

Liberty

1621

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER. PROUDHON

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"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."

JOHN HAY.

Problems of Anarchism.

PROPERTY.

2.—Wherein Property is Subversive of Liberty.

I have already indicated that to demonstrate a truth in the abstract, even when it is generally accepted as such, does not imply its practical recognition and existence in fact. Nothing more plainly shows this than an inquiry into property as it exists today. For it is not one simple system based on justice that we find, but a complicated mixture of practices and ideas—the latter entailed by the former—which lead to confusion of statement and reasoning by nearly all of those who, recognizing the enormous evils of the prevailing system, criticize or advocate its destruction. No less hopeless is the confusion of arguments used by its champions and supporters.

Violence, either direct or through law, accounts for the greater part of actual proprietary rights from the remotest past to the present time; as much in so-called free and civilized societies as in the most barbarous. The upholders of the existing order maintain the justice of current methods of obtaining wealth and the validity of present owners' titles to the possession of property, by hypocritically falling back on the true theory which declares, in the words of Adam Smith, that "the property which each man has in his own labor, as it is the original foundation of all other property, so it is the most sacred and inviolable." They defend their property on the assumption that it is acquired under the same conditions as the right of those who obtain it by their labor without violating others' rights; and uplift their hands in holy horror in their desire to save the poor man's goods and the toiler's right to his own when the wicked Communists cry, in the words of Proudhon but without his meaning, "Property is robbery."

They can show you that laws are continually being made to protect the property of the producer, to insure his right to the fruits of his toil,—mental or physical; that the spirit of the age follows the same course, and that justice requires that every man shall be secure in the possession of his own.

And they say: "Down with the revolutionist, the robber who would deny our rights to the wealth we possess! 'Tis the poor we defend as well as the rich,—the workingman as quick as the capitalist."

And they go on building up wealth that other people produce, extracting it mercilessly from the rightful owners by means of customs, laws, and conditions that have grown up mostly in violence, wrong, and injustice, and are maintained today through force of arms and legal fraud; unmindful the while that this means of acquiring property denies completely the plain rights of others and renders private property, as conceived in the abstract and tacitly admitted by property defenders, impossible for the vast majority of its creators.

While conceding the fact that the just theory of property rights continues to gain ground both in general belief and in legal enactment, I am compelled to point out that its application is still extremely limited, and that in the industrial world under capitalistic conditions it does not obtain at all.

Modern industry and the accompanying economic conditions having arisen under the régime of status,—that is, under arbitrary conditions in which equal liberty

had no place and law-made privileges held unbounded sway,—it is only to be expected that an equally arbitrary and unjust system of property should prevail.

On one side a dependent industrial class of wage-workers, on the other a privileged class of wealth—each becoming more and more distinct as capitalism advances, has resulted in a growing and consolidation of wealth which grows apace by attracting all property, no matter by whom produced, into the hands of the privileged, and hence property becomes a social power, an economic force destructive of rights, a fertile source of injustice, a means of enslaving the dispossessed.

Under this system equal liberty cannot obtain.

The law of life, that each should receive the benefits of his own conduct, that nobody should obtain, without equivalent benefits given, the results of another's life-sustaining actions, that every individual should reap the reward of his energies, the fruits of his labor,—this law, in conformity to which only can the race develop and any society of human beings continue to evolve, is not fulfilled. Industrialism, while growing up under the adverse circumstances just pointed out, has nevertheless developed the need and desire of complete individual freedom and consequently the demand for more equitable property conditions. So that, while private property in its true sense can hardly be said to exist, and certainly is outside the conception of modern capitalism, the abstract belief in it, showing the conscious need, has steadily grown.

History affords many examples of a growing belief, due to the realization of some pressing need and generally going along with a desire for enlargement of individual liberty, preceding the change which ends by making the belief an actuality. All true reforms are of this character. It is safe therefore to predict that the next step in the evolution of property, if it be not in the nature of a reaction,—a circumstance not impossible,—will be toward a fuller recognition of the right of private property.

3.—Communists and Property.

We can now with more confidence take up the issues which Communist opponents of the existing order present. They demand the entire abolition of all property. Some writers of this school, or rather of one of the various schools, allow a title to property; "use," they declare, "should be the only valid title to the ownership of anything, possession the only claim."

The characteristic common to all advocates of common property in attacking the conditions now prevailing is to lay the blame for the evils that exist on the institution of private property.

Though the foregoing articles have indicated the nature of this fallacy, something more must be said in order to make it clear to those who are misled by it. It seems quite unknown to such reasoners that there exists today a body of thinkers who undoubtedly realize and deplore the vast and multitudinous evils with all their attendant miseries and injustices which arise out of the maladjustments of the present economic system, and who are as much opposed to the property scheme which it involves as the most violent revolutionary Communist.

But instead of taking effects for causes and believing the means to be the end, they examine more closely, search more deeply, and trace those evils, not to the institution of private property, but to causes that are as inimical to that institution as they are destructive of the conditions of a just social order.

Call the millionaire capitalist, the labor-robbing idler

who lives on interest, the rich thugs of today and their army of parasites, be taken as the outcome of private property? Surely not. They are the direct result of restrictions and privileges, of legal and governmental origin, and of that social power and economic superiority before explained,—causes that render impossible the growth and diffusion of individual property among the mass of wealth-producers.

Inequalities in possession exist not so much because of inequalities in the power of individuals to acquire wealth under free conditions, but vastly more because political, social, and economic arrangements have always tended to create artificial inequality, to foster and increase whatever natural inequality did exist; a truth exemplified with as much force in the United States as in less free and progressive countries. How else explain the fact that society is divided economically into classes as distinct in the republic as in European countries, and the capitalistic form of property becoming even more concentrated in the hands of a privileged minority.

There certainly was a nearer approximation to a state of diffused individual property in the earlier stages of this nation's career. Millionaires are a comparatively modern growth. Monopolies were few and had not then attained their present gigantic proportions. Privilege had not the same scope, nor had capitalism destroyed the power of the individual to acquire such wealth as he could produce by the exercise of his abilities.

Many modern economic evils were absent.

Prosperity was more general, if the standard of comfort was not so high. Yet who will claim that the institution of private property was less firmly established or less secure. The like truth holds of all newly-settled countries, in which artificial inequalities and the innumerable encroachments on equal freedom which the laws and arrangements of old societies present have not had time to manifest their influence. Still individual property in such places is none the less general.

The conclusion which is forced upon us, not only by such comparative considerations, but by a logical examination of existing circumstances, is that some other cause than the one which Communists ascribe is responsible for social evils.

It would appear that they sometimes realize this truth. Marx's famous Communist Manifesto, which in 1848 made "the ruling classes tremble in view of the Communist Revolution," and is to this day accepted as a text-book by various sections of the anti-property school, declares:

"The Bourgeoisie are incensed because we aim to abolish private property. But in the very midst of society today private property has been made impossible for nine-tenths of its members. Its present existence in the hands of the Bourgeoisie is based on the fact that it does not exist at all for nine-tenths of the people. We are consequently accused of desiring to abolish that kind of property which involves as a necessary condition the absence of all property for the immense majority of society."

"Communism deprives no one of the power to appropriate social products for his own use, it only deprives him of the power to subject others' labor by such appropriation. . . . Under the present system those who do work acquire no property, while those who do acquire property do no work."

If this reasoning means anything at all, it implies that private property should rest upon the right of the individual to the results of his labor, and that Com-

(Continued on page 3.)

Liberty.

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"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the excise-man, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel."—
PROUDHON.

The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

An Invitation Declined.

The following correspondence explains itself:

THE WORLD'S CONGRESS AUXILIARY OF THE
WORLD'S COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION.
CHICAGO, U. S. A., February 3, 1893.

Mr. Benj. R. Tucker,

DEAR SIR: The Labor Congresses in connection with the World's Columbian Exposition will be held at the close of August and the beginning of September, 1893. The World's Congress Auxiliary is desirous of giving one of the sessions to the subject of the Labor Movement from the Individualist Point of View.

The World's Congress Auxiliary does itself the honor to invite you to participate in the Congress by delivering, in person if possible, a paper on the subject of "The Labor Movement from the Individualist Point of View in the United States." The length of the paper is expected to be about twenty to thirty minutes.

Printed matter descriptive of the scope and plans of the Congresses is mailed to you herewith.

The World's Congress Auxiliary would be glad, if you accept this invitation, to know if there are any other topics connected with the Labor Movement on which you would like to address the Labor Congress, and would be glad to receive suggestions from you concerning other speakers.

Begging the favor of an early reply,

Respectfully yours,
H. D. LLOYD,
Secretary, Committee on Programme and Correspondence.

NEW YORK, February 22, 1893.

Mr. H. D. Lloyd, Secretary, Committee on Programme and Correspondence, World's Congress Auxiliary,

DEAR SIR: I am in receipt of an invitation, extended by you in behalf of the World's Congress Auxiliary, to address its Labor Congress upon "The Labor Movement from the Individualist Point of View in the United States." While acknowledging the honor thus conferred upon me and thanking you therefor, I must state at once and very flatly that, in view of such information as has reached me from official and other sources regarding the policy of the World's Congress Auxiliary, I am utterly unwilling to

accept the invitation. In fact, I think you must have mistaken your man; let me tell you why.

In the "North American Review" of October, 1891, there appeared an official announcement from the World's Congress Auxiliary that at its congresses "no discussion, whether in religion, law, or indeed any other subject, will be permitted which tends to attack, to antagonize, or to attempt to overthrow the recognized social law of the civilized world or existing forms of government. Thus neither the Mormon nor the Anarchist will be afforded an opportunity of presenting his peculiar views, as these are in direct antagonism to recognized moral and social laws." Unless the policy thus announced has since been abandoned,—and I have not heard of its abandonment,—it is clear that your invitation to me has been extended under a misapprehension; for I am one of the most conspicuous among those who are expending their best energies in attacking, antagonizing, and attempting to overthrow recognized moral and social laws and government in all its forms. In short, I am an Anarchist. You evidently did not know this, and mistook me for an Individualist. The two are easily confused, for they have much in common; but there is a vital difference between them. The Individualist believes that coöperation for defence and protection should be compulsory, whereas the Anarchist believes that coöperation should never be compulsory, and that no compulsion should ever be exercised upon the non-invasive individual.

There are two reasons, then, why I should not accept your invitation. First, not being an Individualist, I am not the proper person to speak for the Individualists. Second, being an Anarchist, I am not wanted in your Congress under my true colors. Now, under false colors I will not sail.

It has been suggested to me, by a friend who claims to know, that the exclusive policy adopted by the World's Congress Auxiliary is aimed, not at persons like myself, who carry on their warfare against government solely by educational means and passive resistance, but at those who seek to overthrow government by physical force,—in other words, at those revolutionary Communists (miscalled Anarchists by others and by themselves) who favor "propaganda by deed." If this is true, it only adds to my unwillingness to address your Congress. I will not enter a deliberative body professedly as broad as a World's Congress should be, under cover of a distinction framed to admit me and to exclude Pierre Kropotkin, Elisée Reclus, or John Most. Intensely hostile though I am to the teachings and methods of these men, I consider it a very shortsighted intolerance that would deny them a hearing.

Let me say, then, in conclusion, that I hope to see an Independent Congress held in Chicago at the same time that your Congress is in session,—a Congress of intellectual outcasts, if you will, to whose deliberations only those shall be admitted who have been ruled out by the World's Congress Auxiliary, or who, like myself, are prepared to choose between the exclusive and the excluded in favor of the latter. In such a Congress, and not in that of the World's Congress Auxiliary, will be best exemplified the spirit of the brave discoverers of new worlds whose achievements your undertaking is designed to celebrate. The timidity and intolerance

which characterize the policy of the World's Congress Auxiliary are as incapable of discovering an economic and industrial America today as they were of discovering physical America four hundred years ago. Yours frankly,

BENJ. R. TUCKER

Taming a Shrew.

The chatter of the weak-minded, especially of the female division, cannot profitably be made the subject of comment; but there are some amusing features in the case of Lillie D. White, who imagines herself an editor of a paper because her stuff happens to appear in print without corrections and in large type, which may be noted in passing. It will be remembered that in a recent issue of Liberty I made some mild remarks, sparing her intellectual helplessness, with reference to Mrs. Whit's defence of the Kelso book and her charge of severity against me. I also called upon her to specify one or two of my sins in substantiation of her accusation of injustice and dogmatic partisanship. In this, doubtless, I was guilty of an indiscretion. Mrs. White has a tongue, but, in order to prove an injustice, something more than a tongue is needed; and brains or logical capacity even Mrs. White's kindest friends will not have the face to credit her with. Mrs. White, however, seems to be determined to impose on the tongue the function which only the brain can discharge properly, and the results of this experiment are laughable indeed.

Fellow-feeling has made Mrs. White wondrous kind. Realizing that the condemnation of the Kelso and Merlino and Hartmans implied her own complete downfall as a reformer, guide, or thinker, she becomes frantic and abusive and ridiculous. Hell hath no such fury as a woman scorned.

From her motives let us turn to her performances. In the first place, Mrs. White is guilty of an act which, if done by a person of reason, would be described as a piece of impudent knavery, but which, in her case, must be attributed to weak-mindedness and inability to grasp the essential quality of what we distinguish as fairness. She keeps standing in her columns a certain passage from one of my articles in this form:

One who has had the benefit of my elaborate demonstration, and proved himself impervious to logic and common sense, is naturally to be suspected of greater incapacity and density than those who were never put to such a test.—Victor Tarrow.

Of course the design is to convict me of egotism, arrogance, assumption, and conceit out of my own mouth; and, I say, an intelligent person could not perpetrate such a thing unless deliberately dishonest. I have no reason to think that Mrs. White is dishonest; hence I ascribe the dishonest act to her stupidity. And why is the act dishonest? Because the passage, when read in connection with what precedes and what follows it, is perfectly legitimate and proper, and is indicative of no egotism or conceit at all. Mrs. White cannot be expected to draw such distinctions, and to her the passage must seem as objectionable one way as another; but it would be useless to argue with her. Those who are amenable to reason need no argument on this point; and I therefore make none.

Another thing I am inclined to explain as the

product of brainlessness rather than unfairness is the falsehood embodied in Mrs. White's response to Mr. Cohen, who had ventured to endorse my estimate of the Kelso book and to remind the furious editor that abuse is a poor substitute for refutation. "Mr. Cohen intimates," she says, "that there is something to refute in Mr. Yarros's analysis of Kelso's book. If there is, it is buried so far beneath an avalanche of conceit, arrogance, egotism, vindictiveness, and assumption, that the difficulty of overcoming one's disgust and nausea long enough to dig it out and seriously consider it is too great an undertaking." (The "difficulty" is "too great an undertaking"!) Now, this is simply false. My points are so clear and prominent that some of my friends here doubted the wisdom of filling a page of Liberty with self-evident propositions and truisms. My "demonstration" of the utter worthlessness of the book seemed to them altogether too "elaborate." But Mrs. White does not know the difference between burying a point beneath "an avalanche of conceit," etc., and bringing out one's points so as to make them seem too obvious to require elaboration. It seems, moreover, that Mrs. White is suffering from lack of memory as well as from absence of reasoning power, for in her first comment she had tacitly admitted the existence of well-taken points in my review, and pretended to find fault, not with its substance, but with its form and style.

Mrs. White seems to be the victim of the hallucination that I want to club her through a "narrow turnpike." "Even taking his word for it," she moans, "that his is the only plan of salvation, the most of us prefer to go our own way, even though we stumble through tangled paths, follow false lights, and sometimes lose the way. Let us go wrong rather than be clubbed or driven right." This is the talk of hysterical imbeciles, not of reasoning and healthy individuals. Mrs. White can go in any direction she chooses, and she can remain still, if she likes; but I reserve the right to compare her way with mine, and show why mine is better. My clubbing is not for those who differ with me, but for those who pretend to agree with me in the abstract and to go my way, when, in truth, they neither understand nor follow the light I am guided by. I do not club any honest adherent of any reform school; but those who try to sow confusion and ignorance, to darken counsel, and to usurp functions and titles to which they have no claim, I deem it an imperative necessity and intense pleasure to club out of sight and hearing. The Kelsos, the Hartmans, the Whites, have the right to believe and preach any doctrine conceivable; and I have the right to counteract their preaching, if I care to do so, in any legitimate way. Still, as long as they do not ignorantly or maliciously pervert and misrepresent those ideas which I am engaged in expounding and defending, they are safe from my club. It is only when the Kelsos parade their crude and contradictory notions as the philosophy of Anarchism, or when Mrs. White and her stranger impudently undertake to authorize the Kelsos to speak in the name of Anarchism, that the club is called into active service. Anarchism is something which they do not even remotely comprehend, and which I, among others, have made it my business to defend against all comers from antagonistic camps; shall I allow a few senti-

mental and weak-minded "harmonizers" and "peace-makers" to thwart me in my work by nonsensical patching and ignorant misstatement? We teach Anarchism, and we propose to allow no one who does not teach it to mislead the world and neutralize our efforts by claiming to do so.

A few more of Mrs. White's stupidities, and I am done with the subject and the crew. Mr. Cohen wonders why the word imbecility exists at all, "if it is not a mark of imbecility not to know the difference between various doctrines, that are as different as night and day, and to talk of them as if they were one and the same thing." What he gets from Mrs. White is the following luminous observation:

No, Mr. Cohen, I do not feel like saying that it is a "mark of imbecility," even if Mr. Kelso did "not know the difference between different doctrines." It isn't safe to say such things, for a great many people of unquestioned intelligence confuse the different "isms" of economic reform. Proudhon is claimed as authority by schools that "are as different as night and day." Herbert Spencer is "laid out" by Henry George; George is vivisected by various others; and so on, *ad infinitum*. Where is there a writer of prominence not accused of inconsistency and lack of logic by some one? But shall we call them all "idiots, imbeciles," etc.?

Two-thirds of all this is utterly irrelevant, as anybody with any degree of logical capacity cannot fail to perceive. The question is not whether writers are criticised, accused of inconsistency, or charged with ignorance, but whether it is not a mark of imbecility to lump together as identical or similar doctrines essentially unlike and even diametrically opposite. To this the only relevant answer made is that "Proudhon is claimed as authority by schools that 'are as different as night and day'." This, I say, is relevant, *if true*. But it is not true. In every movement there are Lillie D. Whites, and among *such* it may still be a question where Proudhon belongs. But these do not settle anything finally, and their notions are as dust in the balance. Ask such men as Marx and Engels and Hyndman and Shaw whether Proudhon is Anarchistic or State Socialistic, and their opinion will be entitled to weight, since, as authorities in their own school, they may be presumed to know who and what should be regarded as opposed to them. What Marx thought of Proudhon is well known.

Mr. Cohen further desires to be told whether it is not also a mark of imbecility to declare that governments are but mythical monsters, invented by selfish, crafty men as instruments with which to rob and enslave the toiling masses. And Mrs. White accommodates him by saying: "To believe that men invented governments, as they invented the sewing machine or wizard oil, might be said to be crude and antiquated, even imbecile. . . . But governments are the products of men's brains, and in that sense may be said to be invented. It is only a play upon words, a tiresome, useless job of hair-splitting, to object to a formula doubtless used by Mr. Kelso in this sense." Now, this is not only extremely stupid, but unkind,—unkind to the Kelsos and to Mrs. White's mysterious stranger. This is what we find in the Kelso preface: "Indeed, after a long and careful study of political matters, after some experience as a lawmaker in the Congress of the United States, he [the author] came to regard all governments, like all gods, as the mere personifications of mythical

monsters invented by selfish and crafty men," etc. If this means simply that governments are "the product of men's brains," then to what a Pickwickian discovery "a long and careful study of political matters" led the author! But the author did not mean anything of the kind, for he speaks of the invention of governments by "selfish and crafty" men, not by *all* men. To substitute the word "used" for "invented" in the above passage is a gratuitous absurdity, for the author distinctly refers to the question of origin in speaking of "the mere personifications of mythical monsters invented by selfish and crafty men." But more amusing still is Mr. Hartman's innocent confession that a "flood of light burst upon him" when he read Mr. Kelso's passage on the origin and nature of government, in the light of Mrs. White's interpretation. Either Mr. Hartman agrees with this interpretation, or he does not. If he agrees, then think of his appalling ignorance as disclosed in the remark that the truistic statement that governments are the product of men's brains was to him like unto "a flood of light"! If he does not agree with Mrs. White, and had understood the passage in my sense, then, according to Mrs. White herself, he, "after the flood of light," entertains notions which are "crude, antiquated, even imbecile."

It is evident that all these Kelsos, Hartmans, and Mrs. Whites are not to be taken seriously. They do not control their tongues and pens, but are controlled by them. What they say need not necessarily have any meaning or point. It is useless to search in their "words, words, words" for any trace of logic or idea. Coherence is not their ambition, and intelligence is not their gift from nature. v. v.

Problems of Anarchism.

(Continued from page 1.)

munists condemn the existing property system because it is not based on this principle. But I am unable to affirm that the document as a whole would justify us in taking such a view.

Present-day exponents of Communism, however, seem to agree in the view of property rights which I have established. Says Kropotkin in his work, "Socialistic Evolution":

"Abolish the conditions which allow some to monopolize the fruits of the labor of others," apparently agreeing that each should be guaranteed the fruits of his activities. Another Communist, of no less pronounced views against the prevailing property relations, is still more emphatic on the same point. William Morris declares that, having labored towards the production "is the only claim that can rightly be allowed to property or wealth. . . . The claim on any other grounds must lead to what in plain terms we must call robbery." ("True and False Society," page 17.)

As I shall presently show that there is no difference in their attitude towards private property between Communists of the type just quoted and the Social Democrats of the English Fabian Society, I may add to the above the Fabian view. "Admitting," say they in "Capital and Land," when treating of incomes from capital, "admitting the fairness and advantage of guaranteeing to every man the equivalent of the result of his own industry, we deny that there is either justice or profit in the system which permits him to convert this claim into lien for a perpetual annuity." . . .

In the sense, then, that we have in previous articles seen the justice of individual property, it is not denied by Communists; on the contrary, they agree in proclaiming the validity of its basis. And in so doing they admit that some other cause than the institution of private property must be sought in order to account for the evils and injustice which arise out of modern industrial and economic arrangements.

WM. RAILLE.

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*531. Review of the Ellis and Yeats Edition of "The Works of William Blake." London Saturday Review, Feb. 4. 2100 words.

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494. The Distribution of Currency. Editorial in American Banker, Feb. 4. 900 words.

495. The International Monetary Conference. By

Henry W. Cannon. American Banker, Feb. 4. 900 words.

496. Government and Money. By Gustave Cook. Galveston News, Feb. 5. 1300 words.

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500. The Study of Citizenship. By E. E. Hale. Boston Commonwealth, Feb. 4. 1200 words.

501. An Appropriation Looted. How California Board of Forestry squandered people's money. S. F. Examiner, Jan. 30. 4500 words.

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514. Interview with General Weaver on Prohibition and Other Issues. Voice, Feb. 16. 2300 words.

515. Coalition of Reformers. By Annie L. Diggs. Voice, Feb. 16. 1900 words.

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*470. Sources of Religious Infallibility in Scripture. By Joseph Cook. Our Day, Feb. 11 pages.

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481. Sunday Opening. Answer to arguments favoring the closing of the Exposition. By F. C. Southwick. Duluth Herald, Feb. 6. 3000 words.

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488. Causes of Divorce in the Various States. St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Feb. 5. 2000 words.

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*470. Recent Results of Municipal Gas-Making in the United States. By Edw. W. Bemis. Review of Reviews (American edition), Feb. 7 pages.

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*473. Jay Gould as Wrecker and Pirate. By W. O. McDowell. Our Day, Feb. 6 pages.

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487. Hygiene and Political Economy. By T. P. Wilson. North American Journal of Homoeopathy, Feb. 2300 words.

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532. Comments on the Seizure of Anarchists' Private Correspondence. In French. By Jean Ajalbert. Paris, Jan. 10. 1300 words.

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