

On the Road

Emma Goldman

1907

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[part 1]

THE road, the open road! What grand inspiration it gave the “gray poet,” what wonderful vistas it disclosed to him, of space, color, beauty, opportunity, wisdom. “The secret of the making of the best person, the room for a great personal deed, the test of wisdom, the strength that will overwhelm all law and mock all authority.” All that, and more, the open road meant to the great American poet, and to all those who, like Whitman, could walk along the open road, stronglimbed, careless, child-like, full of the joy of life, carrying the message of liberty, the gladness of human comradeship.

But what of society’s outcasts, the tramps, the homeless, shelterless, worn and weary? Does the road mean to them what it meant to the great Walt? Does it not rather mean to them a desert, cold, dreary, aimless? Hated and feared; everywhere hounded; hungry, wretched, with bleeding feet; walking, walking, walking—can the road inspire them to great deeds and liberating thoughts?!

And the workingman, tramping from town to town in search of a master, can he rejoice in the beauties of the open road? The cries of his starving little ones make him deaf to the music of the birds and the sweet symphony of rustling leaves; not for him the enchanting beauty of a spring day’s birth, nor the color symphony of the setting sun. For him, relief is but within the gloomy walls of factory or mill, and the sweetest music in the whirring wheels.

Or to the immigrant, forced to leave his native soil, the cradle of his youthful dreams, plans and aspirations; in a strange land, dragged along with wife and child— what does the open road mean to him but fear and dread and anxiety.

The English tourist, tall, lean and arrogant; the German with his typical green clothes and cap, and his Gretchen, fat, heavy and dull, the very embodiment of the monarchical three K’s—Kirche, Kaiser, Kinder—what do they see in the road? Herded in an excursion party, intent upon the guide who, trumpet and watch in hand, shouts the names of historical places and events—ah, one has but to see them along the country roads, or in New York, Paris and London—worn, dusty, perspiring—the very incarnation of stupidity and boredom. What means the road to them?

And the carrier of a new message, the pioneer of the new thought, the singer of liberty, what does the road mean to him or her? Contumely, slander, hatred, lack of understanding, disappointments, persecution, imprisonment.

These and other thoughts filled my mind as the train rushed along in the darkness of the night.

Cleveland. The same dark, gloomy, filthy Union Depot, the same terrible contrast between the rich and the poor, as in the days prior to the Single-Tax Mayor’s regime. Euclid Avenue with its magnificent mansions and spacious lawns, and the squalid dens where the poor are herded—all just as before.

Our Cleveland groups of young boys have done their utmost within the last few years to spread the ideas of Anarchism. Now they have built up a nice little library of Russian, German, Jewish and English literature. The bright, inviting spot serves as the headquarters for the thinking, groping working people of the neighborhood.

The boys spared no efforts to make the meetings successful ; as a result I had large, appreciative audiences.

The most pleasant and interesting surprise in Cleveland proved my host and hostess, a young couple recently transplanted from the revolutionary soil of Russia to a miserable, squalid American cottage. Both fanatical opponents of Anarchism; yet generous, attentive and hospitable to

an Anarchist. It is well for humanity that the mainsprings of life are not called into play by mere theories; else my hosts would have erected for me a social-democratic scaffold, as they seriously admitted would be the case when Socialism becomes triumphant: "Anarchistic disturbers of public welfare will have to be strung up."

Columbus. The capital of Ohio, the seat of the law's lawlessness. The State House, where the straitjackets for human thought and activity are forged, is indeed an imposing structure. Some day, after it has been cleared of the last vestige of stupidity and crime, the Capitol will serve as a music and lecture hall. At present it harbors too many public thieves to be of any use.

The Johnstown flood or the San Francisco disaster could not have caused greater consternation among the official pillars of society than my arrival here. Orders were issued to every hallkeeper to keep out "the evil spirit." The police and saloon keepers are very closely related; orders were obeyed and the doors closed to us. Having accepted our rent-deposit, the hallkeepers were legally bound to permit the use of their halls; contracts and good faith, however, are of little consequence to "the law-abiding" when free speech is to be strangled.

It is quite astonishing to see intelligent people still cling to the myth of the existence of free speech; experience should have taught them ere this that we have just as much freedom as the club of the average policeman and our own great respect for the latter's authority will permit. Some well-meaning citizens of Columbus called on the Mayor and Chief of Police, naively demanding redress. Alas! These worthies did not even possess the courage of the ordinary thief or burglar. Both assured the citizens that they had nothing whatever to do with stopping my meetings, while their subordinates went about spreading terror among the hallkeepers.

Police, laws and lawmakers are very costly articles; no wonder that the working people of Columbus have such a starved appearance. I have met men here who work for 5–6 dollars per week—about as much as the Chief spends for his cigars. They are supposed to "live," and support their families on six dollars a week. Yet cleanliness is rather expensive, you know. Where is one to get the means, or even the ambition, to keep clean on six dollars a week?

Rare plants sometimes grow in the poorest soil. Dr. C. S. Carr, of Columbus, is certainly such a plant. He is a spiritualist, I am told. But whether spirits exist or not, the doctor seemed to me a spirit from another world when he called to invite me to his home. Though worn out by persistent reporters and other callers, I could not resist the temptation of that sweet personality, that rose cheeked youth with the snowy white hair. Sitting in his large, beautiful study, I could readily understand Dr. Carr's philosophy of simplicity.

"Why should people not try to beautify even the least they have? Why should they want that which they do not have?"

"Why not, dear Doctor?! Why should man not aspire to greater heights than those in which unjust and cruel institutions have placed him? The theory of contentment, of a simple life of beauty may be all right for those who have comfort, beauty and sunshine. But how about the people doomed to live on five dollars a week? Cleanliness and beauty are too costly for them. The parks, the libraries? Ah, my dear Doctor, the ragpickers of Columbus find no time to breathe the fresh air in the parks, nor to read books in the libraries. And if they really could enjoy the parks and libraries, could they return contentedly to their squalid, miserable hovels?"

I was glad to be the Doctor's guest; it gave me an opportunity to set the ladies of the house right on "that man Gorki," who, as the outraged mock modesty of the Puritans would have it, forsook his wife and is now living with a Russian Evelyn Nesbit. Such was the opinion of the

ladies about that pure, noble woman, Mme. Andreieva. If such views are entertained in a liberal home about the most beautiful and sacred relation—made sacred by the power of love and not by the ridiculous mumbling of a priest—what can we expect from the average, unthinking person?

I assured the ladies that there can be no comparison between Mme. Andreieva and Evelyn Nesbit Thaw. Not that I condemn the latter: she is the product of a perverted system of morality; the victim of a stupid institution, called education; the dupe of a vicious thing, called religion; the two having degraded woman to a sex commodity. Mme. Andreieva, however, is of a different type. I do not know her personally; but I know that she is one of that great host of Russia's daughters who have freed themselves from the fetters of conventionality and have declared their right to choose the man they love in perfect freedom; to be his companion, his comrade, at home as on the barricades.

Would, to goodness, that America's daughters should follow the example of their Russian sisters! Then, and not till then, will Columbia stand erect and the voice of Liberty be heard even in Columbus, Ohio.

Toldeo. Happy Golden Rule Jones! It is well that you cannot know that your successor is a gentleman who claims to be a Tolstoyan, a philosophic Anarchist, a friend of Labor—everything, except a lover of free speech.

About to negotiate the strike of the automobile workers of Toledo, this good man was easily frightened by the newspapers: he could not afford to have the terrible doctrine of Communist Anarchism interfere with his negotiations. Poor, poor Labor! I fear me much it has become weak-kneed and bloodless from the sentimental love of its "friends." 'Tis time you'd send those pseudo-friends about their business; walk out in the open, out of the political traps, out of the mayors' offices, out of the halls of legislatures and Congress! Out into the daylight, into the broad, open road of an independent, strong economic self-reliance!

Thanks to the efforts of a few truly big spirits, a meeting was held in Toledo Tuesday, March 12th; the local press conveniently ignored the matter, while the suppression of the meeting on the preceding day was heralded all over the country.

It was an unusually interesting gathering, that at Zenoba Hall. Workingmen, doctors, lawyers; earnest men and women in all walks of life came to the lecture and I was glad of the opportunity to explain to them the true meaning and object of Anarchism.

The most interesting feature of my Toledo visit, however, was the gathering of a few truly free spirits, exceptionally bright and noble souls, with the fire of their revolutionary forbears still buoyantly coursing in their veins. It was my good fortune to meet Mrs. Kate B. Sherwood, one of America's grandest mothers; a mother not merely because of some physiological process, but rather in that wider sense of broad understanding, of comradeship, of oneness with all that which strives for recognition. And Mrs. Pyle, the daughter of Mrs. Sherwood, and Dr. John Pyle, with their enlightened, broad sense of human fellowship, made my hours passed in that true home of liberty an evergreen memory. Dr. J. Pyle, I understand, was once the Socialistic candidate for Congress. He failed to get elected. Fortunate man! He, man of simplicity and affection, with his large vision of human liberty, would have soon withered in the poisonous atmosphere of politics. And Mrs. Laurie Pyle, my sweet hostess, the true comrade and companion, the Anarchist of the soul, that sheds so much love and beauty over that wonderful home on Ashland Avenue.

The road of the pioneer is sown with misunderstanding, obloquy and hatred, yet so long as there are such homes, so long as such spirits live and work—and no doubt there are others, if one were but fortunate enough to find them—there is satisfaction and joy in the labor of Liberty

and Love. “Allons! After the great companions, and to belong to them! They, too, are on the road—they are the swift and majestic men—they are the greatest women!”

Toronto. Queen Victoria stores and Prince of Wales saloons notwithstanding, Toronto could teach our “Republic” salutary lessons in freedom. I addressed here three meetings, and not a policeman in sight! In Toronto they seem to employ the police at dangerous street crossings, for the protection of children and cripples, while our “finest” are protecting the gambling resorts in Wall Street and suppressing free speech. I suggest that we raise a fund to send our free democratic police to school in Toronto.

Detroit, you have proven a traitor to the memory of that sweetest lark of liberty — Robert Reitzel — whose influence permeated the entire life of the city. Meetings stopped by the brutal arm of the law.

Where are ye, men and women, that have once worshiped at the shrine of “Der Arme Teufel”? Ye, that have celebrated feasts of song, flowers and wine in the sanctum of the great, inimitable Reitzel? All ye who were lifted out of the mire of money-making and have wandered under the palms with that arch-rebel against all sham, law and hypocrisy; where are ye? The spirit of Reitzel is gone; else Detroit would never submit to the brutal rule of Captain Baker.

Robert Reitzel, arise and sweep the city with your cleansing storms ; let us hear again the reverberating thunder of your voice, your protests and your condemnation of all cowardice and slavery.

(To be continued.)

[part 2]

CHICAGO. City of the greatest American crime! City of that black Friday when four brave sons of the people were strangled to death — Parsons, Spies, Engel and Fischer, and you young giant who preferred to take your own life rather than allow the hangman to desecrate you with his filthy touch. You noble free spirits who walked along the open road, believing its call to be “the call of battle, of rebellion.” ‘Tis therefore you went “with angry enemies, with desertion.”

O for the indifference, the inertia of those whose cowardice permitted you to die, to be strangled — the very people for whom you had given your life’s blood.

O city of shame and disgrace ! City of gloom and smoke, filth and stench. You are rotten with stockyards and slums, poverty and crime. What will become of you on the day of reckoning, when your children will awaken to consciousness? Will their battle for liberty and human dignity cleanse your past? Or will they demolish you with their wrath, their hatred, their revenge for all you have made them endure?

As my train neared this hole, bellowing suffocating smoke and dust, covering the sky with a dark, gloomy cloth, on the morning of the eighteenth of March, I thought of you, Paris. Great, glorious Paris! Cradle of rebellion, mother of that glad, joyous day, thirty-six years ago, when your flying colors proclaimed brotherhood and peace in the grand spirit of the Commune. What a contrast between you and Chicago! The one inspiring, urging on to rebellion and liberty; the other making her children mercenary and indifferent, clumsily self-satisfied. What a contrast! What an awful contrast !

I arrived at Chicago at the high tide of politics, the various parties wrangling, huckstering and wrestling for political supremacy, each claiming to stand for a principle : the greatest good of the people.

What Bernard Shaw says of the English in "The Man of Destiny" holds equally good with us in this country: "When the Englishman wants a thing, he never tells himself that he wants it. He waits patiently till there comes into his mind, no one knows how, a burning conviction that it is his moral and religious duty to conquer those who have got the thing he wants. He is never at a loss for an effective moral attitude. As the great champion of freedom and national independence, he conquers and annexes half the world and calls it colonization. When he wants a market for his adulterated Manchester goods, he sends a missionary to teach the natives the gospel of peace. The natives kill the missionary, he flies to arms in defence of Christianity, fights for it, conquers for it, and takes the market as a reward from heaven. In defence of his island shores he puts a chaplain on board his ship, nails a flag with a cross onto his top gallant mast and sails to the ends of the earth, sinking, burning and destroying all who dispute the empire of the seas with him. You will never find an Englishman in the wrong. He does everything on principle. He fights you on patriotic principles, he robs you on business principles, he enslaves you on imperial principles, he bullies you on manly principles."

No better picture could be drawn of our own good people, especially our politicians. Of course they do not want the job of mayor, governor or president; of course they do not want to get fat as the proverbial seven cows; it is only for a principle that they enter politics, for the dear people's sake, for municipal ownership's sake, for the sake of purifying our bad morals, for good government, for child labor laws, factory improvement, for anything and everything, only not for their own sake. 'Tis for the sake of principle our politicians fight, lie and abuse one another; for the sake of principle they invest their money in land robbery, in cotton mills where the children of the dear majority are forced to work under the industrial lash, or in stockyards and packing houses where human beings are made to rot in filth.

For the sake of principle liberals, the Single Taxers, have made a compact with the Democratic Party, hailing Dunne, Hearst and others of their caliber as the Messiahs of the people, and indulging in the same cheap methods of abuse and attack. One of our Single Tax brothers was elated over the discovery that his opponent lived with a "nigger." "We'll use it against him. It is sure to kill his chances," said our "liberal" friend, and no doubt it is. Just think, advanced people prying into the private life of a man and publicly dissecting it for the sake of a political job,—I beg your pardon, for the sake of principle. How coarse, how vulgar "principle" has made man.

And our Socialistic friend, is he not ready to string up anyone who disputes "economic determinism" and "the materialistic conception of history"? For the sake of his principle he will kick anyone out of the party who dares doubt the infallibility of political action; he will denounce us as dynamiters, when we venture to suggest some other method. For the sake of principle the Socialistic paper of Chicago devotes its front page to the discussion of "gowns for the ladies," and a Socialistic candidate appeals for votes on the ground that he has a good law practice and an income of a hundred thousand dollars. And the majority goes into the trap and allows itself to be humbugged—for the sake of a principle.

While in Chicago I delivered nine lectures before various nationalities—Jewish, Bohemians, Danish, not to forget of course the dear, fortunate natives who make the Social Science League their headquarters. Whether it was due to the subject, "The Revolutionary Spirit of the Modern Drama," or to the innate curiosity of the Americans, I do not know; at any rate the meeting at

the Masonic Temple was the largest and the most interesting. Two real live professors from the Chicago University, quite a host of students from the same institution, as well as lawyers, politicians and workingmen packed the hall. Great strides must have been made in the last few years to bring out instructors and students from the Rockefeller College. It is not so very long ago that Tolstoi's picture was turned face to the wall because he dared criticise the endower of that hall of learning.

Some naive people were so enthusiastic over my lecture that they suggested to one of the professors that he invite me to the University to repeat my lecture. Alas, they forgot the "principle" for the sake of which the good professor could not invite the Anarchist, Emma Goldman, to the College. Probably he thought that at the sound of Anarchism the University buildings would crumble to pieces, as the walls of Jericho did at the sound of the Jewish trumpet. No one can blame the professor — "principle" before freedom of knowledge.

Life in Chicago has always been hateful and trying to me, but the great kindness at the home of my dear comrades, Annie and Jack Livshis, and especially the untiring goodness and the fine tact and discretion of the Anarchistic Mother, Annie, helped to overcome my aversion to the jungle city.

Cincinnati. The old sensational speculations as to whether I will or will not be allowed to speak in that city greeted me in the newspapers when I arrived. Madam Alice R. Longworth living on Walnut Hill, it was quite reckless of the city fathers to allow dangerous utterances at Cincinnati. However, Anarchism has been heard at three large meetings, and Walnut Hill is still intact. America is full of parasites—Anarchism has greater things to do than to bother about some particular member. It has to build character, to develop individuality, to clear the human mind of spooks and shadows. It has to call men and women "out from the dark refinement, out from behind the screen, out from traditions and prejudices—into the open road."

St. Louis. Some people seem to be incapable of learning that Anarchism and dirty halls in squalid sections of the city are not synonymous. True, Anarchism does not exclude the poor, the dirty or the tramp any more than the sun excludes them, but it does not make a virtue of filth. It seems to me that so long as people remain satisfied with their present conditions, absolutely indifferent to cleanliness, air and beauty, they cannot possibly feel the burning shame of their lives, nor will they strive for anything that might lift them out of the ugliness of their existence. I do not censor anyone, for I am convinced that the boys of St. Louis tried their best; yet I am grieved that they should be satisfied with so little. True, the halls were cheap, but though the future of Mother Earth depends upon the success of this tour, I cannot even for her sake speak in dingy little halls, dark and gloomy, with the dust and smoke making it impossible to breathe.

Minneapolis. Those who believe that only organizations or groups can accomplish things should profit by the example of Minneapolis, where two energetic workers did wonders.

The population of this city is composed of shopkeepers, bankers, doctors and lawyers—not the element that is usually interested in radical ideas. Nor were such ideas ever put before them. Anarchism was a spook, an evil spirit in that town, but daring is the only way to success. The audiences that thronged the halls for three successive evenings far surpassed in number and intelligence the most optimistic expectations. When I looked into the earnest faces, I felt that here were people who did not come to see but to hear, to be enlightened and to learn, and I was grateful to my good star, or rather to the energy and perseverance of the two comrades who made such meetings possible.

The world is full of freaks—the Minneapolis Spook Qub can certainly boast of a large following. This organization is composed of professional men only, and as they are known for their purity and morality, they never suffered the evil spirit of woman to invade their sanctum before. But thanks to the generosity of a friend, the rigid rules of the Spook Club were temporarily set aside. Possibly the members thought that one could not be a woman and an Anarchist at the same time. The angelic chastity of the Spookers would have been quite discomfoting to me, were it not for the presence of a few daughters of that arch seducer Eve, who helped to bring some wit and humor into the dead atmosphere of statute and dissecting room wisdom. Specialists were there a-plenty, doctors enough to create any amount of disease, lawyers and a real live judge to induce one to commit crime, bump interpreters and bump producers, and so forth; all important and awe inspiring gentlemen, but as innocent of the great questions of the day as new born bobes, their heads full of spooks and fears of all that their lack of wisdom could not grasp.

Winnipeg. The dirty crows—as a certain French arist named the priests—who infest the streets and cars of Montreal are not as numerous in Winnipeg, but the horrors of their creed are as dominant here as there—the creed that has for centuries gone about killing, burning and torturing is still holding the Canadian people in power, befogging their minds as in ages past.

The city was white on my arrival; everything in the tight clutches of grim winter; apparently not a sign of life or warmth. But the greetings of my comrades and the enthusiasm of the audiences soon convinced me that all was not cold or dead. Spring, the great awakener of life and growth, was stirring in the hearts of those who had come to hear me.

Men and women from every nook in the world gather at Winnipeg, the land of promise. They are soon made to realize, however, that the causes which drove them from their native shores—oppression, greed and robbery—are quite at home in this new, white land. The true great promise lies in all these nations coming together, to look one another in the face, to learn for the first time the real force that makes for wealth. Men and women knowing one another and clasping hands for one common purpose, human brotherhood and solidarity. Yes, Winnipeg is the place of promise. It is the fertile soil of growth, life and ideas.

The Radical Club, but two years old, has become a tremendous factor in creating interest in new thought. My six days' visit seemed a dream. Large, eager audiences every evening and twice on Sunday, a beautiful social gathering that united two hundred men, women and children in one family of comrades, and people constantly coming and going during the day, all anxious to learn, made the time pass like a flash. When I stood on the platform of the train bidding a last farewell to a large group of friends, I keenly felt the pains of parting; but this, too, I felt:

Aliens! We must not stop here—

However sweet these laid-up stores, however convenient this dwelling we cannot remain here,

However shelter'd this port and however calm these waters, we must not anchor here,

However welcome the hospitality that surrounds us we are permitted to receive it but a little while.”

I wanted to be alone with my thoughts, alone with my impressions of those who had passed before me in long processions during my stay in Winnipeg. However, the official zeal of the Immigration Inspectors willed it differently. With the usual impudence that goes with authority

I was subjected to the “third degree”: my name, occupation, whether American citizen, how long in America, and whether I had been out of the States before. Evidently the uniformed gentlemen had studied that infamous anti-Anarchist Immigration Law that will not admit “disbelievers in organized government.” I assured my anxious protector that he would have to let me return, since I had been in America eighteen years before that stupid law was passed. Though myself a citizen of the world, my father happened to be privileged enough to become a citizen of this free country. After a long conversation with some others of his ilk, my good friend decided to let me go on. I know from experience that our law makers can do anything they please; still, I am optimistic enough to believe that they would not venture to keep me out of this “sweet land of liberty.” Besides, what are laws for if not to be evaded? No wonder so many “disbelievers in organized government” have flocked to America since the law against them became operative.

Poor, stupid Immigration Inspector! If you could have foreseen the result of your zeal, you might not have made it so public that the dangerous Emma Goldman was on the train. You got my fellow passengers intensely interested, with the result that I added a seventh meeting to those held at Winnipeg and disposed of a large number of magazines and pamphlets—not in the hall, but in the Pullman sleeper. When will our fool governors learn that the best government is the one that governs least or not at all? Never before have I felt as convinced of this truth as on this tour. The rigid laws against Anarchists, passed within the past four or five years, the shameful misrepresentation of Anarchism, and the persecution of its adherents have awakened the most intense interest in our ideas in this country. Still more striking is the tremendous change in the attitude of the press. The papers in Toledo, Toronto, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Minneapolis and Winnipeg, especially those of the last two cities, have been remarkable for their fairness and decency in reporting my meetings. Probably they have learned that yellow journal methods, sensational, vulgar, untruthful reports are no longer believed by the thinking readers of newspapers. I wish our Eastern journalists would learn the same lesson and follow the example of one of their colleagues, the editor of the Winnipeg Tribune, who has this to say:

“Emma Goldman has been accused of abusing freedom of speech in Winnipeg, and Anarchism has been denounced as a system that advocates murder. As a matter of fact, Emma Goldman indulged, while in Winnipeg, in no dangerous rant and made no statement that deserved more than moderate criticism of its wisdom or logic. Also, as a matter of fact, the man who claims that Anarchism teaches bomb-throwing and violence doesn’t know what he is talking about. Anarchism is an ideal doctrine; that is now, and always will be, utterly impracticable. Some of the gentlest and most gifted men of the world believe in it. The fact alone that Tolstoi is an Anarchist is conclusive proof that it teaches no violence.

“We all have a right to laugh at Anarchy as a wild dream. We all have a right to agree or disagree with the teachings of Emma Goldman. But we should not make ourselves ridiculous by criticising a lecturer for the things that she did not say, nor by denouncing as violent and bloody a doctrine that preaches the opposite of violence.”

(To be continued.)

[part 3]

Denver. Those who fly high on the wings of imagination must expect to suffer an occasional fall.

The stirring history of Colorado's labor struggles quickened my blood with the thought of the revolutionary attitude of the workers since 1903. I was full of expectation. Had not the mine owners with the aid of their hirelings—the government—waged relentless war against organized labor? Had they not robbed and oppressed in the most merciless manner? Had they not employed the most dastardly means against the three friends of labor whom they could neither corrupt nor conquer? Surely the plutocracy of Colorado had committed enough crimes to cause a national revolution.

My imagination pictured united labor striving in solidaric unity in that great cause, their emancipation from the twin monsters of capitalism and authority.

It was a painful awakening! Whatever the feeling of the workers of Colorado may be at this critical moment, Denver has too much of the hospital atmosphere to permit of a healthy revolutionary spirit. Essentially a health resort, its patients are too much occupied with themselves to bother about the outrage now being enacted at Boise. Of course, there are the intellectuals, or the High Brows as they are playfully called: writers, editors and other professional men; but one would look in vain for revolutionary backbone among them. They hug their comforts and love material and social success too well to follow the example of their brothers in Russia who, at the risk of their own lives, carry the beacon of human emancipation into factory and field. No doubt the American intellectuals are also interested in the pressing questions of the day, but it is the parlor interest of men decked out in evening dress, sipping tea from dainty China cups. Fortunately, the world is full of exceptions. It gave me great joy to find two such in Henry and Lillian Thayer—true Americans in the best sense, in whom the revolutionary spirit of their forefathers has triumphed over the influence of a conservative New England rearing.

The meetings arranged by a solitary enthusiastic comrade proved quite successful, but as I said before, they bore a convalescent appearance. Our social, however, more than realized my highest expectations. In spite of the stormy night we had a most successful gathering of representatives of various schools of thought, united by a genuine feeling of brotherhood and common interest. The purely human side is always at its best at informal affairs.

Our comrades at large will be glad to learn that our old staunch friends William and Lizzie Holmes have awakened to a new interest and have joined the literary staff of Mother Earth.

San Francisco. The city I once called the American Paris looked like a graveyard upon my arrival. Not a fashionable cemetery with imposing tombstones, but like a gigantic refuse pile in which sticks and stones mark the last resting place of the social outcasts. But, then, an uninterrupted trip of sixty hours under capitalistic management that landed me in San Francisco eight hours too late for the first of May meeting, is not calculated to make one see things in roseate colors. Three weeks' stay in the city has, however, not worn off my first impression. The earthquake—or the fire, as the natives prefer to believe—has left its lasting mark. Of course, capitalistic greed is striving to rebuild the city, but the new homes and structures being put up are making the Gate City even more hideous than the ruins still scattered about. No less hideous are the disclosures of the depravity of the local authorities, represented by Mayor Schmitz & Co. The good citizen is eternally drilled in the necessity and usefulness of laws and government, while his rulers are growing fat on the Mrs. Warrens, without even running the financial risks of Sir

John Crofts or the Bishop of Canterbury. When one considers how few of our official rogues are ever exposed, one shudders at the demoralization of our public life.

The conditions during my stay in San Francisco almost seemed to bear out the charges of the yellow press against me. As if it were not sufficient for one woman to be responsible for the deaths of all crowned heads and most great strikes, I have now discovered that I am credited by science with having enriched surgery by a most interesting case—the result of the Czolgosz shot.

Two strikes really broke out after I set foot on the shaky soil,—shaky not because of the quake, but on account of the numerous quacks of the California labor movement, who are feeding the workers on patent medicine and pills. Nothing but quack treatment can bring about such results as the strike of the telephone operators and car men. The former have but recently awakened to the necessity of organization, which probably means to most of them more ribbons and ice cream; but the car men, familiar with the true purposes of trade unionism, should have long since realized that they are waging a life-and-death struggle. The attitude of the unions was simply ridiculous. They gave the company all opportunity to prepare for the strike and then looked on in passive resistance while their doom was being sealed. Nay, more, Cornelius, President of the car employees, offered his services to the Mayor to preserve order, which under the circumstances meant the protection of the company in its successful strike-breaking.

The only satisfactory feature of the strike was the attitude of the public. The people refused to ride on the cars and walked singly and en masse to and from work; their sympathies were entirely with the strikers and the latter would have gained a splendid victory had they been blessed with sufficient sense to know how to handle the situation.

The general condition of the city made the preparations for my meetings very difficult, the more so as most of our local comrades live very far apart and were worn out by their daily long tramps. The work of arrangement therefore fell upon the shoulders of a few men. A number of splendidly attended meetings took place, and a large amount of literature sold.

Our farewell social brought the radical elements closer together and, though twelve different nationalities were represented, including our ardent Japanese comrades, all hearts beat in unison for one great, common cause.

Climate is known to have great influence upon human development; it is probably due to this that the Socialists of the coast are less dogmatic and authoritarian than their Eastern brothers. At any rate, I was invited to lecture before the San Francisco local and was treated in the most cordial manner.

Los Angeles.—Four weeks' continuous correspondence finally resulted in five meetings being arranged in the Sunny City. It was hard ploughing, but the harvest repaid the effort. As the readers will find a more detailed report from Los Angeles, I shall merely remark here that if I have accomplished nothing more than to rekindle the enthusiasm of our long-lost brother, W. C. Owen, my work at Los Angeles has been amply rewarded.

Few of our young readers and comrades are familiar with that name, but those of us who remember such intellectual towers as Dyer D. Lum and John Edelman will recollect W. C. Owen as one of the ablest and ardent workers in the movement at that period.

For reasons of his own, Comrade Owen has kept in the background. When my coming to Los Angeles was suggested, he was too skeptical of success to take an active interest. I was therefore very glad to see him at every meeting and happy to learn that he became sufficiently interested in my work to continue it upon my departure.

I am also glad to state that C. B. Cr, well known to our New York comrades, has recovered his former intellectual breadth and is now actively participating in the work of the Social Science Club.

Altogether, my visit to Los Angeles proved a rare treat. My host and hostess, the breeze of the Tyrolian mountains in their natures; my meeting an old comrade who, in spite of his Socialistic opportunism, is really bigger than his work; and many other persons and incidents combined to make my visit interesting and pleasant.

Portland.—Philistine ascendancy seems to have ridden the local Anarchists of their Anarchism. Most of them have grown prosperous and do not want their neighbors to remember their “youthful follies.” Others are busy saving the country from race suicide. Those who have some Anarchism left were willing enough to work, but lacked the experience. Still, three meetings have been held at Portland, and it is to be hoped that the ice crust covering the native heart and mind has been somewhat reduced in size. The Oregonian, a daily publication, aided my work by printing almost stenographic reports of my lectures.

Tacoma.—Nature has not been as generous to Tacoma as to Portland; it lacks the latter’s brilliance and beauty. The city seems to be stagnant; it has not grown during the last eight years.—My first meeting was largely attended and very satisfactory. By request I remained for another lecture which, however, was not as successful as the first, owing to a large fire which broke out in the neighborhood at the opening of the meeting.

Home Colony.—It was my intention to spend a few days at Home Colony, better known in Tacoma as the home of “cranks” and “free-lovers.” But fate willed it otherwise. I arrived at 8 P. M., and left the next morning, as time was pressing. I therefore do not know whether the colonists are either cranky or free; but this I do know, that they have accomplished wonders. Within eight years they have converted a wilderness into a beautiful garden, and though numerous nationalities are represented at the Colony, they have successfully demonstrated that neither law nor government is necessary for their well-being. No doubt there is occasional friction and misunderstanding; but the colonists have conclusively proven that neither police nor jails are necessary in a rational social organization. As they gradually learn that true Anarchism means non-interference, friction will be minimized.

Seattle.—All is well that ends well.—The authorities and hall keepers became panic-stricken when my coming was announced. It was with great difficulty that we procured a hall.

I refer my readers to the more detailed report by A. H. I wish to state, however, that I regret very much that the proposed debate could not take place. It would have been almost too easy a victory to meet a man who shows his colors like Mr. Mills. The latter claims that Socialism “proclaims its obedience to the law and its desire to act always under and in accordance with legal forms.” If that be so, I fail to see the difference between Socialism and any other governmental theory. Or Mr. Mills misrepresents Socialism, and in that case he is but a typical politician.

Calgary.—“We are the people; the grandest people. We possess the greatest wonders of the world,”—such is the notion of a real, “desirable” American citizen.

After enjoying the perfume of New York’s greatest ornament—the famous East Side—for eight years, I made my first trip through the West in 1897. When I beheld the majestic beauty of the Rockies and the California mountains, I too felt that nature was incapable of anything grander. But my journey from Seattle to Calgary, through British Columbia, the dreamland of Selkirks and the Glaziers has completely cured me of national arrogance. Never before had I seen such glory, such wealth of color and form, and never has man with all his boasted achievements seemed so

puny, so insignificant as at the sight of those giants with the shimmer of gold reflected upon their snowy caps, immovable, inexorable and eternal as the firmament.

From these heights I fell into the mud of Calgary,— a town as gloomy as the priest's cassock. The great mass, however, that thronged the hall Sunday, June the sixteenth, was as surprising as it was unexpected. Indeed ideas are like lightning: they travel with the same rapidity and strike hard when they come in contact with the human mind. They have reached even far-away, deserted Calgary. Unfortunately, I did not have a single brochure or Mother Earth with me. The Canadian Postal service seems to serve everybody but the people. Literature sent from New York on the sixth of the month did not reach Calgary till after the sixteenth. My trunk, containing books and pamphlets, having been negligently allowed to remain at Seattle, I could leave nothing behind me but an impression. However, the ice has been broken, and if the work is continued, good fruition will result.

Nobody should be expected to lecture or to attend a meeting during the hot Summer days. Winnipeg and Chicago have convinced me of this on my return trip. It was altogether too hot to remain indoors. Besides, the human mind refuses to be overtaxed. I was too fatigued and worn out to take much interest in the meetings in the above-mentioned cities. Still, I was glad to meet again our active boys of Winnipeg and the good comrades of Chicago.

When I left New York, March third, I believed that I could return by the first of May. I found, however, such a tremendous interest in Anarchism all through the country, that even four months' touring barely covered the ground.

Our grand old man, Peter Kropotkin, recently wrote to me, inquiring whether I could recommend some young American comrades for work abroad. I replied, in effect, that if we had such gems, we could set them here. Now that my tour is ended, I am convinced more firmly than ever that the soil is ripe and the seed good. What we need is sowers. I have met many genuine, clear-headed and sincere American Anarchists, willing and ready to help our work, once it is properly started. What they lack is initiative. Some day that, too, may be called forth when the call of the battle will ring loud enough in their ears. Then they, too, will realize the beauty of the open road and joyfully follow its beckoning.

“Listen! I will be honest with you, I do not offer the old smooth prizes, but offer rough new prizes, These are the days that must happen to you: You shall not heap up what is call'd riches, You shall scatter with lavish hand all that you earn or achieve, You shall be treated to the ironical smiles and mockings of those who remain behind you, What beckonings of love you receive you shall only answer with passionate kisses of parting, You shall not allow the hold of those who spread their reach'd hands toward you.”

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Emma Goldman
On the Road
1907

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