with him on an appeal to "sacred duty."

TAK KAK.

Mental Lassitude.

When a problem is presented to the mind, the presentation furnishes a sweeping estimate of the problem's extent and complexity, and it is either brushed aside as not worth the energy and time required to become acquainted with it, or its intricacies are unraveled by impressing upon the mind a consciousness of the separateness of its parts and their functions, and combining them into the effect witnessed as the phenomena in its wholeness. This is the analysis and summing up which constitutes the comprehension of a problem, and which enables us to understand everything so far as we can sense the parts and combine their effects. When we come to the incomprehensible, it is so either because we cannot discover all its parts, or having sensed them one at a time, cannot hold them all in memory long and appreciably enough to sum them up in their exact effect. One or the other of these, principally the latter, is what stands between men and a solution of the social questions which unsolved, make life to most people simply an eternal round of tantalizing drudgery. In these cases, wherein the parts and their functions are comparatively few, the difficulty is not due so much to finitude of the mentality as to a lassitude which refusing to grapple with the intricacies of these problems brushes them aside, or attempting it grows weary before the analysis is completed, and jumbles everything up into a vague generalization which disposes of the matter about as correctly as a mathematical problem could be solved by a vote.

For the average philistine to drink and vote with his friends and believe that if a privilege is created he has as good a chance to secure it as anybody, requires less mental exertion than it would for him to reason out that if the State interferes enough to create monopolies for a few at the expense of the many, it is consistent for it to interfere enough more to neutralize them in justice to these many. Likewise, for the State Socialist, this latter primer reasoning of digging a ditch with one hand and filling it up with the other to escape the danger of ditches, is infinitely easier than the nerve-sapping mental tension required to get right down and separate the factors of industry and exchange, and ascertain their effect one upon another and find why the present result is what it is, and how to remove it permanently by removing the cause, instead of wasting labor at lopping off effects so continually that it absorbs what the monopolies would without leaving the ornamentation of their enterprises. This mental lassitude is the trouble also with the Moralist; he will not take the pains to analyze conduct to its final elements, and learn that sacrifice to another, which he preaches, is the only violation of the justice of which he vaguely dreams; it is easier to demand of competence than to make even with incompetence, and of genius than to be battered to a level with mediocrity. Equality—evenness—is a far simpler concept than desert, equity.

I fear the industrial and the exaction temperature will have to grow vastly more frigid before mental oxygen enough to solve it will be generated.

H.

I Review the Reviewer.

Elsewhere we reprint a review by Comrade Lloyd of "News from Nowhere." Now I have not read "News from Nowhere," and perhaps not too much news from somewhere, but in the light of Comrade Lloyd's criticism and in that of my criticism of Communism I shall not take the trouble to learn more about the book. Comrade Lloyd's communism is simply no communism at all. It is like indorsing slavery which when defined means the greatest describable freedom. I can see but one function for a defense of Communism so defined, and that is to give the sophistical Collectivist an opportunity to bolster real Communism before the novice, with Individualistic prestige by exclaiming: behold! the Individualist's ultimate ideal is Communism, why not go to it at the start and perfect its details as they arise. And why not, indeed. Comrade Lloyd's *definition* not being useful in such a case will of course not be mentioned, and an endless jumble of confusion must be cleared from the popular mind before it can understand what the Collectivist would have illustrated by contrast, but for the weapon placed in his hand by a will-o'-the-wisp interpretation of the Individualistic position.

I can understand how, surrounded by the shortsighted greed of this stage of evolution, and pinched at every turn by the exactions of privilege, such a good-hearted, sociable disposition as Comrade Lloyd's would enthusiastically contemplate the social commerce of giving and receiving and helping, but I do not agree with him in holding that under freedom there will be more of it than now or than in the past. Under economic freedom in which each could be fairly supplied by his own efforts, the necessity and principal incentive for giving and receiving would be removed, and if I do not seriously misapprehend the trend of individualization, the act would be heavily against the grain both as a matter of sentiment and of utility. The pride of the Ego will not care to emphasize its incapacity to provide for itself by accepting such gift, and it follows that proffering would be restrained by the same suggestion. If compensation in value of different kind be argued, that is simply exchange, and there is no reason to believe that men's capacity to produce will ever so nearly equal their ever intensifying wants that they will exchange more loosely than exact. In association with those whose interests are as nearly as possible identical with my own I find myself continually hampered, repressed, or invading by the inextricable tangle of a communistic partnership in which each is even eager for exact equity. The difficulties of this experience show more and more every day that the strictest individualistic separateness in social commerce is the nearest satisfactory solution. Under present circumstances I am obliged to work without measuring in the market and to consume without measuring against the work, and the result is grinding slavery all around.

You may set me down as opposed to Communism first, last, in general and in each particular case in which I must encounter it. Give me charity, debt, or commerce, but the loose-jointedness of Communism never. Comrade Lloyd's provision that people may separate interests at will and without reproach, is praiseworthy and correct, but if I am free, for me it will be useless, for I will not mix, once I am above charity and out of debt. I do not understand what my comrade means by the sentence: "Individualism and Communism must co-exist that each may perfectly realize the

other,” unless it be my communistic experience, which co-existing with an individualistic sense of adapting means to pleasurable ends, is so thoroughly realized as to so disgust that sense that my criticism, made with the kindest intention, may seem harsh.

I cannot agree either to the proposition that two men could by a rational process be friends *because* they love the same woman. If from compatibility of tastes they are, or become friends there is no good reason for not remaining such so far as the woman is concerned. But to become friendly because they both want the same thing is too unlikely for realization except in that prostration to an idea which is capable of worshiping the very ground the object of its devotion walks upon; that is, both fellows would have to carry their ideality to such an irrational pitch as to love among her other environment even each other because each were at times such environment. This would be such palpable slavery to an idea, and as such, such an ill adaptation of means to the longest and greatest pleasure, that EGOISM could not consistently leave it unantagonized. We maintain that to regard love in any other sense than that in which the exercise of other faculties and appetites are regarded as means of pleasure, is to appropriate in spirit the irrational inconveniences and sacrifice of the possession idea. If we should love those who please us best, with a lower-case “I,” just as we eat, warm, sleep, and do other pleasant and profitable things, without allowing one to destroy the other by occupying its time in longing contemplation of an ideal-ghost, we would find our happiness increased in the proportion that such longing, deprivation of special loves, endless exaction, and magnetic stagnation now detract from the total of a lifetime. These occupy so much of life that the amount of pleasure which escapes the deadfall of love’s ideality-ghost makes its pursuit humorously absurd. But the *superstition* of the love faculty will probably be the very last to be dropped from the long list for the benefit of which bipeds seem to exist.

H.

News From Nowhere.

“No news is good news,” the old saw saith, and here is “News from Nowhere” which is verily good.

An English comrade, of whom William Morris wots, falls asleep, with his head full of the “Morrow of the Revolution,” in his own house “on the banks of the Thames, a little way above an ugly suspension bridge}:

Waking, or imagining that he awakes, after a time, he finds himself on the same spot, in some year of that very Morrow of which he fell asleep dreaming, and thereupon has surprising adventures.

It is a delightful book, done in that most delightful English of which Mr. Morris is master. In fact it is the most charming Utopian romance of modern times. “Looking Backward” is as stiff by comparison, as Fifth Avenue is stiff and stupid by comparison with a country daisy field. It is an artist’s book, written by an artist who fondly dreams that some day the world will be a pictured holiday, with nothing in it to offend the dainty sense. That is well. It is well I think, that the thoughts of artists should be turned—that the thoughts of all men, each in his own way, should be turned to an ideal future. Self-development and an Ideal Future—these are really the only objects worthy of human thought. Each man must be turned in his own way, for this is a matter of growth, and that which grows starts only from where its last development ends. Therefore I am welcome for all Utopias. I am glad, despite the hard things some of my comrades have aptly said of it, that “Looking Backward” was written. I am still more glad that “News from Nowhere” has followed it. For this novel of Nowhere is a free book. The author is a true lover of Liberty. Therefore, although he is a Communist, his communism has the least possible offense.

But it is impossible to take much in this book very seriously. It is hardly to be supposed that life two hundred years from now, will be like a lazy Sunday afternoon, full of statuesque men and women, arrayed artistically in silks and gems, who have thrown away machinery, and still find it difficult to find enough to do for love (there is no money), to keep from work-starvation. There is an element of absurdity about this, which reveals the authorship of the esthete.

Now mine is a free mind of a somewhat different type from Mr. Morris’s. I am an Individualistic Anarchist, consequently I am impelled to criticise his dream. Not that I reject communism. Spontaneous communism, based on intelligent egoism is all right, and I believe that in Free Society there will be much of it; less than Morris imagines, but much more than most people now suppose possible.

But spontaneous, intelligent communism springs only from mutual love and absolute trust.

Will these be so universal in two centuries that communism will also be universal? No, nor in twenty centuries. Before this can be possible, human nature must have reached a degree of development, to us well-nigh as inconceivable as two co-existing infinities. It is a hard saying, but in life as we see it, that only is perfect which is perfectly limited by its equal opposite. Individualism and Communism must co-exist that each may perfectly realize the other.

It is a mistake that Mr. Morris in his ideal England describes no classes or clans of anti-communists. I understand that his communism is voluntary, but there will always be rebels against an order of society which gives shirks and incompetents an opportunity to possess as much, or more, than the competents. If I choose to share equally with a poor devil that is my pleasure, but if I am required to, against my will, that is a “heckle in my doup,” and I cannot rest easily upon it. A man in order to realize his full dignity and liberty, must be able at any moment to separate himself, and everything belonging to him, from his fellows, and withdraw into a purely individual existence, without struggle or reproach. In order to do this, no matter how much co-operation there may be, the lines of separation between mine and thine, the natural lines of cleavage, must be kept distinct. This is not what Mr. Morris proposes, for his communism is one that abolishes all *meum et tuum* [mine and thine] and merges all men in one. Therefore, however free and spontaneous and beautiful it may appear as he presents it, I pronounce it defective, and surely productive of imperfect, enervated, dissatisfied lives.

In this land, which (perhaps fortunately) is nowhere, every one works for love, and yet we are given to understand that everything is done excellently and at the right time and place. That is utopian certainly. That the ordinary work of life might go on after a fashion among irresponsible workers is possible, but when it comes to business requiring exactitude and dispatch: telegraphing, carrying the mails, even the getting of meals, there must be responsibility and a pressure, not merely attraction, or there will be poor service. And a very poor sort of mental muscle and backbone is produced by always doing what we want to do, what is easy for us, what attracts us. And under a system that permits us to gratify all our whims at other people’s expense, and do what we please, much or nothing, in return, there is a most enervating absence of the natural pressures which make the ordinary man industrious and self-sufficient, mentally and physically independent; and a suspicion arises that some of these bejewelled folk might, some fine day, be obliged to gird their gay doublets around empty bellies.

As an artist, Mr. Morris hates machinery; a hate with which, artistically, I have much sympathy. But his representation that his Nowhereians did everything they could by hand and delighted in primitive methods, and yet were worried about a “work-famine” is funny. When Mr. Morris undertakes to supply all his daily needs by hand-labor, be his own gardener, farmer, caterer, cook, waiter, dishwasher, housekeeper, tailor, launderer, cobbler, hatter, etc., etc., or to pay his fellows in labor for fulfilling these functions for him, his keen anxiety about a “work-famine” will lose its edge. This is a fair test, for the man who is not a parasite produces himself, directly or indirectly, everything he uses. There is no independence short of this.

That there is an artistic beauty, excellence and charm about handiwork that no machine product, because of its absence of human interest, can possess, I admit, and that men will come to lead, more and more, artistic lives in the Free Future I believe, but in order to get leisure for artistic handiwork men must more and more relegate all the commonplace work of life to automatic machinery. There is no other way. The more nearly man is reduced to his bare hands the more he becomes a mere animal, using all his time and powers in the struggle for simple existence.

Mr. Morris impresses me as a man who is near to Liberty but has not yet quite attained her. His mind is not quite clear. The woman question is always a good test, and by that test he fails. His Annies and Claras and Ellens and Goldylocks are all beautiful women, artistically, with manners delightfully free and sweet, but Ellen is the only one among them all worthy of being an ideal heroine in a story of the Free Future. And the reason is plain. She is the most individualized,

and has led the most individualized existence. Ellen is exquisite, and .wherever I meet her, in Somewhere or Nowhere, I shall love her.

Mr. Morris seems to have no conception of the fact that liberty eliminates jealousy. He seems never to dream that free love can be large enough to enclose more than one object. When Clara, who seems a somewhat stupid creature, tho' pretty, finds that she loves a second man, she knows no better way than to choose between him and the first, and so poor Dick is left to mourn until she comes back, leaving the second presumably in the same fix. What in Nowhere is the sense of all this! Why couldn't she love Dick and t'other fellow at the same time. And why couldn't Dick and t'other, provided he was a decent, worthy fellow, have been drawn into friendship by their mutual love for the same woman. Nothing but a stupid, selfish, monopolistic narrowness, improbable of occurrence in a Free Future, except as a case of atavism, could prevent such a reasonable state of affairs, yet Morris seems never to have even dreamt of it. And when Ellen overtakes them on the Thames, and her rudder needs adjustment, and Dick helps her, and the "two beautiful young faces bent over the rudder" seem to be "very close together," the guest gets a pang, and Clara. (she has been showing symptoms of jealousy all along) has a stiffness in her tones when next she speaks. Ye Dreams of Liberty !can't two beautiful faces get together in the Free Future without kissing, or with it for that matter, without the onlookers being diseased with pangs and stiffness? I hope for better things.

J. WM. LLOYD.

The Solution.

And as Auban crossed street after street, and came nearer and nearer to his dwelling, he had already overcome the agitation of the last hours, and once more the wings of his thoughts circled restlessly around the longed-for light of liberty.

What was still resting in the womb of time as a germ but just fructified—how would it develop, and what shape would it take?

Of one thing he was certain.

Without pain it was to take place, this birth of a new world, if it was to live.

The social question was an economic question.

So, and in no other way, it could be solved:

With the decline of State authority the individual becomes more and more self-reliant. Escaping from the leading-strings of paternalism, he acquires the independence of his own wishes and deeds. Claiming the right of self-determination without restriction, he aims first at making null and void all past privileges. Nothing was to be left of them but an enormous heap of mouldering paper. Land left vacant and no longer recognized as the property of those who do not live on it, is used by subsequent occupants. Hitherto uncultivated, it now bears fruit and grain and nourishes abundantly a free people. Capital, incapable of any longer fattening on the sweat of others' labor, is compelled to consume itself: although it still supports the father and the son without obliging them to turn a hand, the grandson is already confronted with the alternative of starving or disgracing the "glory of his fathers" by working. For the disappearance of all privileges entails on the individual the duty of responsibility. Will it be a heavier burden for him than the thousand duties towards others with which hitherto the State saddled its citizens, the Church its members, morality the righteous?

There was but one solution for the social question, but one: no longer to keep one's self in mutual dependence, to open for one's self and thereby for others the way to independence; no longer to make the ridiculous claim of the strong, "Become weak!" no, to exhort the weak at last, "Become strong!" no longer to trust in the help "from above," but at last to rely on one's own exertions.

The nineteenth century has deposed "our Father in Heaven." It no longer believes in a divine power to which it is subject.

But only the children of the twentieth century would be the real atheists: doubters of divine omnipotence, they had to begin to test the justification of all human authority by the relentless criticism of their reason.—From "The Anarchists."

Managerial Experience.

I am now realizing from my invention. I realize that the fond hopes preceding and cotemporaneous with its completion were diluted breeze. And I have finally reached plan-a-teary foundation; that is, I have *found* my plans *tearing*—rent and for rent, as I cannot now occupy them myself. I learn that my elevated railroad was patented when I was still an unsuspecting youth, though little more tender than now.

I had hoped that the revenue derived from renting its shape to a corporation would enable me to become president of our publishing company, and to extend radicalism in the face of popular prejudice and the absence of money orders by mail, but like splitting sandstone, it *rent*; in an undesired direction. People won't buy the paper, no,—you couldn't blindfold and back them up to it; so I chuckled up my threadbare and shiny sleeve as I imagined sinister-eyed and cast-iron-countenanced authoritarians obliged to put up fares part of which would support a paper whose publishers they would like to fly at a rope's end from a beam. It appeared to me such a sleek way to make a clam-brained populace pay for its own education that it was with great reluctance and a dangleingly enervated purse that I gave it up. I could see an accommodating expressman and his dulcimer-ribbed horse hauling away from an office of ours in San Francisco three large mail bags full of papers, instead of stumbling to the ferry train in Oakland with one half full on *my* shoulders, as is true of real life. I also pictured my habitually good-natured and *then* grateful wife and her little niece dashing along the brain-child of their distinguished relative at the rate of 120 miles an hour as they proudly rode from a suburban home to the office to distinguish themselves in literature and orthodox eyes. My own person wore a confident and bold bearing over a “steal”-gray suit and white flannel shirt with a cream-colored tie. I was a much-consulted and bored man, instead of the lean, fade-attired, diffident frame that now stands in undesirable corners of the lower ferry deck as I go to and from our postoffice box with only Alliance exchanges in my coat pockets on the return trip. Our subscribers from the East during a visit to the Coast were entertained baggage and all at our commodious home, instead of at the waiting room of a depot after working hours, as we now do. We were also able to keep a cat, and a dog to bark at it and wear a city tag. But all this except a half starved stray kitten of the feminine number has vanished, and as I View this, the prospect looks bleak, though the possibilities of the kitten are multipliferously great.

Comrade Forrest was right; I have fooled away my time on the railroad, not properly “adapting means to ends,” as Herbert Spencer would cutely put it. And now as a physical result, I must carry by their ends several gray hairs to an ungrateful grave, unless I should grow absolutely bald before starving to death. My wife no longer looks upon me with awe and expectation, and her lower-case niece responds to my requests with the reluctance accorded to guardians or parents who are such by circumstance, rather than with the alacrity conspicuous in doing homage to a great genius. Of evenings I now sit in a remote corner with intensely crossed legs and pensively write sample wrappers to institution worshiping Freethinkers, as I reflect with bitterness

upon the curse of patent monopoly. I am also whiningly fraternal and say we will extend the propaganda.

During this experimental period my wife and I were walloped in brushed clothes and the pleasure of meeting one of our subscribers, J. C. Dana, the librarian at Denver. He was on a jaunt with the American Librarian Association and his wife's permission, and was incidentally taking in the government read shops with specific attention to the notorieties of California climate and sights. He was traveling as my fellow Hoosier, President Harrison, traveled when here, at State expense. I admit that I reflected far less bitterly upon that fact in this case than in Mr. Harrison's.

Mr. Dana obtained our address and a half hour near the middle of the night during which we might hold a mutual expose at one of the railroad depots and on the ferry. My wife is a boodleless politician and was at a session of the Federated Trades, but I got her scared out and she came around in time and sat gravely upon a bench with her feet upon the floor. Soon a line of carriages containing the librarians was driven up, and as these people are really accommodating outside of the library, I found my man at once. He admitted the identity and the introductory ceremony was completed. Mr. Dana proved to be one of those rare unaffected nature's noblemen, and instantly the limited time was being finely masticated by three pairs of jaws in regular comradeship style. His first question inquired our personal purpose in publishing EGOISM. It was a leading point that led, and we admitted that at bottom it is the gratification of a vanity so strong that our discontent is unbearable without the indulgence. He then inquired the number of persons composing our publishing company. I assured him that the whole corporation was present, and that really for a long time I have been forced to be only a tin horn for which the other member furnishes the pressure. Now we all interrogated and disgorged our know things as fast as the building would bear the tonnage. Soon Miss Kelso, librarian at Los Angeles, who also keeps EGOISM on her tables, was found and made a part of the company. We then made better time than before, and when we went to the train just walked over the other passengers, so intent were we upon oscillating our chins against the last moments of time. My wife had to go home and let her head sleep, but I accompanied Mr. Dana across the hay. On the train he sat on a handrail to smoke, and allowed his cigar to burn up while he talked. It seems strange that a generator otherwise so perfect should smoke, but many of the best make do. He ought to be taken back to the founders and fixed, that's the way our folks always remedied stoves thus affected. As the train lunkety-gunked along I stood by Mr. Dana's side and allowed the restless passengers to stroll over my corns while I asked everything I could think of concerning the Denver friends. At the landing I parted with this man as one does on a March day with a warm glow of sunshine; delighted to have it at all, though the more excruciatingly pierced by the chilling blast at having to give it up. For a moment the earnest eyes of a sympathetic temperament sparkled in the electric light as searching nerves responded to the pressure of my hand, and I turned me about and stepped into the old waiting-room of whitewashed boards and felt as one who turns from the bed of death; think as I might, a memory of the companion of a moment before was all I could realize.

Since the moment my wife was slipshod enough to cast her lot with mine, for which I have not paid, I have realized that she is a very careless woman. But she is growing worse as time turns the furrows lengthways of her nose. She has got so she loses her clothes when away from the house. Last summer she lost her only and very best hat in a restaurant, and this fall walked away from her twelve-dollar jacket lying on a car seat. For a Moralist to cut the acquaintance of anything that will lie even on a car seat would be characteristic, but a “brutal” Egoist can plead no excuse besides a misfit carelessness. In the unfascinating face of these facts and the fair countenance of the graven image on the requisite coin, we had to buy others and I had to go along—actually go right *into* millinery stores!!

We went to San Francisco. It was an iron-gray morning and I felt sure there would be a wet spattering rain, so I loaded up a heavy overcoat for myself, a time-honored and sad-featured cloak for my wife, and an umbrella to drain on her shoulders during, and after a shower. By the time we reached the city the weather was clear and the sun poured down a mirrored shine for less than a nickel. Here I was with my second-hand dry goods emporium in hand, the heat and a gaping crowd around, and the horrors of a millinery shop in front. Oh, how I envied the fate of some other dogs who were in the poundman’s ambulance. They, without tag, could enjoy death at a blow. I, must tag and be *tortured* through every store in a large city, and,—live on.

My wife is one of those women who know just what kind of a hat they want and that it is not in the city, but will search and be sure. I pumped down my aeronautic heart and tucked my nerves between my teeth and with expectant look and long strides followed my wife into one of those dens of feminine hats and high prices. There were crowds of waxen-faced girl clerks and twelve-year-old boys who stare customers out of countenance, but nothing was there, and I rushed for the fresh air. Kearny street is not long but has an astounding array of millinery establishments, as I found, for none were missed save in the feminine sense and very plural number. Finally we dropped into a masculine store, and feeling easier, I prepared to stay. The hat wanted was a feather-weight soft felt, sharply in contrast with the feeling and *wait* I had experienced in the search. I knew we had to stop somewhere, and as there was a large assortment I believed my wife could be so bewildered as to choose a hat because it pleased her better than one which pleased her less. The hatter was of the Hebrew race—a race which, though long contested has never been won, and one which seeks shining gold and the bosom of the voluptuous female instead of the ghastly sternum of Abraham, as some now well-padded women propose to do when the warm flesh has fallen from their bones. Surely there will an uproarious rattling of dry anatomy. I do not envy the old man his amours. But I die-gress. My wife described the quality and shape of the article wanted, and the quality was at once secured, but wasn’t the right shape and wouldn’t do of course. She tried others and still others until we were arbored about with boxes, but no hat suited. I suggested trying on the first one again. She did so and explained where it was wrongly shaped. A thought struck my Israelitish savior—why, the hat could be stretched into any shape; that is what it was made for. He moulded it out like dough and clapped it on her head, dinting the crown and pinching up the edges as a woman does an upper pie crust before it is dried in the oven. Then he backed away and bracing his hands upon his knees took aim and surveyed my wife’s head with one eye and an expression of such ecstatic admiration that I trembled lest he should awaken to a realization of the popular offense, and not knowing my liberal ideas on love and divorce, shoot me in self-defense. But he was only acting, and my wife is so little exposed to theaters that she thought it regular griping admiration, and began to admire the hat a little herself. I saw it was now only a matter of getting her used to it, and I gave my proboscical benefactor the

wink and he concealed himself behind the hat-boxes until I convinced her that it looked better than anything she had ever worn, which could easily be true without being becoming. The fact is, she is put up for a nabob's companion, and I am "as," such Bob.

Now there were the cloak stores to storm. Though, with my big armful of back-number wraps, overshoes, and umbrella we were ridiculously well prepared for a storm, I still dreaded it. But the great plate tumbler windows of the enemy's fortress were before me, the order was given, and like afresh soldier I knew no better than to press forward. Numerous clerks stood behind the counters but not one of them moved a muscle, and I believed that we had wandered into a museum. My wife, however, seemed to know better than I, and ambled nonchalantly down the aisle as though she expected to meet somebody, which so occurred. A man with a public smile and arose bud ushered us back to a cook shanty alcove, where a woman with two chins on the same jaw plied them vigorously trying to sell my wife cloaks she didn't want. This woman also looked a suggestion to the other clerks that we were from the mountains, which caused such a stampede of gaze that I felt uncomfortable, and we soon filed out amid smilular applause and rows of squeeze-provoking model girls with faces painted in water colors and framed in old oak hair. The faces of the saleswomen are not all painted in water colors, but the tongues of all are done in oil.

I had such a fill from this first store that I posed on the sidewalk pending the analysis of the nineteen following, but at the twentieth I consented to go in and wait near the door while my wife psychometrized the stock and elicited my idea on the result. This experiment also proved an acute one, for in addition to exposure to the stare of monotony-worn clerks, every floor pedestrian in the building solicitously inquired whether I was waited on. I glanced at my bundle and replied that I was weighted on and waiting, but these men scorn other people's wit. Finally my wife came, followed by a low-pressure condensing clerk with nine cloaks which I was to diagnose for a suitable one. When they were piled upon the old stock on arm, I peered cautiously from behind the pile at my wife as she spun around before a mirror with each aboard. Some were too diminutive across the shoulders, drouth had stunted the length of the sleeves of others, and those with proper sleeves were too commodious in the girth. I chose one from among the latter, however, remarking that though it was now ample in the belt, under, or rather *over* certain contingencies it would be fully inhabited. But the clerk assured me that we need not depend on such intermittent fits, that they had a fitter who could take it up to fit now, and leave the seams so it could be let out as occasion might require. This plan to make the cloak strike her person, struck my legal companion favorably, but she ordered definitely that the fitter cut away the surplus cloth, as there would be no requiring occasion so long as she owned the garment. Wearied and worn from waiting and from shocks to my sensibilities, I was willing to make even such terms for cash deliverance, and arranging to call for the overwear the next day, I was finally soaked up by our garret where I lay in a comatose and California state for sixteen hours and for my own convenience as well. The next evening, being able to be about again, I sullenly slunk in to get the condensed wear, and had the satisfaction of seeing another poor wretch tolled into the store by a couple of women and made to feel like a husband's nineteen-year-old brother at his sister-in-law's first borning bee, too big to send away to stay over night with a neighbor, and not small enough to be pleasantly invisible where he was. He tried to press through between the rounds of the chair-back, ducked his head down to avoid striking the twenty-foot ceiling, attempted to tuck his feet under his chair, then settled down to roast, just as I had the day before, and a rumbling noise was heard. It was a cable car, and I followed it to the ferry.

Carefully yours,

THE MANAGER.

Straws in the Breeze.

A. R. Ayres.—I do not need to join your “Brotherhood of Moralists” in order to be as moral as I want to be. The meagrest opportunities are quite sufficient for me.—Ambrose Bierce.

Pennoyer, Governor of Oregon, is sorry he spoke. The modern politician’s name is Crookback. There is not one of them that dares stand up and be a man.—Oakland Evening Tribune.

“The wise person welcomes every thinker,” says “Brick” Pomeroy. The wise persons are few in number then, for the world at large never has any use for a thinker until a century or two after his death. Thinkers are dissenters and disturbers; what the world wants is conformers.—Phelps County (Iowa) Herald.

Admitting that James Russell Lowell was a “good citizen,” the Post-Intelligencer says: “Too radical in his youth, he was conservative in his later days.” True, and it was in his youth, when he was radical, that he earned the reputation which made his later days prosperous. Conservatism is not necessarily a sign of greatness. The clam is conservative.—Snohomish Eye.

We find a good deal of indignation lying around loose in the country press over the treatment of young Ray Gilson on the faith cure plan, but we venture to suggest that it is nobody’s business but his own and his parents’. As we understand it the boy is old enough to form an opinion of his own, and in fine the only thing to do is to let him please himself about it. To insist that a person shall choose this or that variety of doctor is out of the question.—Oakland Evening Tribune.

Whitman is pre-eminently a product of the New World—steeped in Americanism to the core. Let the World’s Fair managers order the ode from him, and let them pay him handsomely for it, so that he may end his life feeling that his work has gained a little appreciation. The payment should not be regulated on a cold business basis of space rates, but should reach the proportions of a testimonial fund, sufficient to make the old poet comfortable for his few remaining days—San Francisco Examiner.

A Cheap Ranch.

One of EGOISM's subscribers offers at the reasonable figure of \$1500 the raw cloth for a good California home for a farmer or fruit grower or both. It consists of 80 acres of valley and hill lands; the hills are more or less wooded with fine live and white oak enough for 2000 cords of wood. The other land lies in level plateaus ranging one above another; the lower one being about 10 feet above the level of Carmel river a creek running beside it, and the others 20 and 30 feet above. The soil is an excellent one, being a dark loam (not "dobe"), and considerable of the tract is ready for the plow, in five, ten, and fifteen acre lots. It is well watered, and in as good climate and fruit growing belt as the state affords. At present its nearest market is 16 miles away, which is its only objectionable feature, however, it lies on a constantly-traveled road. The party now holding it bought 160 acres and finds he has more than he can handle alone, hence this low price. For further particulars address EGOISM, Box 1678, San Francisco, California.

EGOISM'S PRINCIPLES AND PURPOSE.

EGOISM's purpose is the improvement of social existence through intelligent self-interest. It finds that whatever we have of equal conditions and mutual advantage is due to a prevalence of this principle corresponding with the degree and universality of individual resistance to encroachment.

Reflection will satisfy all who are desirous of being guided in their conclusions by fact, that as organization itself is a process of absorbing every material useful to its purpose, with no limit save that of outside resistance, so must the very fact of its being a separately organized entity make it impossible for it to act with ultimate reference to anything but itself. Observation will show that this holds good throughout the vegetable and animal kingdoms, and that whatever of equality exists among members of a species or between different species has its source and degree in the resisting capacity, of whatever kind, which such member or species can exert against the encroachment of other members or species. The human animal is no exception to this rule. True, its greater complexity has developed the expedient of sometimes performing acts with beneficial results to others, but this is at last analysis only resistance, because it is the only means of resisting the withholding by others from such actor's welfare that which is more desirable than that with which he parts. If, then, (the self-projecting faculty of mankind is such that it will in addition to the direct resistance common to the less complex animals, diplomatically exercise present sacrifice to further extend self, and it being a fact that equality depends upon equal resistance, diplomatic or otherwise, what are its chances in an absence of enlightenment in which the individuals of the majority so far from *intelligently* using this resisting power in their own behalf, do not even believe that they should do so? The result of a general conception so chaotic, would naturally be what we find: the generalization from the practical expediency of certain consideration for others, crystallized through the impulse of blind selfishness into a mysterious and oppressive obligation, credit for the observance of which gratifies the self-projecting faculty of the simple, while the more shrewd evade its exactions, and at every step from the manipulation of the general delusions of religious and political authority to the association of sexes and children at play, project themselves by exchanging this mythical credit for the real comforts and luxuries of the occasion, which the others produce. Thus in addition to the natural disadvantage of unequal capacity, the weaker are deprived through a superstition, of the use of such capacity as they have, as may be seen in their groping blindness all about us.

To secure and maintain equal conditions then, requires a rational understanding of the real object of life as indicated by the facts of its expression. It is plain that the world of humanity is made up of individuals absolutely separate; that life is to this humanity nothing save as it is something to one of these; that one of these can be not-hing to another except as he detracts from or adds to his happiness; that on this is based the idea of social expediency; that the resistance of each of these individuals would determine what is socially expedient; that approximately equal resistance makes it equality, and on such continued and a universal resistance depends equality. This can leave no room for any sane action toward others but that of the policy promoting most

the happiness of the acting Ego. Therefore EGOISM insists that the attainment of equal freedom depends upon a course of conduct-replacing the idea of “duty to others” with *expediency* toward others; upon a recognition of the fact that self-pleasure must be the final motive of any act; thus developing a principle for a basis of action about which there can be no misunderstanding, and which will place every person squarely on the merit of his or her probable interests, divested of the opportunity to deceive through pretension, as under the dominance of altruistic idealism. It will maintain that what is generally recognized as morality is nothing other than the expediency deduced from conflicting interests under competition; that it is a policy which, through the hereditary influence of ancestral experience, confirmed by personal experience, is found to pay better than any other known policy; that the belief that it is something other than a policy—a fixed and eternal obligation, outside of and superior to man’s recognized interests, and may not be changed as utility indicates, makes it a superstition in effect like any other superstition which causes its adherent-s to crystallize the expediency adopted by one period into positive regulations for another in which it has no utility, but becomes tyrannical laws and customs in the name of which persecution is justified, as in the fanaticism of any fixed idea.

Another part of its purpose is to help dispel the “Political Authority” superstition and develop a public sentiment which would replace State interference with the protection for person and property which the competition of protecting associations would afford. Then the State’s fanatical tyranny and industry crushing privilege would torture the nerves of poverty-stricken old age or pinch tender youth no more. The most disastrous interference of this monster superstition is its prohibition of the issuing of exchange medium on the ample security of all kinds of property, which at once would abolish speculative interest and practically set all idle hands at productive labor at wages ever nearing the whole product until it should be reached. The next interference is by paper titles to vacant land instead of the just and reasonable one of occupancy and use, which with the employment that free money would give, would furnish all with comfortable homes in a short time, and thereafter even with luxuries from like exertion. Following this is its patent privilege, customs robbery, protective tariff, barbarous decrees in social and sexual affairs; its brutal policy of revenge, instead of restitution, in criminal offenses, and finally its supreme power to violate the individual, and its total irresponsibility.

The Anarchist Library
Anti-Copyright



Georgia & Henry Reppole
Egoism Vol. II. No. 7.
November, 1891

Retrieved 02/19/2023 from catalog.hathitrust.org

theanarchistlibrary.org