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Union of Egoists

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What is a UnionOfEgoists.com?

This is an informational resource provided by Kevin I. Slaughter of Underworld Amusements and Trevor Blake of OVO, initiated in February and publicly launched April 1st of 2016. The website initially focuses on providing historical, biographical and bibliographical details of a few their favorite Egoist philosophers. It is also integrating the archives of egoist website i-studies.com, the former project of Svein Olav Nyberg, and the EgoistArchives.com project of Dan Davies. Further, it will be home to Der Geist, a Journal of Egoism in print 1845 – 1945. UnionOfEgoists.com will be the best resource for Egoism online.

What is a Union of Egoists?

“We two, the State and I, are enemies. I, the egoist, have not at heart the welfare of this “human society,” I sacrifice nothing to it, I only utilize it; but to be able to utilize it completely I transform it rather into my property and my creature; i. e., I annihilate it, and form in its place the Union of Egoists.”

– Max Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own*

What is Egoism?

“Egoism is the claim that the Individual is the measure of all things. In ethics, in epistemology, in aesthetics, in society, the Individual is the best and only arbitrator. Egoism claims social convention, laws, other people, religion, language, time and all other forces outside of the Individual are an impediment to the liberty and existence of the Individual. Such impediments may be tolerated but they have no special standing to the Individual, who may elect to ignore or subvert or destroy them as He can. In egoism the State has no monopoly to take tax or to wage war.”

–Trevor Blake, *Confessions of a Failed Egoist*

THE EAGLE AND THE SERPENT:

A Journal of Egoistic Philosophy and Sociology.

"The proudest animal under the sun and the wisest animal under the sun have set out to *reconnoître*."—*Nietzsche*.

No. 2.

APRIL 15, 1898.

PRICE THREEPENCE.

THUS SPAKE

NIETZSCHE:

We carry faithfully what we are given, on hard shoulders, over rough mountains! And when perspiring, we are told: "Yea, life is hard to bear!" But man himself only is hard to bear! The reason is that he carrieth too many strange things on his shoulders. Like the camel he kneeleth down and alloweth the heavy load to be put on his back.

EMERSON:

So far as a man thinks, he is free. Nothing is more disgusting than the crowing about liberty by slaves, as most men are, and the flippant mistaking for freedom of some paper preamble like a "Declaration of Independence," or the statute right to vote, by those who have never dared to think or act.

(Dedicated to the Philosophy of Life Enunciated by Nietzsche, Emerson, Stirner, Thoreau and Goethe.) THE EAGLE AND THE SERPENT Labours for the Recognition of New Ideals in Politics and Sociology, in Ethics and Philosophy, in Literature and Art.

A RACE OF ALTRUISTS IS NECESSARILY A RACE OF SLAVES.

A RACE OF FREEMEN IS NECESSARILY A RACE OF EGOISTS.

"THE GREAT ARE GREAT ONLY BECAUSE WE ARE ON OUR KNEES. LET US RISE!"

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To order of Newsdealers, 3d. or 8 cents. Per Post, 3½d. or 10 cents.
Post free, per year, 1s. 9d. or 60 cents. Issued Bi-monthly.

The Eagle and the Serpent Office: 185, Fleet Street, London, E.C., England.

Trade orders to W. Reeves, 185, Fleet Street, London, E.C., England.

EGOISM AS TAUGHT BY THOREAU.

THOREAU had watched [Human] Nature like a detective who is to go upon the stand.—*Lowell.*

Cease to gnaw that crust. There is ripe fruit over your head.—*Summer.*

This life is not for complaint but for satisfaction.—*Letter.*

To reject religion is the first step towards moral excellence.—*Essay.*

The whole duty of man may be expressed in one line: Make to yourself a perfect body.—*Summer.*

All the world is forward to prompt him who gets up to live without his creed in his pocket.—*Week.*

In what concerns you much, do not think that you have companions: know that you are alone in the world.—*Letter.*

I have enjoyed very much my visits to you . . . but life is short and there are also other things to be done.—*Letter.*

There is no more fatal blunderer than he who consumes the greater part of his life getting his living.—*Life without Principle.*

If there is an experiment which you would like to try, try it. Do not entertain doubts if they are not agreeable to you.—*Letter.*

Do not be too moral. You may cheat yourself out of much life so. Aim above morality. Be not simply good; be good for something.—*Letter.*

The wisest man preaches no doctrines; he has no scheme; he sees no rafter, not even a cobweb against the heavens. It is clear sky.—*Week.*

He is the true artist whose life is his material. Every stroke of the chisel must enter his own flesh and bones and not grate dully on marble.—*Summer.*

The man who goes alone can start to-day; but he who travels with another must wait till that other is ready, and it may be a long time before they get off.—*Walden.*

There is something servile in the habit of seeking after a law which we may obey. We may study the laws of matter at and for our convenience, but a successful life knows no law.—*Walking.*

If you would travel farther than all travellers, be naturalised in all climes, and cause the Sphinx to dash her head against a stone, ever obey the precept of the old philosopher and explore thyself.—*Walden.*

Warm your body by healthful exercise, not by cowering over a stove. Warm your spirit by performing independently noble deeds, not by ignobly seeking the sympathy of your fellows who are no better than yourself.—*Chastity and Sensuality.*

The philanthropist too often surrounds mankind with the remembrance of his own cast-off griefs as an atmosphere, and calls it sympathy. We should impart our courage, and not our disease, and take care that this does not spread by contagion.—*Walden.*

In proportion as our inward life fails, we go more constantly and desperately to the post office. You may depend on it, that the poor fellow who walks away with the greatest number of letters, proud of his extensive correspondence, has not heard from himself this long while.—*Life without Principle.*

All students of egoism should provide themselves without delay with the articles on "The Philosophy of Egoism," now beginning in that interesting and unique journal, "Egoism" (see advt. in another column). They are worth far more than the cost of the journal. After reading them every egoist will be able to give satisfactory reasons for the faith that is in him. Especially valuable, also, are the articles in Nos. 1 and 2 of Vol. 4 of "Egoism," on "Self-Entertainless-Self (Male)" and "Self-Entertainless-Self (Female)." We regret that "Egoism" has had to suspend a short time. Its last issue was Oct., 1897. We earnestly hope it may soon resume publication.

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No 2-17

RECONNOITERING THE ENEMY.

"When the sun was at noon Zarathustra suddenly looked upwards wondering—for above himself he heard the sharp cry of a bird. And lo! an eagle swept through the air in wide circles, a serpent hanging from it not like a prey, but like a friend; coiling round its neck.

"'They are mine animals,' said Zarathustra, and rejoiced heartily. 'The proudest animal under the sun, and the wisest animal under the sun have set out to reconnoitre. . . . More dangerous than among animals I found it among men. Let mine animals lead me!'"

Amid the many misconceptions of our mission it is a real encouragement to know that in Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace we have found a sympathetic expositor. We are almost tempted to ask Dr. Wallace whether it would be possible for him to undertake a class in those particular branches of knowledge which are in his opinion best adapted to prepare our critics, dramatic and poetic, to understand the sayings of our Eagle and Serpent.

A reader complains that our articles are "too short and scrappy." We beg to say that for the present we can aspire to be only a "guide, philosopher and friend," to the students and apostles of egoism. A guide, to point the way to those sublime heights where Eagles and Serpents alone can live; a philosopher, who believes with Pascal that the truest philosophy is to scoff at philosophy; a friend, to lead the faithful to the bulky tomes of space-writing or space-defying prophets. Our friend's policy may be magnificent but it is not our way of reconnoitering the enemy. We advise him to join our Egoist Circulating Library described in another column.

A consistent altruist is always a daisy, if not a jewel. For instance, Professor Herron in the March ('97) "Labour Prophet" says, "a newer evolutionary science will find that the meek plants, the meek animals, the things socially fittest, are inheriting the earth." Comment would spoil this. Still it is only fair to the Professor to say that he proves his statement, as follows: "Jesus says the meek shall inherit the earth." What a pity Darwin never saw this proof by text.

Canon Knox-Lyttle writes that Baron Pollock told him that the duty of sentencing criminals was a responsibility that compelled much "thought and prayer" even on a salary of £10,000 a year. The Baron's humour suggests that of Bill Nye who in a letter conveying his sincere regrets to a Lynching Committee on the failure, on account of wet weather, of their effort to hitch a legal satellite to a more heavenly star, spoke in the following touching terms:—"Scientists say that the tensile strength of a rope is only one-third when wet what it should be when dry, and a greased rope is even weaker. Good manilla rope kept dry for that purpose and six feet fall generally yield no opportunity for adverse criticism. Sometimes you will find serious drawbacks in these little impromptu affairs but love will find a way."

Stephen Byington's proposal to save the world by bribery is a good deal more rational than any altruistic scheme of salvation we have ever seen. When asked to support a certain measure by political action, Byington figured out that at the current price of Congressmen it would cost more to elect a Congress than it would to bribe the one in existence. We believe that there are honest politicians in the sense of the statute which defines an honest politician as one who will "stay bought." Nevertheless, though it may seem pessimistic, we must say that we doubt if there are enough of these to save us. It seems to us that all reformers should lay aside minor and petty differences and combine for the selection of a set of politicians who will stay bought. Until we get such politicians to represent us, Byington's plan of salvation by bribery will remain an "iridescent dream."

SALVATION BY SELFISHNESS.

MR. WILLIAM PLATT contributes to the *University Magazine* for April an almost miraculous misconception of the mission of this journal. But in one respect his article is inspiringly accurate. Mr. Platt fully grasps the point that our purpose is to teach selfishness. Yes, we have come to teach selfishness—class-consciousness, class-selfism—to all the exploited of earth. Our attack on altruism distresses Mr. Platt painfully. We have sent to *U. M.* a reply to Mr. Platt's article and a single point of that reply we desire here to produce. We had thought that the world-damning effect of charity (or altruism—in social science the terms are identical in meaning and value) was admitted by all thinkers, but Mr. Platt has undeceived us. In order then to make it clear to the maddest dreamer who ever preached "Self-sacrifice, self-sacrifice, ever self-sacrifice," to an expatriated, exploited, impoverished proletariat (what sacrifice can that man make who has already sacrificed everything but the workhouse?) what social scientists mean when they speak of altruism, we beg to transcribe a sacred parable contributed to *Liberty* by John Beverley Robinson, a parable which it is our intention to circulate by the million, to print on all walls wherever there are walls and to print in raised letters for poets to read. This parable is entitled

THE LAND OF THE ALTRUISTS.

A Parable for the Infant Class.

If you start from the South Pole and sail due north, you will come to a wonderful country inhabited by the people called Altruists.

They are called so because they prefer other people's happiness to their own.

They are a very industrious, hard-working, uncomplaining people, forever toiling from daylight till dark, making all kinds of useful and luxurious things; yet so unwilling are they to enjoy the fruits of their labour, so anxious for somebody else to be happy at their expense, that they have made this very ingenious and complete arrangement to secure that result.

They have ordained that everybody who has produced a thousand dollars' worth of goods shall receive from the rest of the community sixty dollars a year; he who has made or obtained in any way ten thousand dollars' worth shall receive six hundred dollars a year; and so on in proportion.

Now, it is easily seen that, as the people to whom these stipends are paid are at liberty to go on working and making enough to live on, they are able to lay by the amounts paid to them by the community. After a while these amounts become so large that they need not work at all, for all the rest of the Altruist community are pledged to support them, their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, not only till death, but forever.

Such sweet and unselfish dispositions have these Altruists.

There are getting to be a good many of these people who are supported by the Altruists.

Two or three million at a guess in every twenty or thirty million families do not work, but are paid because they have so much already. They are getting very bossy, too, these stipendiaries of the workers, and begin to hold themselves very loftily, and despise the unselfish workers as dirty, ignorant, low creatures, unmindful of the fact that it is only because the workers are Altruists that they enjoy providing luxuries for others rather than for themselves.

It is getting to be rather hard scratching, too, for the workers, Altruists though they be, who enjoy hunger and suffering; for to the objects of their care, the supported class, they have given, not only all the houses and furniture, and all but a little of the butter and meat and bread, but the very land itself, so that now, when the Altruist workers want to work still harder and to cultivate more land to support the rapidly-growing numbers of the Aristocrats, they find themselves forbidden by these very Aristocrats to use the land which they have given them.

Clearly a catastrophe must occur. Although the Altruists enjoy starving as long as they have the pleasure of seeing the Aristocrats, as they call those whom they support, have plenty, there is a physical limit to the process of starvation, and, when the Altruists begin to diminish in number, the Aristocrats must also dwindle.

What the outcome will be no man can prophesy—a relapse into slavery at least, which the Altruists would no doubt enjoy even more than their present arrangements; but there is a chance that their natures may change: they may become Egoists, and no longer take pleasure in giving to those who give nothing in return. Then there

will be no Aristocrats, and everybody who is not an Altruist will have a much better time.—*John Beverley Robinson in "Liberty."*

We trust that we have sufficiently indicated the type of altruism against which the proudest animal under the sun and the wisest animal under the sun wage uncompromising warfare—it is the altruism which everywhere passes as an adequate substitute for justice (save among the few reformers who know both what they want and how to get it), the altruism by which the exploited are taught to bless (and curse not) the Shylocks who despitefully use them and to enter an imaginary heaven through the pu(t)rifying process of a living hell.

Does Mr. Platt endorse or does he repudiate this sort of altruism? In the exercise of a friend's privilege, we demand of Mr. Platt that he shall repudiate it. If he declines to do so, it will be necessary to speak more plainly; if he declines to repudiate this altruism we will know exactly where he stands; and of Mr. Platt, the counsellor of new miracles of submission, abnegation and self-sacrifice on the part of the people, already deprived of their all,—of Mr. Platt in his Franciscan rôle exhorting the exploited to renewed vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience to their God-appointed rulers,—of Mr. Platt in this ghastly, reactionary and Christian rôle it will be our duty and our pleasure to speak in tones more suggestive of an exasperated

VOLCANO.

COMMENTS ON THE EAGLE AND THE SERPENT.

We have received the following opinions of our first number. The Editor of course, does not hold himself responsible for all the opinions expressed.

DEAR SIR AND FRIEND,—I received your sample copy and fully appreciate its efforts. I enclose 5s., etc.—T. H., (a fourteen hour shop slave).

DEAR SIR,—Please send me 12 copies of your No. 1. I enclose payment. I like your idea and think you will do a good work.—ALFRED R. WALLACE.

Your title is too long! Cannot you reduce it to two? Why not THE EGOIST? Motto—"Wisdom and Self-reliance."—A. R. W.

In the "Clarion" (March 19), Dr. Wallace called attention to the fact that E. AND S. looks at altruism and egoism from the standpoint of how best to stop exploitation, "not at all as regards individual action towards our neighbours and friends." He finds our title to mean "self-reliance and wisdom." He quotes approvingly our "Creed and Aim," and adds that our demand for egoistic or self-interested action on the part of the exploited means simply "that we are fools if we choose landlords, capitalists, soldiers or lawyers to govern us, and that the kind-hearted and altruistic workers and dispensers of charity in the slums, though individually to be admired and loved, are as a class to be condemned, because they have no object but to palliate symptoms, instead of removing causes. In originality and go E. AND S. is very refreshing. I hope it may meet with support."

Having asked Mr. G. B. Shaw if he wished to take a few dozen copies of No. 1 and distribute them as samples we received this reply:

DEAR SIR.—I return you the proof sheets of your new journal. If you send me any copies for distribution I will avail myself of the facilities I enjoy as a vestryman of this parish to distribute them throughout the cells of the St. Pancras dust destructor. I am not an altruist, and do not distribute papers gratuitously. I am not a news agent, and I do not sell periodicals. However, if you like to send me your paper as it comes out, for my own reading, you will be able to extract a single subscription from the enclosed postal order. The journal, as far as I can judge, promises to be sufficiently foolish to make people think; and its quotations are excellent. It is unfortunately pretty clear that the editors do not understand their own case. All the old fashioned quibbling about martyrs getting burnt because they enjoy it is the crudest vulgarization of the old mechanical Benthamism, founded on the notion that happiness is the

end of life, and life only a means to that end. If the journal pursues that line diligently and enthusiastically, it may hope in the course of time to reach a stage of advance in thought not much more than fifty years behind that at which the late Charles Bradlaugh began his individualist propaganda.—G. B. SHAW.

DEAR SIR,—In reply to your request for my opinion of E. AND S., I am in sympathy with nearly every sentiment expressed in your first number. Unlike my brother designer, Mr. Walter Crane, I have no prepossession regarding the title. I have always admired the majesty of the Eagle and the wisdom of the Serpent. As to the doctrine of Egoism, it is very old, far older than Altruism. In fact it is the first of all isms. Were it not for Egoism there would be no survival of the fittest. The Altruists are the unfit, therefore they do not survive. In fact they never existed. Jesus was not an Altruist, but an Egoist. All the good work He did was not for the glory of those whom He benefitted. It was all done to the glory of God-Jesus.—WM. KEILLER, Belfast.

DEAR EDITOR,—Having outgrown the cosmopolitanism of my Anarchism, and long since ceased to regard one status of equal-liberty as a desideratum for the whole of humanity (but as only, in actual practice, denoting the equal status of those composing each caste or grade of beings) I find the writings of Nietzsche peculiarly refreshing, and your "journal of egoistic philosophy and sociology" likely to meet my requirements. For the egoistic position has an advantage over other points of view in being free from all moral-handicapping, and, so, especially attractive to those who wish to be free from all moorings and who find pleasure in the contemplation of great men—Emerson, Goethe, Napoleon, Zola, Smith, Jones, Brown and Robinson—as showing the possibilities in the production of more energetic and higher types of humanity than we are encompassed with. We are contradistinguished from those who find their rest in contemplation of the little and the commonplace and who advocate Socialist, Christian, Anarchist or other liberalising doctrines which, at their best, assume that existent, average, mediocre, or worse, types of humanity are worth succouring and preserving—worth giving free-education to—and worth granting equal-liberty to. It seems to me, rather, that the evolution of higher types is hampered by doctrines of equality—of equal liberty—of universal brotherhood and christian love and all the sacrificing propaganda which gives to lower races of men and "niggers" hopes of earthly inheritance to which they—in their weakness—are not entitled; though, of course, the effort of combatting these decadent doctrines and promises of enervating ease, brotherly boozing and peace pudding is but one of the many means whereby our own emancipation and strength is advanced. For me, the doctrines of the Anarchist are as obsolete as those of the Socialist or Salvationist. For all that *their* main arguments are worth, *justice is always* on the side of the weak and inferior,—a sufficient condemnation of *their* point of view. Having cleared the decks of superstition, at the start; refusing to be drugged with any "moralic-acid," and comprehending that questions of justice and benevolence are quite secondary to the supreme question of supremacy, we can estimate the healthiness or unhealthiness of all beliefs and educations in obedience to which men and women spend their talents in certain ways and not in others. In fact we are enabled to weigh the factors entering into the struggles between nations and individuals. I wish the E. AND S. all success and hope it will plainly show up the ways and means resorted to by those who have power, but use it on the lower plane to the end of relieving themselves and many of the physiologically unfit from the battle of life, so that "beyond-men" are more likely to be born out of their caste than in it.—LEIGHTON PAGAN.

AN EGOIST CIRCULATING LIBRARY.

WE believe that the cause will be most effectually promoted by the organization of Egoist Coteries or Libraries wherever two or three are gathered together in its name. It is our great desire to promote the formation of these

groups throughout England, America and Australia. Our first step is to call for volunteers. We ask all who are willing to co-operate with others for the purpose of forming an Egoist Library or Society to send us their name and address. We especially want in every English-speaking city the name and address of some one who would be willing to act as provisional secretary of such a Library in his city and whose address could appear in No. 3 of E. AND S. When this address appears the adherents in each city could get together and organise. Those in smaller towns could ally themselves with the nearest society or their wants could be met by a postal travelling library.

Such a library as this is rendered necessary by the very high price of much of our egoistic literature. Again, in each society there ought to be found some one conversant with German or French through whom the members could read and discuss the egoistic works not yet translated into English.

We will not formulate any specific plan at present. We wait to hear from our friends hoping that their approval and further suggestions will enable us to announce a local secretary for every large city where English is spoken and some method of attending to the spiritual wants of those in remoter parts.

In the meantime our egoist authors can promote this movement by offering a copy of their works to each society so organised. A word to the wise is as good as a hit by a pile-driver.

Use can no doubt be made of any who could act as secretary of a postal library and presentation copies of any works on any phase of egoism and especially of Nietzsche's very costly volumes would be acceptable. Others may be in a position to offer money towards the postal missions. The propaganda machinery will not be complete till every city has a postal mission as well as a library for merely local needs.

We will consider all correspondence *re* the Libraries as strictly confidential.

What shall be the name of this Library or Society? Each Society could determine that for itself. We suggest a few variations and ask for opinion on these, also for other suggested names:

Myself Society—Egoist University or Circle—Emerson, Thoreau, Self-Culture, New Ideal, Finding Myself Out, or The Exploited One's, Society—Self-Exploration, Minerva, or Anti-Exploitation, Society. We will take a *referendum* on these names.

APOLOGETIC.

The following columns will be maintained in each issue of E. AND S. "Altruism and Exploitation"—articles and extracts illustrating the cost in money and manhood of our altruistic aberrations; "The Egoistic Interpretation of History and Biography," "Egoistic Studies in the Great Novels," "The Testimony of the Apostles" (egoistic quotations from the master-builders), "The Discouragements and Consolations of a Reformer," "The Religion of Egoism," "Book Reviews," "Open Discussion Column" and "Finding Myself Out."

The foregoing announcement stares at us in an accusing manner, but we hope to redeem its promise in No. 3. One or two other announced articles must be held over. But if the reader will look at the article on Rouchefoucauld in the Britannica Encyclopedia and at Whitman's "Song for Occupations," "Song of Myself" and "By Blue Ontario's Shores," he will find the gospel in undiluted form. Several book reviews must be held over.

We cannot hope to crowd as many errors into this issue as usually distinguish a Shelley first edition, but the fact is that the loss of three days through the Easter holidays and the editor's illness and unavoidable absence on press-day may work wonders in our text, and may also make us late. We regret the error by which this issue was announced for March instead of April, 15. Our foreman truly says, "To the pure all things are pure."

NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

PLEASE note our address: Eagle Publishing Company, 185, Fleet Street, London, E.C., England. Orders for the trade should be sent to Mr. W. Reeves, at the same address. Our next number will appear June 15th. Trade orders always receive immediate attention, but we can not in every instance assure immediate reply to orders by post. But all business letters receive the earliest attention that it is possible to give them.

* * *

The question of the efficacy of prayer (see p. 7, No. 1) has been forever settled. "Heaven knows our meaning, we say no more." Still the demand for the EAGLE AND SERPENT has been fairly encouraging. Send in the orders, ye faithless, and we can soon appear oftener and at a lower price.

* * *

If the demand is sufficient we will reprint John Beverley Robinson's article, "The Land of the Altruists," as a tract with advt. of EAGLE AND SERPENT. Send in your orders by post—price, 25 for a penny, 100 for threepence. Give us time on these orders.

* * *

The editor finds it physically impossible to reply to all the letters he receives. We hope soon, however, to convey personal greetings to several well-wishers. We trust that all will understand that every minute of our available time is carefully weighed and employed for the cause according to our best judgment.

* * *

Will our friends (and enemies) who receive this journal with this paragraph marked kindly consider themselves invited guests to a symposium in our next issue? We shall consider it a great favour to us and to our readers on both sides of the water if such persons will send us very early by letter or post card their frankest criticism of E. AND S. Such letters will be more valuable to us and our readers if they carefully indicate the reasons for such endorsement or condemnation as may be expressed. These contributions will appear in our next issue. Will *you* not consider this a pressing personal invitation, lend us a few moments of your valuable time, and so assist in making our next issue a "feast of reason and a flow of soul?" Will journals printing a notice of E. AND S. kindly send the same marked to our address?

* * *

Any American journal inserting and sending us a copy of the following advertisement will be given the same number of words in EAGLE AND SERPENT:—

"THE EAGLE AND SERPENT" is a bi-monthly journal of egoistic philosophy and sociology which teaches that in social *science* altruism spells damnation and egoism spells salvation. In the war against their exploiters the exploited cannot hope to succeed till they act as a unit, an "ego." Sample Copy, 5 2-cent stamps; 2 samples, 10 2-cent stamps. Address, Eagle Publishing Company, 185 Fleet Street, London, England.

* * *

American letters and papers should be carefully weighed and prepaid, and should all be marked, for the present, "Viâ Cunard or White Star Line, from New York City." In case of war such post would be safe in British vessels.

* * *

The University Press, Watford, near London (England), will send to any applicant details of their 100 Guinea and 50 Guinea Competition for the best essay on "The Danger of Celibacy, from a psychological, pathological and sociological standpoint."

* * *

The following articles will appear in early numbers of E. AND S.—"Rent and Interest—the Murderers of Mankind," "An Open Letter to the Duke of Bedford with reference to the Suicides on his Estates," a review of John Henry Mackay's life of Stirner and of his edition of Stirner's replies to his critics, a collection of quotations from Nietzsche entitled "The Duty of Death and the Death of Duty," and "Altruism in Exchange."

We have sent out many free samples of E. AND S. and have hundreds of other names to which we wish to send ; but our limited means do not permit it. Who will be the first to contribute to our propaganda fund ? Account will be rendered and acknowledgment made in our columns of all such contributions. Postal rates compel us to withdraw our offer to send 12 copies for a shilling. The best that we can do is to send 3 copies at the price of 2, 5 at the price of 3, 10 at the price of 6, etc. But we can still supply free copies of our Prospectus.

* * *

Can not one of our artists supply us with a design for our title ?

NIETZSCHE AS A SOCIAL REFORMER, Or, The Joys of Fleecing and Being Fleeced.

Perhaps the pleasure is as great
Of being fleeced as to fleece.

WE are enabled to lay before our readers the first instalment of a series of letters offering critical observations upon a statement by Mr. Thomas Common (translator of Vol. II. of the English Edition of Nietzsche), of Nietzsche's aims and methods as a social reformer. Mr. Common's statement is as follows :—

It is quite a pleasant surprise to hear of a new periodical which is to be devoted to the promulgation of Nietzsche's philosophy. A periodical of the kind is certainly an excellent idea. The Prospectus of THE EAGLE AND THE SERPENT is an interesting document, and contains much which I entirely agree with ; though I would hardly be inclined to subscribe to everything it contains ; and, so far as I understand Nietzsche's philosophy, I am inclined to think that some of the sentiments expressed in the Prospectus would hardly have suited his taste.

Nietzsche is certainly an apostle of social reform—its greatest apostle in my opinion,—but the social reform he advocates (the establishing of a true aristocracy, and the proportioning of advantages and disadvantages respectively according to merits and demerits) is something very different from social reform as generally understood in England. The effort to make everyone perfectly comfortable and perfectly free, irrespective of merit, is almost the only kind of social reform hitherto dreamt of in this country. The object of social reform according to Nietzsche is not “the greatest happiness of the greatest number,” but the realisation of a higher type of human being, the *overman*,* a being as much superior to man as man is superior to the ape.

Nietzsche's teaching is not adapted for the multitude, and a periodical devoted to its promulgation cannot hope, nor even desire to be popular. Though Nietzsche's philosophy is the truest and most important, yet it is contrary to the interests of the multitude that it should be accepted and reduced to practice ; it must consequently always remain an esoteric doctrine. Higher education, however, when it has had a real value, has never been a thing suited for every body ; and now that we have once more an esoteric body of doctrines, we may hope that the value of education may again be restored, after having been depreciated and falsified by those who have popularised and extended it. Zarathustra soon discovered that he had made a great mistake by preaching to the people in the market place.

As regards duping and fleecing, of course much of it goes on. But Nietzsche has explained to us the rationale of the process, and we can now look at it with more complacency. Falsehood is preferable to truth for a large section of human beings, and falsehood naturally flourishes best when it is firmly believed in—when people permit themselves to be duped and fleeced. The priest (and to a certain extent the politician also) is the shepherd of the sickly flock, and if he does fleece

* *Overman* is generally considered a better rendering of *Uebermensch* than *beyondman*. Apart from the fact that *beyond* is hardly used as a prefix, the word *overman* is surely perfectly justifiable by its analogy to Emerson's *oversoul*. If there is any doubt as to the best rendering, perhaps Dr. Murray, the great lexicographer, might decide the question.

them once a year, he also protects them continually. He dupes them certainly, but he dupes himself also; but then the falsehoods he believes are useful alike for himself and for his flock—the general belief in appropriate falsehoods makes life much easier for the typical shepherd in question (who is a person with decaying powers) and his sickly flock. Now that Nietzsche has explained all this at great length in his *Genealogy of Morals** we take up an attitude towards Christianity entirely different from that assumed by the Secularism of former days, which, in its folly, tried to persuade men to give up Christianity because it was false! The Secularist had always the worst of the argument with the Christian, for the falsehood of Christianity is the very reason why the *typical* Christian (the typical sinner) should cling to it more closely; it is his only hope of salvation in this life.

Nietzsche perhaps, like Rochefoucauld, lays more stress on egoism than altruism, but he certainly cannot be regarded as an absolute and unconditional opponent of altruism. Of course he condemns foolish altruism which sacrifices superior individuals to inferior, but not the altruism which in the majority of cases would result in higher excellence to society (even though egoism may be at the bottom of such self-sacrifice it is, nevertheless, altruistic); on the other hand, also, there are many kinds of egoism which Nietzsche condemns†—the very reason why he condemns foolish altruism is on account of the evil egoism at the bottom of it. Nietzsche's test for egoism and altruism is their result in bringing about a higher or lower degree of social excellence. The one or the other is good or bad according to the good or bad effects it produces. It seems to me, therefore, much more correct to regard Nietzsche as the apostle of a true aristocracy in opposition to democracy, than as an apostle of egoism in opposition to altruism.

There has been some little correspondence recently among those interested in the issue of the translations of Nietzsche's Works about the formation of a Nietzsche Society, but it has not yet been formed. The idea of the formation of a Nietzsche Society is, I think, to be traced to the remark made by Dr. Tille more than two years ago, that the time would come when there would be Nietzsche Societies all over the country. Perhaps when the next volume makes its appearance, and more attention is directed to his philosophy, an attempt will be made to get a Nietzsche Society properly organised. THOMAS COMMON.

We desire to thank the authors of the following letters for their kindness in furnishing our readers with their comments on Mr. Common's statement. In our next issue we will publish further comments on Mr. Common's letter and also his reply to his critics.

SIR,—If Mr. Common's statement of Nietzsche's teaching and the social reforms at which he aims, are accurate, then, even though some of his *methods* of obtaining social reforms may be good, the reforms themselves seem to me to be both impracticable and worthless, if they are not even retrogressions. Mr. Common tells us that Nietzsche is the apostle of "a true aristocracy," and of apportioning "advantages and disadvantages respectively to merits and demerits." If by "advantages" he means material superiority or greater wealth, and that the aristocracy of merit claim this superiority as their right, that alone would, in my opinion, show that they were *not* a true "aristocracy" and that they did *not* really "merit" what they claimed. Again, what is merit, and who is to decide on the merits and demerits of individuals? If it means intellectual, moral, or physical, superiority, or any combination of them, and if these qualities are fully exerted for the benefit of society at large, those who possess and so use their superiority will, under any rational condition of society, receive the greatest reward men can receive—the respect, honour, and affection of their fellows. But such men can only *prove* that they possess such superior qualities and that they are worthy of the honour they will receive, by working and living under

* See especially Part III., Sect. 13.

† See Vol. XI., p. 192,—the section on the *Natural value of Egotism*; and, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, p. 104 in the *Chap. Of Giving Virtue*.

equal conditions and *equal* advantages with their fellows. Without this absolute "equality of opportunity," there can be no possibility of accurately determining "merit and demerit" as regards society; hence, I maintain that the only object worth working for, as the first and essential stage towards utilising all the best powers and faculties of a nation for the common good, is, to bring about this "equality of opportunity." This, however, is simple justice, as between man and man. It is a fundamental axiom of ethics. It is not an "esoteric" doctrine, and it does not need to be upheld by "falsehood," as apparently does Nietzsche's system of aristocracy—and from falsehood, esoteric teaching, and a ruling aristocracy, nothing that is of permanent good ever has arisen or can arise.

I believe, absolutely, in truth, in justice, and in the free development of human nature, as the only and the essential methods leading to true social reform; and I therefore dissent as strongly as possible from Mr. Common's principles and methods.

ALFRED R. WALLACE.

DEAR SIR,—Mr. Common's suggestion of a Nietzsche Society may possibly prove fruitful. Since the foundation of the Fabian Society in 1884, no organ of a new popular development of social philosophy has been formed among us. It is noteworthy that the Fabian Society was formed by the division of a pre-existing group into two sections; one, the Fabian Society, taking up the political and economic side of the social question; and the other, then called the Fellowship of the New Life, and still in existence as the New Fellowship, taking up the ethical and philosophical side. The result is noteworthy. The Fabian Society has exercised a great influence, and has attained, perhaps, the maximum of success possible to such organisations. The New Fellowship, though composed largely of the same men, has exercised practically no influence at all, because it had no really new ideas. There was nothing to be learned from it that had not already been learned from the best of the Unitarians. Like them, it sought to free social and personal ideals and duties from superstition; but it laid even greater stress on the sacredness of the ideals and duties than the comparatively easy-going superstitious people did. It was not until after 1889, when Ibsen and Nietzsche began to make themselves felt, that the really new idea of challenging the validity of idealism and duty, and bringing Individualism round again on a higher plane, shewed signs of being able to rally to it men beneath the rank of the geniuses who had been feeling their way towards it for two centuries. Had the New Fellowship started with any glimmering of this conception, their history might have been different. As it is, it seems to me quite possible that a Nietzsche Society might hit the target that the Fellows of the New Life missed, and might repeat on the ethical plane the success of the Fabian Society on the political one.

Yours faithfully, G. BERNARD SHAW.

DEAR SIR:—I do not believe in Altruism, but I believe in Egoism still less; therefore I find some difficulty in expressing an opinion on the article submitted. The writer is without doubt correct in claiming that falsehood is preferred to truth by many people and so, too, the crowd is fleeced, because it prefers to be fleeced to offering resistance to the fleecers. This is the one central truth of Egoism that, given the opportunity of more than one course of action, whichever course is taken is that which one prefers. But, in numberless cases, were it not for the pressure of the crowd, there would be other courses open which would be infinitely preferred to either of those, one of which has perforce to be adopted. This is where egoism makes default. It is not what I like, but what the crowd decrees. The crowd prefers to be fleeced, therefore I have to be fleeced lest a worse fate befall me. I neither wish to be fleeced nor to starve to death. If the crowd so willed, these alternatives would not be presented to me but, seeing they are presented, I choose the former. Thus in my own interest it is advisable to change the opinion of the crowd and even aid in improving its position. Moreover I may suffer, personally, at the sight of suffering, and hence—to please myself—I try to remove or alleviate it. This action, selfish as it is, when performed spontaneously or involuntarily, and, it may be, at the cost of some discomfort or inconvenience, is regarded as altruistic. In my opinion there is

no such thing as altruism; what is best understood by this term is only cultivated or refined selfishness—while egoism, on the other hand, carried to its logical, brutal, conclusion seems to me to mean nothing more than the rule of the stronger, the more cunning or unscrupulous.

Yours faithfully, H. QUELCH, Editor *Justice*.

In reply to our request Mr. Common still further explains Nietzsche's position, as he apprehends it.

DEAR SIR.—I do not think that Nietzsche ever discusses the question of rent and interest. Probably in the ideal state of society which he contemplates, money might not be used at all. As regards rent and interest at present, in so far as they serve to secure due advantages to the worthy and disadvantages to the unworthy they are not very objectionable, but when they have a contrary tendency they certainly are objectionable.

With regard to esoteric doctrines, I did not imply any concealed secret doctrines, but rather doctrines which are not suitable for teaching to the multitude. In a society composed of a superior ruling class and an inferior subordinate class (that is certainly the form of society which Nietzsche contemplates), certain precepts according to which the ruling class act, are practically esoteric doctrines, and are not communicated to the subordinate class. Plato furnishes a sufficiently good example of an esoteric doctrine somewhere in his *Republic*, where he suggests it as something desirable that the superior ruling class should impose certain fictitious beliefs on the subordinate class. Nietzsche discusses exoteric and esoteric doctrines in section 30 of *Beyond Good and Evil*. T. COMMON.

This is but the first skirmish between the aristocrats and the exploited. We must reserve detailed editorial comment for our next issue, by which time we will have Mr. Common's reply to his critics and also his criticism on Dr. Redbeard's "Philosophy of Power" which teaches a reversed Nietzscheism and says that it is the duty of the exploited to exploit their exploiters *when they can*. It seems to us that Mr. Common's pretensions as a social philosopher are seriously compromised by his attitude of apparent indifference to the question of rent and interest.

COURSE OF STUDY FOR BEGINNERS IN EGOISM.

WILL our friends kindly assist us in making the following list as complete as possible? We want references to English articles on "Stirner" and on "Egoism."

ARTICLES ON NIETZSCHE.

Quarterly Review, Oct., 1896. Blackwood's Magazine, Oct., 1897.

University Magazine and Free Review, May and Dec., 1896.

Agnostic Journal, Jan. 23rd, 30th, Feb. 6th and 20th, 1897.

Truthseeker of New York, July 17th, 24th, 31st and Aug. 7th, 1897.

Truthseeker of Bradford, England, Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec., 1897.

Natural Science, June, 1897.

LITERARY ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

ALL books and journals sent to us will be acknowledged in this column. Ampler notice will be given as opportunity is presented.

Journals received:—*Personal Rights, Labour Prophet, Brotherhood, Conservator, Justice, Les Temps Nouveaux, Adult, Truthseeker, Bradford Echo.*

Books and Pamphlets received:—*Slaves to Duty, Badcock; For Love and Money, Leighton Pagan; An Unknown People, E. Carpenter; Women, Love and Life, W. Platt; Love Triumphant, Platt; Do we Live, Do we Love? Platt; Three Dreams in a Desert, Schreiner; The World, the Flesh and the Devil, J. M. Wheeler; Suitable Food, Wise Sex-Love and Immortality, Sophie Lepper.*

For Love and Money is the title which Leighton Pagan gives to his two essays, *The Judgment of Paris—Up to Date* and *The Money Famine*. A review could not do justice to the author's treatment of love. Though an egoist (perhaps, because he is an egoist)

his heart beats in sympathy with the "vast procession of unloved women" (and every unloved woman means an unloved man)—between the lines he pleads for all those described by De Quincey as "deprived of their unreturning daytime by wicked kinsmen whom God will [not] judge." The whole essay pleads for life and for life more abundantly. It breathes the very spirit of that time when as Heine said "the religion of gloom and sorrow having passed away, the religion of joy shall tear away the thick veil which hides the rosebushes of earth and the nightingales will dare to sing joyously out their long-concealed raptures."

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The friends of THE EAGLE AND THE SERPENT can assist us by distributing copies of a descriptive leaflet to be had on application. We solicit original or selected contributions germane to our purpose. We especially want short articles or extracts showing (1) how much our altruistic aberrations cost us in hard cash (we have faith in this sort of propaganda); (2) the total failure of altruism to bring anything but misery and slavery to the race; (3) egoistic quotations from Nietzsche, Stirner, Emerson, Thoreau, Goethe, Ibsen, Whitman, Humboldt, Spencer and others. Contributions to our propaganda fund will be most gratefully acknowledged.

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TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLES OF EGOISM.

Know thyself.—*Solon.*

Knowledge is power.—*Bacon.*

To thine own self be true.—*Shakespeare.*

The beautiful is always severe.—*Segur.*

If it be right to me, it is right.—*Stirner.*

Moderation is the pleasure of the wise.—*Voltaire.*

God helps them [only] who help themselves.—*Franklin.*

Love is the union of a want and a sentiment.—*Lamartine.*

Self-love is not so vile a sin as self-neglecting.—*Shakespeare.*

To scoff at philosophy is to act as a true philosopher.—*Pascal.*

Every mortal is relieved by speaking of his misfortunes.—*Chénier.*

Man is Creation's master-piece. But who says so?—*Man.*—*Gavarni.*

It is difficult to free fools from the chains they revere.—*Voltaire.*

He who is devoted to everybody is devoted to nobody.—*Delavigne.*

God is generally on the side of the strongest battalions.—*Napoleon.*

Under the freest constitution ignorant people are still slaves.—*Condorcet.*

In jealousy there is usually more self-love than love.—*Roche-foucauld.*

Goodness, for the most part, is but indolence, or impotence.—*Ib.*

When our vices leave us, we flatter ourselves we are leaving them.—*Ib.*

The greatest of all pleasures is to give pleasure to one we love.—*Boufflers.*

We like those to whom we do good better than those who do us good.—

Saint-Réal.

Testimony of the Apostles of Egoism.—(continued).

Trust in God and [that is, so far as you] keep your powder dry.—*Cromwell*.
It is easier to be good for everybody, than to be good for somebody.—

A. Dumas fils.

The more honest a man is, the less he affects the airs of a saint.—*Lavater*.

To know man, borrow the ear of the blind and the eye of the deaf.—*Ib*.

Who despises all that is despicable, is made to be impressed with all that is grand.—*Ib*.

Everybody exclaims against ingratitude. Are there so many benefactors? —*Bougear*.

A woman by whom we are loved is a vanity; a woman whom we love is a religion.—*Girardin*.

Diversity of opinion proves that things are only what we think them.—*Montaigne*.

To love is to ask of another the happiness that is lacking in ourselves.—*Rocheperdre*.

Virtue is so praiseworthy that wicked people practice it from self-interest.—*Vauvenargues*.

There is pleasure in meeting the eyes of those to whom we have done good.—*La Bruyère*.

The art of conversation consists less in showing one's own wit than in giving opportunity for the display of the wit of others.—*Ib*.

Egoism is another name for self-preservation; the egoist, after providing for self, turns altruist.—*Tilden*.

High positions are like the summit of high, steep rocks: eagles and reptiles alone can reach them.—*Mme. Necker*.

The men of future generations will yet win many a liberty of which we do not even feel the want.—*Stirner*.

One is free in proportion as one is strong; there is no real liberty save that which one takes for one's self.—*Ib*.

There are persons who do not know how to waste their time alone and hence become the scourge of busy people.—*Bonald*.

Not to enjoy one's youth when one is young, is to imitate the miser who starves beside his treasures.—*Mme. Louise Colet*.

All passions are good when one masters them; all are bad when one is a slave to them. [The same is true of ideas].—*Rousseau*.

You can tell more about a man's character by trading horses with him once than you can by hearing him talk for a year in prayer meeting.—*American Maxim*.

Forget this superstition (that the day of noble deeds is past), steep your souls in Plutarch, and through believing in his heroes, dare to believe in yourselves.—*Nietzsche*.

To be regardful of others within reason is intelligent egoism, but it is necessary to distinguish those who are worthy of our regard from those who are not.—*Tak Kak*.

The discoverer of a great truth well knows that it may be useful to other men, and, as a greedy with-holding would bring him no enjoyment, he communicates it.—*Stirner*.

Everywhere the strong have made the laws and oppressed the weak; and, if they have sometimes consulted the interests of society, they have always forgotten those of humanity.—*Turgot*.

Napoleon the exploiter said, "The heart of a statesman should be in his head." The exploited will never be saved till they make the brain the seat of their patriotic affections.

Religion and moralism say that we may have passions, but we must not allow our passions to enslave us. The egoist extends the suggestion to include ideas. He has ideas, but he remains the master of them. . . . All the ideas he has he will use as he sees fit. If of a speculative intellectual turn, the egoist cannot doubt that there is the greatest good for all in egoism, and as he can find satisfaction in proving it, he may undertake to do so.—*Tak Kak*.