

THE LEGISLATION FETTER.

The Modern Idol-Worship that Imperils Individual Liberty.

LAWS WHICH OUTRAGE NATURE.

The Non-Interference Doctrine—Robbery By Law—The Moral Aspect—Burdens for the Weak—The "Inspection" Craze—The Right to Vote and Pay.

The prevailing and most dangerous heresy of modern society is legislative idolatry—the exaltation of the statute book over the laws of nature; the abdication of individual function for the too implicit trust in legislators' omniscience and legislative omnipotence. Probably never before in the history of the world have the executive functions of the State been so extended, or corporate interference with individual freedom of action been so frequently exercised and tolerated—nay, even solicited. Men affect a horror of the very name of "Socialism," yet busy themselves in multiplying paternal laws; they want their love of freedom, yet petition for its limitation; they revere the memory of those who shed their blood to secure for them liberty and a voice in the conduct of the affairs of the State, yet so incapable are they of perceiving the great law running through nature, they pay and work and vote to rivet upon themselves the shackles of a new slavery! Verily, shall a man not denude himself of his rights if he will? Surely; but if in so doing he deprives others of their rights, against their will, he wrongs his fellow-man. We hear much of "patriotism" in these days, but, unfortunately, the practical demonstrations of the noisy counterfeiter have been given in the dupes of ignorance and bigotry toiling in the harness while callous selfishness handled the lines and plied the whip.

The multitude does not reason closely. It inclines to seek short cuts to its goal. An apparent immediate good, although fraught with all the objections attaching to expediency as a policy, is often more alluring to it than the certain but more distant realization thereof by conforming to the great laws of nature. And it is to this domination of desire over judgment, this incapacity of the multitude to see that COMPENSATION MUST BE MADE FOR EVERY WRONG,

whatever the motive prompting it, that selfish men owe their power to sway it to their own profit. A promise of material benefit—what matter though it be obtained by moral wrong-doing?—a good catch-cry—what though it partake of the nature of the street corner prayer of the Pharisee?—and of how little avail is the Golden Rule or the "Thou shalt not steal" of the Great Lawgiver! Men who would bubble over with indignation were the slightest question raised as to their probity hesitate not to seek for privileges for themselves and their friends which of necessity carry with them the oppression of others. Every advantage to be gained by law to one man or class operates to the disadvantage of some other man or class. Nothing is added, nothing deducted from the total, but when one gets more another gets less. What is added on one scale is taken from the other. The aggrandizement of wealth and the pinch of poverty are contemporaneous; they bear to each other the relation of cause and effect. Yet wealthy men who clothe themselves in the mantle of Christianity and profess a belief in the Brotherhood of Humanity seem to see no inconsistency in utilizing the power wealth and position give them to secure the passage of laws whose tendency is to set nation against nation, class against class, man against man, in order that under cover of law they may profit by the unnatural industrial strife consequent thereupon. The desired law is passed; the selfish shrewd heap up riches; the selfish stupid wonder that they fasten not, but fail not in their reverence for the law. The law! What a word this has become to conjure with! And how the conjurers work it to their profit!

Law is holy; but not your law, who keep the tablets while While you dash the law to pie or eat it in life and soul. Bearing up the Ark is lightsome, golden Apis hid within. While we Levites share the offerings, richer by the people's sin.

And to some people it never seems to have occurred that there can be a conflict between Legislation and Right, that there are limits, already far overstepped, to the wisdom, justice or usefulness of statutory enactments. To others the credulity of the multitude opens an easy avenue to personal gain and preferment, of which moral obliquity enables them readily to take advantage. They have probably for the moment lost sight of the all-pervading law of compensation which sooner or later must be reckoned with; or, faintly like the present gratification blinds them to the wrong they do their fellows and the debt they are accumulating.

GET WEALTH, HONESTLY IF YOU CAN, but get it at whatever cost of sacrifice of principle, of friends, of future; at whatever abandonment of honor; at whatever demoralization of society; pay the price, but get wealth, seems to be the motto of too many men to day. And these men are not denizens of the back alleys and squallid dens of vice; they are leaders in church and society, prominent in business, eminent as philanthropists. And because of this standing or the disregard of principle is more to be deplored. The villain that lurks in dark places indicates a healthy goodness in the society from which it hides; the ignorance that is timid and inquiring is already half-enlightened. But when moral wrong becomes a political principle and finds a place of honor in our statute books; when the highest honors and emoluments fall to the advocates of laws which violate the first principles of liberty and deny the divine paternity, the thinkers of the nation may well anticipate the inevitable consequences.

For the laws of economics are as invariable as the laws of physics. Were they as well understood, the denial of individual liberty would be considered no less absurd than the denial of the fact of gravitation.

Yet people daily, by voice, by vote, by act, deny the former proposition. They do not, of course, say in so many words, "Liberty is an Evil," but they employ themselves lopping off branches and severing roots, until the tree once so freely watered with heroic blood promises to become a gnarled and stunted scrub incapable of sheltering us from the scorching sun of corporate tyranny. Emerson grasped the situation when he said:

The basis of political economy is non-interference. The only safe rule is found in the self-adjusting master of demand and supply. Do not legislate. Meddle and you mess; the citizens with equal laws; secure life and property, and you injure to talent and virtue, and they will do back hands. In a free and just commonwealth, property rushes from the idle and imbecile to the industrious, brave and persevering.

"A free and just commonwealth!" Are we striving to merit that designation? Are our laws "just"? Do we practice legal "non-interference"? Have we opened the natural opportunities to "talent and virtue"? Who would make such a claim? The very gifts of nature which no man could create are appropriated as individual "property," and those who by virtue of man-made laws exercise "rights of ownership" over the Earth assume that more recent arrivals on the scene have no right to a resting place upon it, save on condition of purchasing their permission. The stored-up heat of the coal beds and the mineral wealth of the world are "private property," and can only be used as "private property," and on paying the price asked by those who by virtue of legislation "own" those natural stores of human necessities. And far from feeling that for this undisputed possession of those deposits they owe some thing to society, these "owners" of creation's bounties use their prerogative to extort the last cent from those dependent upon those stores for heat; and when those who own not, but who must live and pay with their labor for permission to be upon the Earth, seek for wages that will enable them to be anything more than animals of burden and perpetrators of a race of earners for others, the lords of the heritage close their works, freeze the public and starve the workers into docility. These men are not slaves; oh, no! They are "free and independent." If they don't like the wages, there's no compulsion; they needn't take them; the streets are free to them—if they keep moving! They can cheer for political leaders, glorify the old flag, tramp in processions, vote and pay taxes. Why can't they be satisfied, when all that is asked of them is that

THEY SHALL PAY THEIR SURPLUS EARNINGS, over a bare subsistence, in support of those who possess the "privileges," who "give them employment," and who graciously permit them to stay upon their planet? Men own the earth, and charge their fellows for permission to live upon it and make it productive! It has a queer sound, hasn't it? Yet, turn over the proposition as you will, give it expression in whatever form of words you may, there remains the ugly fact. Is this a conformity to natural law or is it not?

The condition is long established! Of course it is; but Evil differs from Good in that age gives to it no reverence in the eyes of intelligence. With a good man to recognize evil is to abhor it, to seek means of escape from it. Evil has its stronghold in ignorance and selfishness. This condition is one that oppresses the masses; majorities rule, and once dispel the illusion, created by long reverence for laws which deny natural rights, and the wrong will soon be righted.

So with regard to freedom of sale and purchase. It is not enough that the Great Dishonored should pay for permission to live upon this planet; they must be made to pay the taxes of its owners. Every dollar of federal taxation by excise and customs comes out of the products of labor and is a deduction from the earnings of those least able to bear the burden of government. The owners of the Earth, as may be raised in this way an army of officers, selected generally from the ranks of political bunco steers, are supported at the public expense, paid fat salaries and comfortably pensioned off when age, indolence or infirmity requires the political exigency which requires the position as a reward for another heeler renders such retirement expedient. Nor is this the only or worst result of the indirect system of raising a revenue. It opens vast opportunities for official peculation and fraud, and Government extravagance. The duty on imports enables capitalists in certain lines to get higher prices for their product because of the restriction on the liberty of choice to which the consumer is subjected. The increase in price caused by the exclusion of foreign goods and internal combination does not go into the public coffers, but into the purse of the protected manufacturer; hence we have the spectacle of a legalized robbery of one class to enrich another class. And while the man who sells his labor is compelled to submit to the fiercest competition in a free labor market, this same law enables the favored ones to time and limited production—at once lessening the earners' period of employment and squeezing a higher price out of the consumer. Combines of labor! Oh, yes; they have sometimes held their own; oftener they have failed; but whether they succeeded or failed they always did so at great cost, for in the end labor pays it all.

What is the cause? Interferences with natural laws; middlemen legislation, prompted by cupidity and selfishness which regard not truth or Right, but prostitute all principle for gain; supported by the suffering and deluded as short cuts to a better condition, because they think they see good to be obtained by the expedient, forgetful of the eternal flat that will as surely send punishment as Consequence is indissolubly linked to Cause. And how crafty leaders

LAUGH AT THE GULLIBILITY of the docile donkeys who harness themselves to their carriages and about themselves hoarse in applause of the men and measures that take from them their dearest still lower their condition of servitude! Humbug is said to pay, but it doesn't often pay the humbugged; and when he gets able to see that he is humbugged the game is up. Ignorance is the mother of superstition, it is said; it is the

vital air of Legislative Fetish Worship.

And what of the plotters? You of the broadcloth and silk tite, up there in the best pew near the pulpit; are you able to secure the exposition of a comfortable gospel? Are your subscriptions to Church schemes and charities such a considerable proportion of the gains wrung from the soilers by unjust laws that unpleasant truths jar not on your delicately attuned ear? Does your beautiful veneer defy the eyes of the watchman on the walls of Zion, or does he cry aloud and spare not? Do the tariff-stolen shohls in your pockets jingle out a "Don't be personal" refrain when he reads "Thou shalt not steal"? Does it sound unbecomingly to hear him assure the people that "the robbery of the wicked shall destroy them"? Do you take comfort from the declared certainty that "though hand join in hand the wicked shall not go unpunished"? Has it ever occurred to you that the moral difference between a man untrue to principle for the privilege of plundering his fellows by law, and the laborer who sells his franchise for a few dollars or a glass of whiskey can only be one of degree? And if it has arrested your attention, what were the relative positions you assigned to each?

And in how many other ways are we "meddling," "interfering" with the annual pilgrimages to urge upon Parliament the passage of laws without number, most of which are in the nature of encroachments on the domain of personal liberty! Our reliance upon legislation is rapidly degenerating into a pure fetishism. We have legally constituted combines in law, medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, and probably others, and some guilds are hysterically complaining because their incorporation does not give them the power they wished to obtain.

EQUAL RIGHTS! The term has of late been so ridiculouly travestied that it has lost caste. But equal rights, in the course we are now pursuing, would eventuate in every trade, profession and calling becoming a protected body corporate. Imagine the "Royal College of Dishwashers," or the "Imperial Corporation of Scavengers," or the "Empire Guild of Noble Bootblack Artists," with all the "whereases," "nevertheless" and pains and penalties with which these legal interferences with personal liberty fortify the corporate combine!

Strange, too, that the men on whom the burden falls most heavy should be the loudest in their demands for further legislative interference. The "inspection" is mostly an industrial one, even when "engineered" by the place-seeking politician. We have had inspectors of one kind and another until the farce has become tiresome. What matter whether they know a canal from a race track, or a colonization company from a picnic! They get their commission, salaries and perquisites; the people pay. It makes votes; and here lies the secret of the readiness to accede to the cry for more officials. We must live by legislative rule, by the same rule, be deprived of our earnings by the same rule, be doctored, die and be buried by it. And every way we turn, at all hours, we need a Government inspector or other tax-eating emissary to see that liberty remains to us. It costs money, of course; but we are a patient, paying people. If we like it, why should we not have it, and foot the bill? Most of us share in these benefits? We may be shut out from enjoyment of the natural opportunities, kept on short time and low wages by a combine, have our pockets picked by the taxif thieves and our personal liberty restricted by statute laws; but we can't be denied the right to worship the Legislation Fetish, and enjoy government officers galore as long as we can earn enough to pay them.

But there is a cloud on the horizon. The schoolmaster is abroad in the land. The doctors say they find trouble in persuading their patients not to be drugged; a class of people are to-day actually berating the popular childlike trust in legislation. It remains to be seen how tenacious of existence is the Modern Idolatry.

MARQUETTE

Her Royal Sweetness. To be called Her Royal Highness is the destiny of every woman born to wear a crown, but it remains for one woman among all the royal families to have the endearing title of Her Royal Sweetness given to her and that honor belongs to Alexandra, Princess of Wales. She has that marvelous art of making goodness seem attractive; of making the right act the pleasant one and of impressing upon all who know her that the knowledge that she does good is to have a pleasant time, and not to do it is to miss some of the pleasure of life. Many princesses have been written about as having been beautiful, as having caused great wars, as having done great deeds of valor, of having made men die for them, and kingdoms quarrel over them, but this gracious lady, that the whole world bows down before in sweetness and goodness, that peace has been the watchword of her life; and not only does she value peace, but those loving sisters, Faith, Hope and Charity, abide with her.—Lady Elisabeth Hilary in Ladies' Home Journal.

Keep the City Clean.

Philadelphia Record: In discussing the street cleaning problem in the "Popular Science Monthly" General Emmons Clark insists, with great force and truth, that no system can succeed if there be not efficient co-operation on the part of the public. So long as householders and housekeepers shall sweep or throw their dust, dirt, ashes, garbage or refuse, or any part of such matter, into the streets, or allow anything to escape from their garbage receptacles upon the sidewalks or upon the streets, or so long as carts conveying dirt and refuse shall be allowed to drop any part of their contents on the streets, there will be continuing and irremediable uncleanness. Cleanliness, like godliness, must permeate all the parts of a city, and actuate all the inhabitants, before proper physical and moral sanitary conditions can prevail.

Whenever a man concludes that he has got enough religion it is a sure sign that he hasn't got any.

—Lawrence Barrett's life was insured for \$100,000, it is said. His estate is worth two hundred thousand more.

WOMAN'S PLAN FOR WOMEN.

Mrs. Frank Leslie Promises Her Fortune to Poor, Educated Women.

Mrs. Frank Leslie has decided to found an institution for women; not for paupers, but for women who earn their own living either by literature, art or by any similar profession.

"But not during my lifetime," said Mrs. Leslie. "I am going to meet my lawyers on Wednesday evening and instruct them to draw up a new will. In this I shall bequeath almost all of my property to found an institution to help women who are helping themselves.

"Educated and able-bodied women who cannot help themselves do not deserve to be helped. Paupers, children, lunatics, the aged and the sick are all cared for now. Men need no help. The very fact of being men gives them abundant opportunity to do in many ways. I do not think any one has ever held out a helping hand to them in the way I propose."

In reply to a query as to the nature of the institution she proposed to found, Mrs. Leslie stated that in many respects it would be a parallel of the Players' Club that Booth gave to his fellows.

A substantial building will be bought, or more probably, built. In this studies for women artists will be provided. Club rooms, library, baths, offices and so forth will be planned. A restaurant, at which meals will be furnished at cost price, as in men's clubs, will be a feature. Lecture rooms and courses of lectures will be permanently endowed.

"To show how women are handicapped," said Mrs. Leslie, "I will instance the case of a young friend of mine. She is about 22 years old and an artist of considerable ability. A new studio building was opened recently. My young friend rented a studio and spent a good deal of the other studios were rented to men. Now, an older woman and one who was not at all sensitive might have braved it out. But my young friend was sensitive her to remain living all alone in a building handicapped simply by being a woman, I don't know what the word handicap means."

Mrs. Leslie was asked what amount of money she proposed to devote to the purpose.

"That," she replied, "will have to depend upon how much longer I live. My properties are now valued at about \$600,000. Most of this will be left, so that if I should die this week, it would become the endowment fund for the women's club. But I hope to live many years longer.

"I hope to remain in business ten years more and enjoy life as I have been doing for the past few years. After that I shall retire and spend the rest of my life in enjoying the fruits of my years of hard work."

"Please tell the people," added Mrs. Leslie, "that I shall do nothing at all in the way I have indicated until after I have passed away. I want to enjoy my fortune while I live."—New York Morning Journal.

Ingersoll's Eulogy on Barrett.

Col. Robert G. Ingersoll lectured before the New York Press Club at the Broadway Theatre Sunday evening before an immense audience. His subject was William Shakespeare, and the New York papers declare that it was the greatest effort of his life. Before commencing the lecture proper he paid the following tribute to Lawrence Barrett as a prelude to his subject:

"My heart tells me that on the threshold of my address it will be appropriate for me to say a few words about the great actor who has just fallen into that sleep that we call death. Lawrence Barrett was my friend and I was his. He was an interpreter of Shakespeare, to whose creation he gave flesh and blood. He began at the foundation of his profession and rose until he stood next to his friend, next to one who is regarded as the greatest tragedian of our times next to Edwin Booth. The life of Lawrence Barrett was a success because he honored himself and added glory to the stage. He did not seek for gain by pandering to the thoughtless, ignorant and base serious form. He spurred the question, the vulgar and impure, and gave the intellectual, the pathetic, the manly and the tragic. He did not stoop to conquer. He had a thoughtful face, a vibrant voice, he had patience, industry, courage, and the genius of success. He was a graceful and striking Bassanio, a marvelous Hamlet, an intense Othello, of the century. In the drama of our human life all are actors, and no one knows his shifted by great forces, and the commencement, plot and end are still unknown, are unguessed. One by one the players leave the stage and others take their places. There is no pause. The play goes on. The prompter's voice is heard, and no one has the slightest clue to what the next scene is to be. Will the drama have an end? Will the curtain fall at last? Will it rise again upon some other stage? Reason says perhaps, and hope still whispers yes. Sady I bid my friend farewell. I admired the actor and I loved the man."

A String of Abstains.

The following is, says the Australian Sunday School Teacher, from a boy's essay on total abstinence: "I abstain from alcoholic drinks because, if I would excel as a cricketer, Grace says, 'abstain'; as a walker, Weston says, 'abstain'; as a workman, Hanlan says, 'abstain'; as a swimmer, Webb says, 'abstain'; as an orator, Bright says, 'abstain'; as a missionary, Livingstone says, 'abstain'; as a doctor, Clark says, 'abstain'; as a preacher, Farrar says, 'abstain'; as a prison and workhouses repeat the cry, 'abstain'; We have heard a long speech with less in it.

One of the latest "fads" in liquid refreshments is the oyster cocktail. Very small oysters are specially ordered for the purpose. Eight or ten are put in a glass and sprinkled over with pepper and salt. Then some imported malt vinegar is poured over them and the mixture is ready for the consumer.—Chicago Post.

A GOOD SAMARITAN.

Affecting Street Scene in Montreal.

A scene, in many respects a painful one, but which showed the true womanhood of a lady who happened to be passing at the time, was witnessed on Leguachiere street last evening. About 6 o'clock quite a crowd collected on the street to witness the antics of an unfortunate young woman who was under the influence of liquor and dancing in front of St. Bridget's Home to the apparent delight of the heartless gathering of onlookers. When the unseemly exhibition had lasted quite a while, a lady happened along. Without a thought of her costly attire and regardless of the jeers of the crowd she unhesitatingly caught the poor creature by the arm, and induced her to accompany her. She brought the unfortunate to the door of St. Bridget's Home and craved for admission, only to meet with refusal. Undaunted she tried the adjoining institution, with the same result. The lady then stood for a few moments on the sidewalk as if undecided what to do. Finally, the light was heard to remark: "The poor creature cannot be left on the street; I will take her home." A passing cab was called and the lady and her charge drove off.—Montreal Herald.

A Woman's Essay on Women.

It often puzzles me that some men seem to prefer silly women. Some clever men, too, perhaps on the same principle as the me your stupid pupils." They never consider themselves clever enough to leave him. I am told that Herbert Spencer as a complete contrast to his life's work. Yet, in spite of this, it always annoys me to see a mindless woman at the mercy of an aggressively superior man, who is sure to give herself away. What pathos there is in Congreve's lines, if one only look at them from this point of view:

When Leslie first I saw, so heavenly fair, With eyes so bright and with that awful air, I thought my heart would burst so high aspire. But soon as e'er the beautiful idiot spoke, From her coral lips the folly broke; Like balm the trickling nonsense heal'd my wound, And what her eyes enthralled, her tongue unbound.

Poor Leslie! who no doubt thought her face had conquered the irresistible Congreve, to read that she was only a "beautiful idiot" after all. It was a pitiful termination to what was doubtless a most exciting episode for her. But she was a silly woman, he the witty and exquisite maker of comedies. What else could be? The age of gallantry is over, and our Pinceros and Joneses and Grundys do not write cutting epigrams about the young ladies they meet nowadays; at least I hope not—indeed, I am sure not, or we should read them in the Era; but silly women are pitted in and laughed at all the same, perhaps by even sillier men, and that is what irritates me. A great many women, I am sure, have the reputation for being stupid, simply because they allow their native wits to go to rust; they have no self-reliance, and they have been reared to a sort of religious belief in the sanctity of man's superior sense and intellect. Such women seldom, if ever, exercise their own ideas, even in matters of dress, while their minds rarely range beyond social courtesies and domestic concerns.

Good Words for Girls.

Your mother is your best friend. Have nothing to do with girls who snub their parents.

Tell the pleasantest things you know when at meals.

Do not expect your brother to be as dainty as a girl.

Exercise, and never try to look as if you were in delicate health.

Introduce every new acquaintance to your mother as soon as possible.

Don't think it necessary to get married. There is plenty of room for old maids, and they are often happier than wives.

Enjoy the pleasures provided for you by your parents to the fullest extent. They will like that as a reward better than any other.

Notes From Scotland.

The British Postmaster-General announces the establishment shortly of a service for the rapid transmission of letters for short distances.

Damage to the extent of between £500 and £600 was done by a fire which occurred on the 12th inst. in Princes' Street Railway Station, Perth.

Mr. John Diak Peddie, R. S. A., who represented the Kilmarnock Burghs in Parliament from 1880 to 1885, died on the 12th inst., at the age of 67.

The Haddington cattle-dishorning case came up before the Justiciary Court at Edinburgh on the 13th inst. when the court unanimously affirmed that such dishorning was not cruelty to animals within the meaning of the Act.

A little pressure has been brought to bear upon Lord Rosebery, with the result that he is expected to return to public life immediately after Easter. At present the Liberals are badly represented in the House of Lords. Earl Granville has been confined to his house through indisposition, and Lord Kimberley carries no weight or authority. The result has been that for a considerable time Premier Salisbury has never encountered even a word of criticism in the Upper House.

Ninety-one Japanese swords, the property of Brayton Ives and exposed at the sale of Mr. Ives' bric-a-brac in New York on Thursday night, were purchased for the Metropolitan museum of art for \$15,000. This sum of money was raised in a few hours by a number of gentlemen who did not like to see the fine sword collection dispersed. Mr. Ives himself contributing \$5,000 for the purpose.