

# **Egoism Vol. I. No. 3.**

Georgia & Henry Replogle

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## Pointers.

We fail to appreciate those evils which never come.

Persons in San Francisco who wish to subscribe for EGOISM can pay their subscriptions at the office of "Freethought," 838 Howard street.

While EGOISM contains adverse criticism of one of the "Individualist's" editorial writers, it is quite as anxious to commend the strong and sensible plea by "L," in the issue of June 16, for the enlightenment of the masses, as against preaching dynamite.

So much more valuable does William Holmes believe an active authoritarian to be than an indifferent citizen, that he "as an Anarchist" does what he can to stimulate such to active hostility by introducing Collectivist literature where he thinks that of Anarchism would not be acceptable.

Women's Rights have taken one step more. Women have stepped over the horse with one foot, and may now ride with a leg on each side. This is one step toward freedom, but it will not enable them to ride the political "hobby" there, for the reason that it does not travel in that direction.

It is with intense pleasure that we note the rapid strides to an impregnable position by the office editor of "Freethought," as evidenced by his article, "I Philosophize," reprinted in another column. EGOISM has not existed in vain. Hugh O thou wilt yet be left in the rear with thy "duty" fetish and "moral" phantom!

But two persons have as yet applied to this branch for petition blanks to secure signatures for the release of Moses Harman. There is no positive assurance that a petition even numerous signed will effect such release, but as we have before stated, it is the only hope and it seems no one could afford to leave a stone unturned. A long list of petitioners would be a rebuke to the censor gang worth working for even though it failed to move the president to action. Has EGOISM not some more friends who are acquainted with somebody that they could use in this way. Leaflets stating the case to those canvassed, will be furnished with; blanks. Both petition blanks and leaflets are valueless lying here, but would at least do propaganda work if circulated.

The first number of "Free Life," Auberon Herbert's new paper, published in London, has reached us. That it is a formidable antagonist of political superstition will be seen by its salutatory, "One Fight More—the Best and the Last," reprinted on another page. It will be a strong standard bearer for Anarchism in England, and a rallying point for the firm individuality of the English character as it passes from native blustering to the unalterable dignity of the strength born of experience. Mr. Herbert's broad sweep and definite touch of details in handling the political dogmas all the more intensify the regret of the Egoist upon noting the shadow of the "morality" ghost floating about whenever ethical policy is approached. It is hoped that he will take the trouble to ferret out the "morality" delusion as completely as he has the political one. The paper contains four pages a little larger than those of this paper, is probably issued weekly, and at one penny. All orders are to be addressed to Auberon Herbert, Old House, Ringwood.

A friend, who has no controversial ax to grind, observes that the editors of this paper take the doctrine of Egoism for granted, and do not enlarge upon the idea looking to its establishment in a scientific sense. This is true, and two reasons are that, first, Tak Kak, whose long familiarity with

the idea and scholarly ability enable him to treat it incomparably better than we possibly could, is developing its philosophy, and second, there are many who can better understand and appreciate a new departure in thought by assuming it and gathering the evidence by citations from their everyday experience, than by the more condensed method of abstract deduction. Thus with both methods employed, every variation between the two extremes of perceptive and reflective habit will be more fully met than otherwise. This explanation will probably be satisfactory to all save some pedantic controversialists, who will be considered when Tak Kak has finished his exposition of the subject, if they still think they can make the “moral” wart stick with evolution plaster. Tak Kak is laying a foundation for his argument so comprehensive and deep that jealous sophists will probably be silenced if they study his treatise in order to venture a criticism of it. We hope every reader will carefully read and digest these articles as they appear, so that at their completion each will find himself or herself master of a philosophy that is at the very foundation of all the happiness possible to conditioned beings. Close study is the lone condition of gaining knowledge, and can be facilitated only by advantage of a commanding view; this advantage an understanding of Egoism furnishes.

## I Philosophize.

Every man should be able to give a reason for the hope that is in him, and should be prepared to explain his conduct when he does good as well as when he does evil. To do good for the sake of good, or to do right “because it is right,” is not philosophical. Self-denial is unnatural, and therefore unwise unless some benefit results to the self-denier sufficient to pay for the inconvenience. Life, as far as I can see, has no object, but it may have its uses. Uses for what? To give the means of happiness to its possessor. One thing is not “higher” than another. A handful of mud from the bottom of the bay is as “high” as the brain of the philosopher. The latter is merely a more complex mass, and has attributes not belonging to mud. What we call intelligence, as I view it, is a result of complexity. Intelligence is not put into the brain, but is the recognizable manifestation of the working of the brain. There is no design in it, but a natural process. Therefore we are not required to indulge in sentimental admiration of genius. We need only to recognize it; as a natural outcome of prior conditions.

Life having no object, and when rightly viewed no high aim or romance to the sane person, what shall he do with it? Spend it riotously? That will not pay, as witness the wrecks on the shores of dissipation. Shall we practice self-denial as regards the pleasures of the world? Yes, if it gives us happiness, in which case we have used life to its highest productivity, and in denying ourselves one pleasure we have achieved a greater. The monk in his cell, the anchorite ; in his cave, the priest among lepers, contemplates his reward and is happier, or thinks he is, than he would be elsewhere. Otherwise he would not be there. Life has no virtues and no duties as generally understood. To do that which we call virtuous is to do what experience has taught us brings most happiness, and therefore pays us in the end. It is no more praiseworthy than the act of paying our board in advance when we have no credit. To practice what goes under the name of virtue is simply to prepare conditions for selfish benefits. The duty idea is a superstition. If a person would be happy otherwise than in the performance of what he terms duty, he would not perform it. He has only followed his ruling inclination.

The question arises, What is life for? It is for nothing. We possess legs adapted to locomotion, and use them for that purpose. We have life adapted to the pursuit of happiness. Let us so employ it.

Gentle reader, do you ask me what I am giving you? I answer: If I understand the subject it is the doctrine of Egoism, the philosophical side of Anarchism. It appears to me to be a valuable line of thought for those who desire to get at the mainspring of human action, though at the end of the, investigation they are likely to emerge from the same hole they went in at, and to find things the same as ever upon the surface.—George E. Macdonald in “Freethought,” of June 28.

# The Courage Myth.

The word “courage,” is another of the miracle words. Like the ideal of Altruism, it is impossible, and exists only in the misconceptions of loose analysis. Consistently defined, its ideal would consist in the virtue of placing the smallest value on the greatest considerations; of imperiling life and all that it means to the possessor for some one of its incidental matters. Indeed, the conception can be maintained only in the thought of jeopardizing the important and more desirable for the minor and indifferent. Otherwise, the thought of risk, and idea of “courage” disappears. It requires none of the ideal, “courage,” where the thing imperiled is only equal to or a less consideration than the thing to be gained. Neither does any one really risk the greater for the smaller with a full sense of the fact. If one realize that life is worth more to him than the incident for which he is about to risk it, he simply does not take the risk. Who takes a real risk must do it blindly and without consideration, which is foolish, and the lone condition under which a supposed courageous act takes place.

The strong man does not enter a physical combat with a sense of fear and an apprehension of probable defeat, but because he has an abundance of strength which assures him of a correspondingly less degree of danger than would present itself to a weaker man. The logician may be physically weak, but enters an intellectual controversy because he or she feels the position is correct; that facts sustain it and that the instances of proof can be satisfactorily cited. The champion of physical strength might shrink from a like contest with all the timidity that the other could manifest if urged into physical combat. Each would undoubtedly challenge the admiration of the other and win credit for great “courage,” while really both are exercising only an economy of their forces to be in active capacity at all, and are not assuming what either regards as the great risk required to make it the “courageous” act for which each gives the other credit, else neither of them would be found there.

This brings us to the objective impressions with which we form the ridiculous conception known as “courage,” to which so much worshipful deference is paid. We see others extravagantly using a function of which we have little ourselves, and could so exercise only at the peril of all that existence means to us. This objective impression subjectively appropriated without separating the fact of another’s strength from our own weakness in that particular function, produces the idea of courage, or bravery for taking a great risk, because it would be a great risk to us. Subjectively, all acts follow what under the circumstances is to the Ego the line of the least resistance. All escape, if they can, from a hurricane or a sinking ship, where their ability for effective resistance is about equal. Any deviation from this line is an error in judging danger rather than a deliberate submission to it. Between the person who runs and the one who stands for fight, there is only a matter of difference in judgment, or of taste; one feels surest of safety and advantage in one course of conduct, the other in another; both wish to be safe. One prefers security and the other things of life to the fame of a given risk, while the other either feels sure of both, or forgets the one for the time being, which is so far insanity, and leaves the further results of that course

of conduct mere accident so far as that person is concerned; a matter as far removed from his or her responsibility as the revolving of the planets.

Let whoever finds a “courageous” act analyze it before worshiping the actor and see if it is not either the accident of insanity, or the unimperiled feat of conscious strength. In either case the thought of risk, the imperiling of the greater for the less—the only condition that constitutes risk—has no influence, and an idea of courage without danger will be much like the hero—no more. Brave revolutionists, and brave defiers of greater powers, determine ye the difference between the brave, and the foolish.

H.

## Moral Motives and Egoistic Methods.

That Moralists are only *blindly* selfish people, seems paradoxical to those who have not given the subject close enough attention to dispel the moral ghost. That physical force revolutionists are generally Moralists would seem equally so. But closer observation will show that they both come from a closely related mental indolence, and that those who have outgrown the force idea and claim the moral, do so more through not having scrutinized it as they have that of physical force, than to any consistency between moralism and educational methods. For it follows that if a thing is “right,” as morality holds it is, there is no reason for not *making* people do it, as force advocates propose. On the other hand the upholder of force would not think of compelling a thing that was not “moral.” Both are based on emotionalism, and consequently neither will take the trouble to trace conduct to its source and look for the remedy there, but slashes away at the surface without regard to cause and effect or consistency.

An all-around sample of this degree of mental penetration, is “T” of the “Individualist,” who uses heavily of its editorial space and writes all its editorial nonsense. In the number of May 10, of that paper this writer in an article upholding force, is in a sense, an Egoist, and says:

The public is nothing to me. I agree with Vanderbilt when he remarked “the public be damned.” If they are on my side I will help them, if not, so much the worse for them. The person for whom I am fighting is myself...

Whether it is a policy for self-aggrandizement through pretended love for the welfare of others, or a real “change of heart,” the reader may judge, but in the number of June 16, in evasively attacking the Egoistic position the same writer falls dead in love with the public, and says:

So the social question is not one of intelligence, primarily, but of morality. It is not as essential to teach men, as to mould their characters so that the sight of happiness in others gives them pleasure; so that they will be more careful not to infringe on the rights of others, than to be always on the lookout lest others curtail their liberty. Afterwards we must have intelligence to tell us *how* to accomplish these things. But only after morality has made us desire to do them.

It is not stated why Moralists, in strict accordance with this theory, do not take pleasure in the happiness of monopolists, nor why physical force is required, unless it be to do the moulding with, in absence of the intelligence which “need not apply” until men have had a dose of morality. The above remarkable conclusion was deduced from the premises that intelligence “gives us the power to do what we want to do,” and that “if you give a man who lives off the labor of others more intelligence he can do so more effectually”; hence morality to cause him to use it for others. If intelligence will give us power to do what we want to or even tend to give such power, it has occurred to some persons that intelligence has a tendency to get around among other men as soon as the preaching of religion is abandoned, in which case it would not depend so much



on the labor robber's desire to rob, even though he had no "morality," as it would on whether these laborers would permit him to do so. It is the peculiar doctrine of Egoism that as men are built, they are better adapted to understand and attend to their own desires than their neighbors are, and that self-defense can be more safely depended upon than generosity. It has occurred to Egoists that a very selfish person would naturally desire his neighbors to serve him before themselves, and that the sentiment is fathered by the blindest selfishness; so blind that it cannot see that this very sentiment gives it away.

Individual consciousness being somewhat subjective, has a tendency to forget the interests of other consciousnesses, which it can know or care little about. Separately organized beings must, from that very fact, consciously or unconsciously, act from and in reference to that separate organization, whether such action results in mutual interest or otherwise. It follows that under this absolute condition of being, equality of intelligence alone can bring equality of conditions. And the appealing to the native selfish instinct of the individual by causing his mind to dwell so intensely upon the idea that something is to be or should be done for him, that he forgets that this requires the same from him, and that nothing is thereby gained, prevents an approximate equality of intelligence, which permits the crafty to become robbers of labor, and makes these Moralists their most useful though unconscious tools. Hence Egoistic intelligence, against Moralism—religion.

H.

## An Example of Privilege's Pets.

Two more San Leandro vegetable men were arrested this morning for selling wares from their wagons. Officer Curtis made the arrests and accused the men with obstructing the streets. They deposited \$20 bail each and were released. The arrests are being made at the instigation of the Eleventh street produce dealers, who assert that their business is greatly interfered with by these wagon peddlers, who go from house to house—Tribune.

It is amusing to witness the assurance with which the municipal authorities pretend to do one thing while they are really doing another. This little incident above quoted is very thought-provoking, and clearly illustrates the falsity of the claim that protection of the weak is the function of government. The spirit and intention of the arrest of these men were to prevent them from selling fruit on the streets, while the charge of obstructing the streets was only a technical point to make the officers secure, as is shown by the following remarks of one of the privileged produce dealers of Oakland: "The question came up some time ago as to what could be done to rid ourselves of these peddlers, and the City Attorney and the Chief of Police said they could only arrest them for obstructing the streets. The nuisance had been carried so far that something had to be done to protect ourselves. That is why these arrests were made."

Now, mark you, these arrests were made at the instigation of the Eleventh street produce dealers, "whose business was greatly interfered with," and it was one of these men who said "something had to be done to protect ourselves." It was not the people of Oakland who desired protection, but those men whom the government had granted the privilege of monopolizing the produce trade. A more direct example is not needed to show that it is privilege that the law protects instead of the weak. Back of it all lies the monopoly in money, but more directly bearing upon this instance is the fact that by paying a high license these men buy the privilege of having the efforts of the police and other officers directed in their behalf. The government must protect them or it will not get the boodle. The San Leandro men were not even violating any of the city ordinances so as to attract the attention of the authorities; it was only those who were in the same business that were interfered with. If one of the peddlers had requested the authorities to arrest all of the other peddlers because they were "interfering with his business," they would probably have arrested him for a lunatic; and yet, if the real object of the police force is to look out for and protect the poorer and weaker portion of the people it would have been in place for them to have ascertained which was the poorest and weakest man in the crowd and given him their protection, but instead the strongest and richest men of all were the ones protected. The source of the injustice is easily traceable to the privilege granted by the licenses given to the produce dealers. If all unlicensed competition could not be prohibited the licenses would be of no avail; for where there is equal opportunity there is no privilege. If these produce men would cease to pay the tribute to the government they would at once cease to receive its protection, for it is by virtue of this tribute that it is given them. In open competition with opportunities equal the

results of labor would of necessity distribute equally among the laborers in proportion to their capacity. But where government steps in and interferes with competition by granting privileges the results of labor as inevitably drift into the hands of those privileged as snow drifts into huge piles under a heavy wind, while other spots on the ground are bare. E. C. Walker said: "One must see, if not totally blind, the giant and ghastly form of Privilege in shadowy outline behind the' millionaire. Privilege it is that robs labor of his pittance and gives it to the fortunate pets of the State." In this instance the outlines grew very distinct.

G.

# The Philosophy of Egoism.

## III

Egoism is (1) the theory of will as reaction of the self to a motive; (2) every such reaction in fact. This double definition is in accord with the usual latitude due to the imperfection of language, in consequence of which an identical term covers theory, individual fact, and mass of facts. I apprehend that in making this fundamental definition I shall have provoked the dissent of some readers well enough grounded in mental philosophy to perceive that on accepting the definition they must speedily consign any claim for an unegoistic philosophy to the realm of mental vagaries. They will accuse me of begging a question in the definition; but I cannot wish to lay down a definition less fundamental than that which will be found sufficiently comprehensive and exact in every relation of rational motive and resulting volition and action. When I shall have done justice to "Altruism" it will be seen that there is here no begging of any question. The alternatives which the "Altruists" propose may accord with such of their own conceptions as they wish to term "Egoism," with which, however, I have no complicity.

By "the self" I mean the living person or animal, as recognized by the senses and consciousness, and not by any mysterious, intangible entity or supposed entity,—“soul,” “mind,” or “spirit.”

By "motive" I mean any influence,—sight, sound, pressure, thought or other energy,—operating upon the self, and thereby causing a change in the self, under which process it reacts to seize what contributes to its satisfaction or to repel or escape from what produces or threatens its discomfort or undesired destruction.

If my definition be imperfect, the gap is in omitting to mention reflex action together with will. I regard reflex action as probably connected with a species of will in the nerve centers (and in other plastic matter in the lowest animals). However this may be, reflex actions are not subject to serious dispute in any speculative moral aspect. The omission, therefore, if any, would concern the exhaustiveness of the definition, not its quality. But the merit of a definition is not in its exhaustiveness; it is in drawing the line at the right place. As I do not propose further defining "will," I will just say that reflex action being granted to be in effect self-regarding, all that remains to be done in order to universalize, according to these views, the recognition of the Egoistic theory, is to establish all determinations to voluntary activity as reactions, plus consciousness in the brain, like reflex actions without it. Any controversy against the Egoistic theory will rage along the line of voluntary action; hence that part of the line of Egoism is all that is essential to be put into a definition. But if I have omitted reflex action in (1) the theory, I have not ignored it in (2) "such reaction in fact," for "such" refers to the self.

Consulting convenience, I have written "the self" whether meaning apparently the whole co-ordinated energies of the self, or the attracting and repelling powers of any organ or member thereof. Probably never were the whole energies of any animal exerted at once under the stimulus of any motive or combination of motives; hence the common expression is an exaggeration.

A course of reading in history, philosophy, and science, especially standard literature on evolution, together with personal observation of animal, including human life, will gradually convince any intelligent person that all voluntary acts, including a certain class of acts popularly but erroneously called non-voluntary, are caused by motives acting upon the feeling and reason of the Ego, and that the reaction of the Ego to a motive occurs as surely according to the Ego's composition and the motive as does any chemical reaction; that the only difficulty for our understanding is in the complexity of motive influences (motives) and composition of the subject acted upon. To avoid this conclusion the dogmatists have spoken of motive as if it were something self-originating in the thoughts. Plainly, motive is any influence which causes movement. There must be a cause for every thought as well as every sensation. That cause must affect the Ego, and the Ego cannot but react if affected,—therefore according to the character of the motive and the manner and degree in which the Ego is affected in any of its parts, otherwise there would be no nature, no continuity of phenomena. In short, man in everything is within the domain of nature; that is, the regular succession of apparently self-correlating phenomena.

A motive planted in the Ego (that is to say in the self) may be compared to a seed planted in the ground. Assuming that it germinates, the commonly observed effect is an upward growth of stalk and fruit, analogous to voluntary action; but I have defined Egoism by reference to the spring of such action rather than by reference to the action as phenomenon, for a reason which will be understood by following out the analogy. Beside the upward growth there is a formation of root. The stalk of some plants may be repeatedly cut off, but while the root is alive there is the probability of another upward growth. This is most generally the case with young plants. Though mental analysis should reduce will to a mere abstract term of convenience for an imaginary link between motive and act, and whether or not volition becomes differentiated to bear a more precise and active sense, it is necessary to have a conception correlating renewed activities with former ones, as perceived in repetition or in series, without the planting of new seed. This is found not in the simple and familiar illustration of seed lying without germinating for some time, but in the invisible growth beneath the surface, supplying energy and determination to forms which repeatedly appear and then take various directions accordingly as they encounter obstacles.

TAK KAK.

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THE proper work of policemen is to protect property and life against thieves and murderers and, perhaps, to answer questions for the information of persons who wish to get about town, and to assist women and children in crossing streets. This work they perform to a certain extent, and should have credit for it, but all the good they accomplish is greatly overbalanced by the harm they do in their illegitimate capacity of armed retainers of the ruling classes.—Hugh O. Pentecost.

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## Selfishness versus Unhappiness.

While it is true that we are always intent upon our own happiness, it is equally true that we are forced to devote much of our time and energy toward reducing our unhappiness. In our efforts to lessen our pains it seems sometimes as if our motives were altruistic. As for instance where one rushes into danger to save another from injury or death at the peril of his own life. But to be more specific, let us suppose a case: We shall imagine for instance a father and little daughter standing on the deck of a ship as it plows the ocean. By some accident the child loses its balance and falls overboard. The cry of the child pierces the father's heart and instantly renders him frantic, and he jumps overboard to save his precious child. But before the great ship can be stopped and boats lowered the father and child have been lost to the sight of the passengers. They have sunk beneath the waves, yet the boat's crew row back heroically to the place where they were supposed to be. But the search is in vain.

The act of the father in this case might be called unselfish or altruistic. Let us see. When his child fell into the ocean the father's heart was instantly filled with agony. His suffering was unendurable. He *must* do something. He is no longer self-possessed. He is driven by the storm of emotion to act, and the only thing to be done seems to him, is to plunge into the water after his child. His judgment and reason did not weigh and balance motives and the probabilities of success. It was uncontrollable feeling that moved him to act. He knew well enough that he could not swim a single stroke. One moment's thought would have told him that he was plunging into the jaws of death, as there was no prospect of his saving the child.

"Did he not love his child?" Yes. "Was it not because of his love of her that he sprang into the ocean after her?" No. The love of his child was the *occasion*, but not the *cause*. His unbounded affection produced agony and despair, and he could not control them; they controlled him. He could not live in such torture, and insane as was his act, it was the only one that promised *relief*. The imperative demand for less agony was the *cause* of his act. The love of his child was the cause of his agony, and the agony was the cause of his jumping into the water after her. The love of the child then was only an *indirect* cause, the *direct* cause was his *own* suffering. His action was obviously egoistic, and not altruistic. He could not endure the pain. He must have less pain, and in his momentary insanity no other thing seemed possible for him to do.

Now let us suppose another case. The father is an expert swimmer, and his child falls from a ship, the land is not far away, the water is smooth, and it is probable that the father may reach his child before it drowns and bear it safely to the shore. But in this case there is no more evidence of Altruism than there was in the other. It is not probable that a father takes into deliberate consideration his swimming abilities. In both cases the fathers acted from impulse. The love of the child caused the impulse in each case, but the direct demands of the Ego to lessen its pain were the direct cause. We love others, but never can love them better than we do ourselves.

We may die for a friend, but when we come to the last analysis we find Ego in front of *alter*. We shall find that the man who gives his life for a principle or a cause, as the martyrs are supposed to give theirs, generally gives it for himself. He gives it on his own account. He does not die

for others, but dies for himself. He is built that way. And in most cases he would have but little hesitancy in making martyrs of others if he had his way. Those who have died as martyrs had the stuff in them for making others enjoy the same great blessing. Bruno did not die for others. He died because it was a fuller satisfaction to his nature to die than to live by denying the truth, by denying his manhood. He died in the enjoyment of a self-satisfaction which he could not have if he lived.

Living for others, and dying for others are fictions. Man lives chiefly for himself, and he tests all things by the amount and quality of happiness or unhappiness that he thinks they may bring to him. That he is benevolent, charitable, etc. at times there is no question, but these expressions of his good will are but safety-valves through which he puts himself on good terms with himself. He does the good things because it is a pleasure for him to do so, or because he thinks he will in some way derive pleasure in consequence of his act.

W. S. BELL.

## **“One Fight More—the Best and the Last.”**

**[Auberon Herbert in his “Free Life.”]**

“Why have you come into existence, and what have you to say?” is the question which will be asked of us, and which it is our task to answer. We have come into existence to preach a great but simple truth, on which, as we hold, all real improvement of the human race depends. That truth is—as Mr. Herbert Spencer, above all other teachers, has taught—that a man’s consent as regards his own actions is the only basis on which social relations can be happily and permanently founded; and that the struggle for power over each other, in which all classes are recklessly engaged, is a mere madness from which they have to be recalled. The gospel we preach is that force, when not carefully and exactly confined to one purpose, for which it may be used without positive wrong,—force to repel force—the force of self-defense—whenever it exists as an organized system, under which some men compel other men to accept their view of what is right or convenient, under which some men are the regulators and some the regulated, is a mere survival of barbarism, a mere perpetuation of slavery under a new name.....

It is best at once to define what we mean by force. We mean the direct use of physical force, whether by tying a man’s hands, or inflicting legal penalties upon him, to compel such a man to do certain things—whether good or bad things, we care little or nothing—without regard to his individual consent; and the task that we take upon ourselves is to show that all such force, outside the limits we have assigned to it, is unreasonable in its essence (that is, cannot be brought into conformity with reason or justified by an intellectual process); .....that it is opposed to the great laws under which all human improvement takes place; that it is opposed to the evolution of the race, and therefore destined in the end to involve in destruction those nations and societies who refuse to abandon the use of it; that it does not and cannot command any machinery by which it can be made a true servant of men; that tried by the test of an experience reaching over ages, it has always sooner or later, when confronted by reason ...—however great may have been the measure of the brutal license given to it—retired worsted from the field, in presence of those truer forces, whose evolutionary task it is, as knowledge grows and human nature improves, to place their heel upon its head. We know well that to emperors, popes, and cardinals, whose eyes turn fondly to an unreturning past; .....to bureaucrats built up from the stuff of pedantry; to politicians anxious to magnify their trade and calling; to those who run the great machine for their own glory and profit; to the half cunning and half self-deluded man who has never discriminated between his opinions and his interests; to the courtiers of every kind who crowd around the throne of the people; and, . we will add, to many a good, worthy citizen who for want of careful thought uses the first weapon that is put into his hands, to fight evil,—to all these, force, or the idea of governing, shines in glittering colors, and seems the great prize worthy of the greatest efforts. We know all that, and we reckon with it at its true value. The army is great to look at, but it is poor and weak in itself. The emperors, the administrators, the bribers, and courtiers never have held the human mind in submission, and never will. Behind all these there are masses of men and women, misled,



if you will, by many a human passion, by many a skillful appeal, by many an ingrained cause of error, yet through it all faithfully wishing to see and know the truth, and ready slowly and painfully to follow it, when sight and knowledge shall come to them. Were it not for this desire for truth, which neither passion, nor ignorance, ...can destroy, the world would be indeed in evil plight. We cannot deny that, since the days of Roman empire, never did governing force appear to hold all nations so closely in its grasp as today; and yet for all that, we believe, never were the days of its dominion so certainly numbered, never was the new reformation, which will break up the great governing machines of the world and give freedom to every individual to possess and direct his life in his own fashion, so distinctly within human view. "But will you take no account of that greatest of all forces, State Socialism?" may be the involuntary exclamation of our readers, as they hear us speak in such terms of the ultimate rejection of governing force. "The emperors, bureaucrats, politicians, may be passing from us, like pale ghosts overtaken by daylight, but the real enemy, State Socialism, is only now beginning to find and develop its immense powers." True, State Socialism is our real enemy, the real perfected outcome of governing force. For years and for years the kings and their governments and the classes have played with force; until at last, today, the grim image of a perfect force-system, perfect from its main lines down to the smallest detail, has been born in the minds of men and is greeted with enthusiasm by millions of those, who find in it their new hope. We can see—who cannot see?—the power that this new idea is exercising upon men. Swiftly and steadily over the whole world the shadow of the evil thing grows and deepens; and men rapturously pray to it to come speedily and fall upon them, just as in old days tribes smitten by their neighbors prayed to some great conqueror to come and take them for his own. Yet knowing all this, knowing that the advance of State Socialism may sweep with the violence of a hurricane through this country, and through other countries, knowing that for a time it may even overpower the resistance of sane men, we neither fear it nor shrink from it, but only welcome it. Why? Because State Socialism is the last great bribe of the worshippers of force; the last great stake which they have to place upon the world's table. Because the race has to live through this great final temptation, this great master-delusion, as it has lived through many other temptations and many other delusions. Because it is only after force has offered all it can offer those who live the hardest lives, and that offer has been contemptuously rejected, that force itself will sink down to those lower depths of impotence and slave's estate which wait for it.... The hour of our temptation is before us, and we must neither shrink from it nor fear it. We have broken the force of kings; we have broken the force of churches; we have yet to break the force that pretends to be of the people and speak in their name. To all men and to all nations it is reserved at some moment of their lives to climb the high mountain and see the fair things of the world spread out before them, and to know that such fair things may be their own, if they will only fall down and worship the false guide that stands at their side. On the peak of that mountain the peoples of the world now stand. Never was a seemingly richer show of fair things offered to those who would fain be at rest after toil and in safety after danger. Lands and cities, the workshops throbbing with energy, the palace with its dainty pleasures, sheltering all that the mind of man has planned and his hand executed,—all these shall be theirs, on the one condition that they shall fall down and sanctify power, sanctify the right of some to take from others, sanctify the right of some to regulate according to their passing will every faculty and every act of others; on the condition that they shall deny and tread under foot that right which is inextinguishable and inalienable from manhood, the right of each to act and think for himself, the right to use his faculties for his own benefit and according to his own liking, the right to buy,

to sell, to exchange the product of those faculties without let or hindrance, the right to live in a free world where each constructs happiness or unhappiness for himself, and in which none is the mere atom in the ordered and regulated crowd.

..... Until the love of liberty has grown strong enough and pure enough to reject the gifts of State Socialism it cannot be the guide and mistress of men.

# Henrik Ibsen's Habits, Work, and Opinions.

Henrik Ibsen, as characterized by Walter Fren Lord, in the "Nineteenth Century," is a solitary man. For twenty-five years he has lived in self-imposed exile from his native country. No lands call him master; no household calls him its head. In his wanderings over Europe he goes in no society, and in his many temporary abodes he takes nothing with him that he calls his own. A friend charged with messages to him in Rome could only find him after much patient searching, and though well known by many by sight, he has no intimate friends.

I live to myself (he says), without friends. Friends are a costly indulgence; they lay on us obligations of speech or silence, like parties in politics. I believe in no such obligations. I belong to no party and wish to belong to none. I will sacrifice my feelings to the, claims of no organized mass, be it Party, Society, or State. From our early youth we are all brought up to be citizens instead of human beings; but we belong in reality to humanity rather than to the State. The expression of our own individuality is our first duty, not its subordination to the interests of the community. I, at least, have no talents as a citizen, the leader of a school, or a member of a party; and there must be thousands like me.

Concerning his manner of working, Ibsen says:

When I am writing, I must be alone; if I have the eight characters of a drama to do with, I have society enough; they keep me busy: I must learn to know them. And this process of making their acquaintance is slow and painful. I make, as a rule, three casts of my dramas, which differ considerably from each other. I mean in characteristics, not in the course of the treatment. When I first settle down to work out my material, I feel as if I had got to know my characters on a railway journey; the first acquaintance is struck up, and we have chatted about this and that. When I write it down again, I already see everything much more clearly, and know the people as if I had stayed with them for a month at a watering place. I have grasped the leading points of their characters and their little peculiarities, but I might yet make a mistake in important points. At last, in the final cast, I have reached the limits of my acquaintances: I know my people from close and lasting intercourse; they are my trusted friends, who have no surprises in store for me; as I see them now, so shall I always see them.

Ibsen's fame rests largely on his social dramas, in which the revolutionary aspirations of the masses now agitating the world attain artistic expression. His position in relation to the burning question of the times may be gathered from a letter he wrote to Georg Brandes, in which he says:

The State must be abolished. In a revolution that would bring about so desirable a consummation I should gladly take part. Undermine the idea of the commonwealth,

set up spontaneity and spiritual kinship as the sole determining points in a union, and there will be attained the beginning of a freedom that is of some value. Changes in the form of government are nothing else than different degrees of trifling,—a little more or a little less absurd folly.

And from a speech to a club of workmen at Drontheim, in which he said:

Mere democracy cannot solve the social question. An element of aristocracy must be introduced into our life. Of course I do not mean the aristocracy of birth or of the purse, or even the aristocracy of intellect. I mean the aristocracy of character, of will, of mind. That only can free us. From two groups will this aristocracy I hope for come to our people,—from the women and our workmen. The revolution in the social condition now preparing in Europe is chiefly concerned with the future of the workers and women. In this I place all my hopes and expectations; for this I will work all my life and with all my strength.—Transatlantic.

## A Technical Grievance Redressed.

New York, June 16, 1890.

EQUITY PUBLISHING COMPANY:—Your advertisement on last page of EGOISM for June concerning the pamphlet “Monogamic Sex Relations” discussed by “Ego” and “Marie Louise,” impels me to send you expressions of disapproval for having brought that discussion before the public at large in a manner most damaging to myself and my position.

While you have carefully reprinted all of “Ego’s” arguments on the subject, you have in a most unfair manner mutilated my own by striking out those which formed the solidest ground upholding my position.

As you describe in your advertisement, “Ego” has endeavored to charge monogamic sexual relations with all the terrible evils you describe, but I have proved, or attempted to prove that Monogamy is simply speculative, having no existence outside of our statute books, and that “Polygamy” and its inevitable correlative, “Polyandry,” are the veritable conditions under which our race is propagated and the true parents of the evils of which “Ego” complains.

Comrades, why so cripple my position and damage the theory I have tried to uphold?

It is incorrect to advertise a discussion between “Ego” and “Marie Louise” when “Marie Louise” is but partially heard.

Are you then so afraid of the truth that you strangle it into silence?

Your sincere comrade,

MARIE LOUISE.

The “fear” and “strangling” of “truth” very readily occurs to those who find some part of their argument missing, but to intentionally attempt to suppress any real argument of such a hearty “kicker” as Marie. Louise, would have been as unwise as it may prove to be for her to call public attention to bad argument unintentionally and partly through necessity omitted.

When the printing of “Monogamic Sex Relations” was commenced it was the design to publish from the “Alarm” the whole series of articles on the sex question by Ego, Marie Louise, C. L. James, and others, but when Ego’s reply to Marie Louise was partly printed, sickness had so consumed the time allotted to the work that we could not complete it as at first intended. So we conceived the idea of making it a discussion between Ego and Marie Louise only, and accordingly ran hurriedly through her last article and selected such of those parts of the strongest paragraphs that referred directly to Ego and put them on the last page and a half of space that was left of the twenty-four. As will be seen, those paragraphs containing the argument the omission of which is complained of, named C. L. James directly, mentioning Ego only incidentally, and as it was awkward to have

direct reference to another, in a discussion between Marie Louise and Ego, these paragraphs were left out of that discussion without duly considering their argumentative qualities. This is how she happened to be carelessly not maliciously suppressed.

As to the value of the argument it will be seen that no attempt was made to show how existing sexual relations produce the evils charged upon them in the grievance, while Ego did so show in citing the balanced electrical state of bodies in monogamic association, which is attested by medical writers in general in their advice to husbands and wives to sleep apart, as well as by the experience of thousands of those husbands and wives who have followed such advice.

In view of the fact that these evils do exist, and of the reasonableness that the balanced electrical state of the body through partly perfect monogamic association does lead to many of them, it is hard to understand how a more perfect and therefore intense Monogamy would remove the evils arising from the nature of Monogamy.

By way of showing how far the tone of the grievance is justified we reprint the body of the argument omitted in the pamphlet, and will send it, along with this protest and explanation on a separate sheet, with all pamphlets sold in the future, which will rectify the matter as nearly as may be. —[PUBLISHERS.]

#### THE OMITTED ARGUMENT.

James says: "Whenever a nation advances to a certain point in civilization they grow feeble, and strict laws for the enforcement of Monogamy give place either to liberal laws about divorce as in America, or to disregard of marriage and its obligations as in Italy." The position of James is altogether indefensible. It is not the enfeeblement of the race which brings the necessity of liberal divorce laws or disregard of marriage obligations. It is the Spirit of liberty with which progress inoculates the race. It is a phase when superstition and prejudices slacken their hold and the rights of the individual asserts itself. It is a revolution and does not prove enfeeblement more than did Luther and the reformation, or the destruction of the divine right of kings by Cromwell and Robespierre. It proves not an enfeeblement of the race, but a stronger intellectual development and a stronger insight into the science of life.

But I wish my readers to pause a moment and inquire whether our present civilization is monogamous—whether our present generation is the offspring of monogamous parents.

James says: "Our marriage laws equalize the tendencies by permitting men to be varietists while it requires women to be monogamists." Nordau says: "Out of a hundred thousand men, there would barely be one who could swear on his death-bed that he has never known but one single woman in his life." (Conventional Lies, p. 316.) Is this Monogamy? One half of the race acknowledged polygamists, and as far as their male functions are concerned procreating polygamous children. But is this all? Must not the males have female co-respondents in their polygamous relations? I see James and Ego rush to the rescue and exclaim: "Prostitution is there." Yes—prostitution is there, appalling in its magnitude! Female prostitutes who sell themselves to male prostitutes, who buy them for the most debasing purpose. Loathsome mire into which men and women crawl while pharisaic society spreads a cloth over it and labels the very

cloth itself as monogamous! But again is the acknowledged number of prostitutes adequate to meet the demands of the entire half of the male portion? We know that the number of males and females born is equal with a slight surplus of males. Here we are confronted with the hard fact that our generation is not only the offspring of polygamous fathers, making an equation of polygamous and monogamous heredity, but the monogamous section itself has to be divided into two parts pertaining to Monogamy and Polygamy (or Polyandry) respectively. Is this last division also an equation? If not, which side does overbalance the other? In short, how many women, say out of one hundred, does it require to meet one hundred polygamous men taking into consideration that we are not permitted to make eunuchs any more? It is useless to close our eyes to the terrible reality! Where shall we locate the monogamous children? How are they born? It would, indeed, be a blessing to be able to believe in spiritual incarnation as Christians do.

Monogamy in our civilization is a law, and nothing more, a dead letter by which one man having entrapped his neighbor's wife feels confident that his own wife knows the law and obeys it. Our marriage institution is anomalous in its principles. It does not unite two beings born free and equal. Man may dictate; woman must obey. Man may inflict pain; woman must forbear. Man may protect and respect, she must love. Respect a slave and love a master. What a paradox! Another demoralizing feature of our marriage institution is its indissolubility, and indissoluble it is, truly. Under our system of conventional morality no divorce can free a man, much less a woman. That fatal knot can never be untied. Powerful spider, it throws its webs and entwines our whole being. In vain do we try to burst the smothering envelope; it will not break. Under our pressure it may relax but never split open. Escape we never can; drag along the hateful burden, we ever must until worn out by the unequal struggle we sink down to die. Then death says to that legal murderer of soul and body:

"Stop; thy power dares not profane the gravel" The union of the two sexes must be adjusted in accordance to the laws of nature. It is a question which is paramount to all others. From that union all good and evil flow. It is the principle of life; the first cause; the alpha of the universe. As long as it is not established on the ethics of the science of life, so long must our poor humanity groan under the chastising hand of nature..... Not until sexual union is properly adjusted can we hope for an amelioration in the race. To reform a man or woman is but a dream. External conditions may soften vulgar impulses and strengthen weak and vacillating tendencies. The moderating process, with propitious environments, will produce offsprings more and more assimilated with equitable conditions. But no perfect offspring can be produced under an iniquitous system of marriage relations. This problem is the greatest (because the highest in importance) which ever stood before the mind of humanity. But it is to be faced and grappled with cost what it may.....

Conventional marriage and its laws having distorted our natural attributes, it is injudicious to judge of men and women as they are now. Give them unfettered freedom to act as their impulses bid and they will soon find the true road to happiness.....

## Egographs.

“Friendship ends where borrowing begins.”

“We blame in others only the faults by which we do not profit.”

Virtue, like piety, is a lack of experience; a pride in our ignorance.

A definition is a concise statement of how little we know about a subject.

“The wicked are preferable to the imbecile, because they sometimes rest.”

The principle of conjugal happiness is a belief in nervous attacks—Schopenhauer.

“The chain of marriage is so heavy that it takes two to carry it—sometimes three.”

The easiest task is to render a service to one who may be useful to you.—Schopenh’r.

“Life is the last habit that we wish to lose, because it is the first one that we form.”

“Honesty is of all things the most cunning, because it is the only thing the cunning do not foresee.”

“Never discuss; you will convince nobody. Opinions are like nails; the harder you hit them the deeper they go.”

The strength of Shakespere lay in the fact that he had no taste. He was not a man of letters—Schopenhauer.

Man may love his fellow well enough to die for him; he does not love him well enough to work for him.—Proudhon.

“There are a number of people, especially in politics, who are like bottles; they have no value except that which is poured into them.”

“Women who are absolutely beautiful have only that amount of modesty which is necessary to make the most of their beauty.”

A reputation is a bell which no one is willing to be the first to pull. But let the wind cause it once to strike and there is a rush for the rope—Schopenhauer.

What is due to the hearer of a clever saying is measured best by the sayer’s appreciation of its appreciation. Yet he usually gives himself the whole credit.

An original maxim is cracking an old “chestnut” in phraseology so modern as to lead the thoughtless to believe it the first time it has occurred to any being.

“If the sentimental lent itself as readily as the material to chemical analysis, we should be frightened at the quantity of hatred and contempt that can be contained in the purest love.”

Poetry is like a real cat catching imaginary elephants; the optical illusion of mental laziness. Yet where it produces pleasure it is as useful as existence, and a great saving of elephants as well as exertion of cat.

Evolution is the seine of experience dragging the sea of time, and the ever present generation the fish of the future ones. Fortunate will it be thus to be a fish and swim away to the north pole when the earth takes its “third motion” flop.

“What is a coquette? A woman who causes one, or several men to suffer without giving them anything. What is a man who can be made to suffer by a woman from whom he receives nothing?



He is a simpleton. Why, then, despise coquettes, and where is the harm when a heartless woman destroys a headless man?"

There is always one person that you cannot hope to convince in discussion, that is the person with whom you are discussing. It is only the hearers, or better still, readers of such discussion who are susceptible to the logic of a position. If there is no third party to benefit by a discussion it is lost time so far as proselyting is concerned.

Sacrifice! I deny sacrifice; it is a mysticism. Talk to me of *debt* and *credit*, the only criterion in my eyes of the just and the unjust, of good and evil in society. To each according to his works, first; and if, on occasion, I am impelled to aid you, I will do it with a good grace; but I will not be constrained. To constrain me to sacrifice is to assassinate me.—Proudhon.

Indolent imagination combines known substances contrary to experience and sees a silver lake and golden sky, which pleases for a moment like another dream. Analytic imagination combines known substances contrary to known combination and produces an invention that pleases long and serves mankind throughout the ages. Both are different degrees of intensity of the same faculty. Which will you be content with.

To what uses may the laws of our country be put! Last Sunday the female members of two baseball clubs were arrested for playing ball at Danville, Ill., and charged with disturbing the peace. The women had advertised the game, and when it came off two thousand Danvillains were present to be disturbed. The arrest is a great outrage. Women have as good a right to play ball as men, on Sunday or any other day—"Freethought," June 14.

Several men who within the past few weeks became murderers in order to vindicate their honor have been acquitted by San Francisco courts. As a natural result murders of the same kind grow more frequent. Last Monday Michael Conlin shot his wife because she drank liquor. Conlin is a drinker and was intoxicated when he did the shooting, yet he is more than half justified by the press of this city, and the "higher law" is likely to acquit him. All these tragedies spring from the mistake which men make that wives are their property and subject to their will and correction.—"Freethought," June 14.

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