

Josiah Warren's

**EQUITABLE COMMERCE**

*Devil's Claw Distro*

DEVIL'S CLAW DISTRO

This zine is a reprint of Josiah Warren's  
*Equitable Commerce*

### Editors Introduction

This essay written in 1846, is one of the first to focus on individualism in the United States. Josiah Warren is credited as being one of the first "anarchists" in the United States, the anarchist historian William Bailie even went as far as to call him the "First American Anarchist." Warren was an influence on later individualist anarchists Benjamin Tucker and Lysander Spooner. This essay outlines the "sovereignty of the individual" and discusses the importance of the individual within society.

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Devil's Claw Distro is a distro based out of the Colorado desert with a focus on individualist anarchism, ecology, the desert and consensus based decision making.

"Wilderness is not a luxury but a necessity of the human spirit"  
-Edward Abbey

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<http://www.devilsclawdistro.tk/>

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Josiah Warren

New Harmony, Indiana, U.S., 1846

### Notes

1. Alphonse de Lamartine, *History of the Girondists*, Henry T. Ryde, trans. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1888), p. 289. Obviously, Warren was working with an earlier edition.
2. *History of the Girondists*, p.325. The event referred to is Georges Couthon's vote in favor of executing Louis XVI.
3. Ecclesiastes 3:1 (King James Version).
4. "[I]he wants and fears of individuals [are] the first and most cogent motives which impel men to form civil government." Note C: "Of the Constitution of Virginia," *Blackstone's Commentaries*, St. George Tucker, ed. Philadelphia: William Young Birch and Abraham Small, 1803). <http://www.constitution.org/tb/tb-0000.htm>

The public are here presented with the results of about twenty-five years of investigation and experiments, with a view to a great and radical, yet peaceful change in the character of society, by one who felt a deep and absorbing interest, and took an active part in the experiments of communities at New Harmony, during the two years of 1825 and 1826, and who, after the total defeat of every modification of those plans which the purest philanthropy and the greatest stretch of ingenuity could devise, was on the point of abandoning all such enterprises, when a new train of thought seemed to throw a sudden flash of light upon our past errors, and show plainly the path to be pursued. But this led directly in the opposite direction to that which we had just traveled. It led to new principles, new views, and new modes of action. I have come to the resolution to place [these matters] (as far as is practicable), in a manner that it may be studied in detail, in times of undisturbed leisure, where the attention can be fixed upon that alone, individually; for nothing short of this can do it justice.

I have many times sat down to perform the task now before me; but when I contemplated the overwhelming magnitude of the subject - the bewildering complication of its different parts - the liability to err, to make wrong impressions through the inherent ambiguity of language, and the impossibility of conveying new ideas in old words, I have shrunk in fear and trembling at the task, have lain down my pen in despair, and returned to the silent, but safe, though tardy, language of experimental action. This speaks unequivocally to those who see and study it; but this mode of introduction has its limits, depending on the locality of the experiments, and the intellectual capacities and pecuniary resources of those within its immediate sphere, neither of which may prove sufficient for the establishing of one complete example.

I deem it unnecessary to add any thing to what has been so well said of late, to show the imperious necessity of a total change in society's institutions. Almost every one now admits - what the few far-seeing and deep-thinking have perceived in all ages of human institutions - that something is radically wrong somewhere. There has always been a striving after a purer state of existence - a panting after an atmosphere never yet breathed in the social state - a clashing between the theories and practices of men - a yearning after practical justice and humanity. Society has been in a state of violence, of revolution and suffering, ever since its first formation; and at this hour the greater number are about to array themselves against the smaller, who have, by some subtle and hidden means, lived luxuriously upon their labor without rendering an equivalent. Governments have lost their power of governing. Laws have become powerless from their inherent defectiveness and irresistible by ordinary means; the right of the strongest begins to be openly admitted to a frightful extent, and many of the best minds look forward to an age of confusion and violence, with the confidence of despair. We have contemplated suffering in different forms till the heart is sick; and, unless a speedy and effectual remedy be applied, would fly from the scenes or shut our eyes upon them forever. We are not alone in this feeling - the same spirit is abroad, calling for aid, for sympathy, for remedy; and in response to this call, I come at once to our subject - social reformation.

## Part I

### 1. Means for the Attainment of our Proposed Ends

The first element of Equitable Commerce, or rather, the foundation of the whole subject is the study of individuality, or the practice of mentally discriminating, dividing, separating, disconnecting persons, things, and events, according to their individual peculiarities.

Do not be alarmed at the word 'study,' or at the dry and abstract form of the heading of this chapter, I shall deal as little as possible in the abstract, but subjects of illimitable magnitude admit of no other form. The American Declaration of Independence is an abstraction, and those who are incapable of examining subjects of this character may as well lay down the book here and save further trouble; while I invite the few more fortunately constituted to an examination of mind upon which the success of our whole object depends, but which constitutes no part of our education, nor scarcely of surrounding example.

The individualities of which I speak are so deep-seated, so subtle, and hidden, that they pass unde-

will become equally respectful of our rights and of each other's. All of these propositions are probably self-evident, yet not one of them is practicable under the present mixture of the interests and responsibilities between adults, and between parents and children. To solve the problem of education, children must be surrounded with equity, and must be equitably treated, and each and every one, parent or child, must be understood to be an individual, and must have his or her rights equitably respected.

It will be seen, on a little trial, that children thus thrown upon themselves, begin to exercise all the self-preserving faculties; they are interested in looking at the consequences before they act and will ask the advice of parents, and listen with interest to their injunctions, which before they would have shunned as unmeaning, tedious inflictions.

Under these circumstances, if we call children in the morning, it is for them and not for us that we do it. If we advise them not to spend their money or time foolishly, it is for them and not for us. It is not our time or money they spend, and they can see that our advice is disinterested. Then they listen and thank us for that which otherwise they would have considered a selfish exercise of authority. I speak from seventeen years of experiments, of which more will be said in the proper place, but will add here, that these principles can only be partially applied under the present mixture of the interests and responsibilities of parents and children, that where parents are obliged to bear the consequences of the child's acts, the parent must have deciding power. But in things in which the child can alone assume the cost of his acts, he may safely be intrusted to the natural government of consequences.

## 5. Natural Organization of Society

It would, probably, not be advisable for less than thirty families to commence these operations, because less than about this number could scarcely commence the exchanges, so as to derive much economy from them. For instance, two families could not sustain a shoemaker, nor a carpenter, an iron worker, nor any other indispensable profession. Thirty families might sustain some of them, by which means each could have the benefits of all. Six families could not sustain a storekeeper; probably not less than thirty could. If fifty families commenced together, the economies would be greater, a hundred families greater still.

When they have commenced their operations, they will probably see what is wanted there or in the surrounding neighborhood. If the location is sufficiently near a city to afford a market for surplus labor, the co-operators can divide their time between the two places. Otherwise the greatest caution is necessary in the coming together, and the growth must be slow in proportion to the want of a sustaining demand. If some branches of business, such as stereotyping, publishing, etc., were commenced, the product of which will sell abroad, then any number within the demand can safely assemble at once after they have provided their first accommodations. When they arrive with their families, perhaps another carpenter can be sustained; when he and his family arrive, perhaps another mason can find sufficient employment. If each of these continually report their wants in the report of demands and supply, then any one wishing to know whether he can be sustained has only to get some one on the premises to consult this record, from which he can judge for himself.

In this manner, one after another can be added to the circle, till those living in its circumference are too remote from the boarding-house, the schools, and the public business of different kinds. Then another commencement has to be made, another nucleus has to be formed, and thus in a safe and natural manner may the new elements extend themselves toward the circumference of society. Commerce, on these principles, will be proposed with different individuals in foreign countries, which may give rise to similar beginnings in different parts of the world, each nucleus extending its growth outward till the circles meet, obliterating all national lines, national prejudices, and national interests, and in a safe, naturally and rapidly progressive manner reorganize society.

I decline all noisy, wordy, confused, and personal controversies. This subject is presented for calm study and honest inquiry. After having placed it fairly before the public, I shall leave it to be estimated by each individual according to the peculiar measure of his understanding, and shall offer no violence to his individuality, by any attempt to restrain or to urge him beyond it.

pected by common observation; and almost defy scrutiny itself; and yet, as electricity seems to be the life-principle of the individual, so this individuality seems equally to pervade every thing, and to be the life-principle of society.

The word 'individuality' furnishes an illustration of itself. It assumes different significations in different cases. We sometimes use it as a substantive, sometimes as an adjective, sometimes as a verb. Different persons understand it differently in either form; and the same person will understand and appreciate it differently at different times, according to different degrees of development and different states of mind, under different circumstances. Such is the indefinite diversity that will spring up out of the peculiarities or individualities of persons, times, and circumstances when the word is used; and this diversity is inevitable. We can scarcely write a phrase that will not be subject to similar diversity of interpretation, growing out of the subtle individualities of different minds and different states of the same mind.

The subject of equitable commerce has drawn forth many remarks and comments very different from each other. One says, "he sees nothing in particular in it"; another said he "perceived that it had all the features that a great redeeming revolution ought to possess." P. "could see nothing in it but indications of insanity." The Rev. Mr. C. pronounced it "the result of more wisdom than commonly falls to the lot of man." F. saw in it "a design to make a little money"; while C, G, and E censure its author for spending his time and wasting his resources in attempts to introduce principles which require "more virtue and intelligence to carry out than mankind possess."

To contend against this diversity is to contend against our nature's constant production. Such is the subtle and inherent nature of this individuality, that it accompanies every one in every thing he does, and any attempt to conquer it is like undertaking to walk away from his mode of walking, or to run away from his breath - the very effort calls it more decidedly into play.

Out of the indestructibility or inalienability of this individuality grows the absolute right of its exercise, or the absolute sovereignty of every individual.

We come now to an important and serious application of the facts evolved.

Words are the principal means of our intellectual intercourse, and they form the basis of all our institutions; but here again this subtle individuality sets at nought the profoundest thoughts and the most careful phraseology. There is no certainty of any written laws, or rules, or institutions, or verbal precepts being understood in the same manner by any number of persons. To require conformity in the appreciation of sentiments, or in the interpretation of language, or uniformity of thought, feeling, or action where there is no natural coincidence, is a fundamental error in human legislation - a madness that would be only equaled by requiring all to possess the same countenance or the same stature.

Individuality, thus rising above all prescriptions, all authority, every one, by the very necessities of nature, is raised above, instead of being under, institutions based on language. Institutions thus become subordinate to our judgment and subject to our convenience; and the hitherto inverted pyramid of human affairs thus assumes its true position.

We will endeavor to justify the apparent extravagance of our announcements by a few familiar illustrations, although the complete elucidation of individuality must be the work of time and more extended opportunities.

When one finds his different papers, bills, receipts, orders, letters, etc. all in one confused heap, and wishes to restore them to order, what does he do by separate, disconnect, divide, and disunite them - putting each individual kind in an individual place, until all are individualized? If a mechanic goes to his tool-chest, and finds all in confusion, what does he do to restore them to order, but disconnect, divide, separate, individualize them?

It is within everyone's experience, that when many things of any kind are heterogeneously mixed together, separation, disconnection, division, individuality, restore them to order. No other process will do it.

If a multitude of ideas crowd at once upon the mind of a speaker or writer, what can he do to prevent confusion, but divide his subject, disconnect, disunite its parts, giving to each an individual time and place?

It is this which constitutes the principal element of the very highest grade of criticism.



are now confined by custom and craft to one or two pursuits, in which competition has ground them to beggary and starvation. Let women and all others whose labor is unpaid, abandon their pursuits and turn to others that will command an equivalent, which they can do when all kinds of instruction can be obtained on the cost principle, and where the prices of board, clothing, and every thing else are limited in the same manner. Under these circumstances, a few hours or days of instruction substitutes years of customary apprentice slavery, and be it more or less, the learner, besides paying his or her instructor equitably for his labor, can sustain himself or herself from the beginning to the end of it.

### 3. Child-Rearing

A proper regard to the individualities of person's tastes, etc., would suggest that residences be occupied by such persons as are most agreeable to each other. Therefore, children generally, as well as their parents, would be much more comfortable not to be so closely mixed up as they would be in a boarding-house with their parents. The connection is already, even in private families, too close for the comfort of either. Hotels for children, according to peculiarities of their wants and pursuits, would follow of course. I have seen infant schools, in which one woman attended twenty children not above two years old, and where the children entertained each other, taking more of their burthens on themselves than the best mothers could have carried. Perhaps fifteen mothers were preserved from the most enslaving portion of their domestic labors. And if such institutions were opened and conducted by individuals upon individual responsibility and upon the cost principle, every mother and father, and every member of every family, would be deeply interested in promoting the convenience and reducing the cost of such establishments, and in taking advantage of them.

Instead of the offensive process of legislating upon the fitness of this or that person for those situations, any individual who thought that he or she could supply the demand, might make proposals, and the patronage received would decide. Every mother would be free to send her child or not, according to her individual estimate of the proposed keeper, the arrangements, and the conditions, and it would, therefore, be a peaceful process. If every mother should be required by a government, or laws, or public opinion, to send her children, without the consent of her own approbation, we might expect resistance, discord, and defeat.

### 4. Education

With whom will we trust the fearful power of forming the character and determining the destinies of the future race? Every thing we come in contact with educates us. The educating power is in whatever surrounds us. If we would have education to qualify children for future life, then must education embrace those practices and principles which will be demanded in adult age. If we would have them practice equity toward each other in adult age, we must surround them with equitable practices, and treat them equitably. If we would have children respect the rights of property in others, we must respect their rights of property. If we would have them respect the individual peculiarities and the proper liberty of others, then we must respect their individual peculiarities and their personal liberty. If we would have them know, and claim for themselves, and award to others, the proper reward of labor, we must give them the proper reward of their labor in childhood. If we would qualify them to sustain and preserve themselves in after life, they must be permitted to sustain and preserve themselves in childhood and in youth. If we would have them capable of self-government in adult age, they should practice the right of self-government in childhood. If we would have them learn to govern themselves rationally, with a view to the consequences of their acts, they must be allowed to govern themselves by those consequences in childhood. Children are principally the creatures of example. Whatever surrounding adults will do, they will do.

If we strike them, they will strike each other. If they see us attempting to govern each other, they will imitate the same barbarism. If they see us attempting to govern each other, they will imitate the same barbarism. If we habitually admit to the right of sovereignty in each other, and in them, then they

mode paralyzes action, is embarrassing and discordant, and therefore wrong, while the other admits the freest action, works equitably toward both parties, is perfectly harmonious, and therefore right.

Again: let any laws, rules, regulations, constitutions, or any other articles of association be drawn out by the most acute minds, and be adopted by the whole. As soon as action commenced, it will be found that the compact entered into becomes differently interpreted. We have no power to interpret language alike, but we have agreed to agree. New circumstances now occur, different from those contemplated in the compact. New expedients are to be resorted to; two of more interpretations of the same language neutralize each other; an opinion expressed is misunderstood and requires correction; the correction contains words subject to a greater or less extent of meaning than the speaker intended; these require qualification. The qualification is variously understood, and requires explanation; the explanations require qualifications to infinity. Different estimates are formed of the best expedients, but there is no liberty to differ. All must conform to the articles of compact or organization, the meaning of which can never be determined. Opinions, arguments, expedients, interests, hopes, fears, persons and personalities, all mingle in one astounding confusion. What is the origin of all this? It is the different interpretations of the same language, and the difference in the occasions of its applications, where there is not liberty to differ.

Exactly the same reasons apply against one person being in debt to another, and it is only by settling every transaction in the time of it, either by equivalents or their representative (such as the labor note), that the liberty, peace, and security of all parties can be preserved. Running accounts between any two persons are liable to be erroneous, from omissions and mistakes which are entirely beyond the control of the best intentions; but errors from these causes cannot be distinguished from those of design.


It is only by individualizing our transactions and their elements that each citizen can enjoy the legitimate control over his own person, time, or property. If we present a rose to a friend, it is understood to be an expression of sympathy, a simple act of moral commerce, and the receiver feels free from any obligation to make any other return than the expression of the natural feeling which immediately results. But if one should give half of his property to another, the receiver could not feel equally free from future indefinite obligations. Not, perhaps, that the property was more valuable to the receiver than the rose, but it cost more.

A delicate regard to the rightful liberty of every one, and the necessity of self-preservation, would seem to admonish us to make cost the limit of gratuitous favors, while those of immense value which cost nothing, can be given and received without hesitation or reluctance, and will purify our moral commerce from any mercenary or selfish taint.

## 2. Working of Machinery

If one person have not sufficient surplus means to procure machinery for a certain business, all will have an equal interest in assisting in establishing it, provided that he will have its products at cost. But if there is no limit to their price, then they can have no such co-operating interest. The wear of the machinery and all contingent expenses, together with the labor of attendance, would constitute this cost. The owner of the machinery would receive nothing from the mere ownership of it. But as it wore away, he would receive in proportion, till at last, when it was worn out, he would have received back the whole of his original investment and an equivalent for his labor in lending his capital and receiving it back again. Upon this principle, the benefits of the labor-saving powers of the machinery are equally dispersed through the whole community. If one portion is thrown out of employment by it, the land and all arts and trades being open to them, so that they are easily and comfortably sustained during a new apprenticeship, they are not only not injured but benefited by the new inventions.

When any persons are thrown out of employment by the introduction of machinery, or when from any other cause there is no demand for their labor, it becomes necessary for their self-preservation that they turn to some other employment. At this point the apprenticeships established by custom stand directly in the way. During the nineteen years of the study and experiments of equitable commerce, it has been one principal object to test practically the necessity of these apprenticeships. The results of these tests are on record for publication, if necessary. No new proposition of equal importance is more susceptible of proof than this, that the period of apprenticeship can be far reduced. And at least one half of all the pursuits now monopolized by men, can be quite successfully performed by women, who



When two persons are talking at once there is not sufficient individuality in either voice to separate it from the other. Both uniting together, they make nothing but confusion. The efforts of both them and their auditors are thrown away.

The more the letters of the alphabet differ from each other, i.e. the more individuality each possesses, the more efficient and perfect they are for the purposes intended.

Musical harmony is produced by those sounds only which differ from each other. A continuous reiteration of one note, in all respects the same, has no charms for any one. The beats of a drum, although the same as to tune, are not so as to stress or accent; in this respect they differ, and this difference occurring at regular intervals, the strong contrasted with the weak, enables the attention to dwell upon them, with more or less satisfaction; but the unremitting repetition of one dull, unvarying sound would either not command attention or make us run mad.

It is when the voice or an instrument sounds different notes, one after the other, that we obtain melody; and it is only when different notes are sounded together that we produce harmony. The key note, its fifth, its octave, and its tenth, when sounded together, produce a delightful chord; but these are all different from each other, and retain their separate individualities, even while thus associated in the closest possible manner; so that, while they are all sounding together, the practiced ear can distinguish either from the others. They never become combined. They never unite into one sound, even in the most complicated, nor in the most enchanting harmonious associations. If such were the result - if they were to lose their individualities in association, and unite into one sound, all musical harmony would be unknown, or be suddenly swept from the earth, as social harmony has been by the violations of the individualities of man. It is to the indestructible individuality of each note in music that we are indebted for this most humanizing art. And it is through a watchful regard to the equally indestructible individualities of man, that he is to be indebted for the harmony of society.

The commencement of constitutional governments was the first step of progress in politics, and it was disconnecting, dividing, disuniting the subjects of legislative action from those which were reserved sacred to the people.

The disconnection of church and state was a master-stroke for freedom and harmony. The great moving power - the very soul of the Protestant Reformation was, that it left every one free to interpret scriptures according to his own views.

Responsibility must be individual, or there is no responsibility at all.

The directing power, or the lead of every movement must be individual, or there is no lead, no order, nothing but confusion. The lead may be a person or thing - an idea or principle; but it must be an individuality, or it cannot lead; and those who are led must have an individual or similar impulse, and both that and the lead must coincide or harmonize, to insure order and progress.

The masses in a city, when meeting each other upon the side-walk, without any thing to lead to one individual understanding, may turn out in divers ways to avoid collision. One turns to the right, the other to the left, and they both counteract each other; and both stop, both change again, with the same result - no progress - nothing can result but uncertainty and confusion, until there is some definite understanding between them, which both co-operate to carry out. (Definiteness is attained only by an individuality of meaning in the proposition advanced.) Some one individual suggests through the papers that every one turn to the right on meeting another. As it is for the interest, and is the wish of every one to avoid collision and delay, their inclinations and their interests coincide with the idea thus thrown out, and the confusion is at an end. Here is individuality of purpose, individuality of understanding, individuality in the regulating or governing power, or lead, and yet the governing power is not a person, but an idea. Therefore, although the lead or governing power must be an individuality, it need not necessarily be a person. But if two suggestions were thrown out at the same time, the one proposing to turn to the right and the other to the left, and no one individual understanding were arrived at, and if each one had not an interest in avoiding collision, they would neutralize each other, and confusion would be the result. Can we not see, democrats as we are, that here may be an explanation of the defense of absolutism in governments, for the suppression of diversities of opinion, suppression of

the freedom of the press, etc.?

Here is in miniature the grand issue between despotism and liberty. What is the answer? The right of supreme individuality must be accorded to every one; and though it is entirely impracticable to exercise this right in the present close connections and combinations of society, the true business of us all is to invent modes by which these connections and amalgamated interests can be individualized, so that each can exercise his right of individuality at his own cost, without involving or counteracting others; then, that his co-operation must not be required in any thing wherein his own inclinations do not concur or harmonize with the object in view. I admit that this makes it necessary that the interests of the individual should harmonize with the public interests. This is entirely impossible upon any principles now known to the public.

We propose to throw out such ideas or discoveries as, when they come to be examined, may, like any other definite or scientific truths, become like suggestions relative to the side-walk: the regulators of the movements of each individual, by the coincidence between these suggestions and his interests, or self-preservation.

Blackstone, and other theorists, are fatally mistaken when they think they get one general will by a concurrence of vote. Many influences may decide a vote contrary to the feelings and views of the voters; and, more than this, perhaps no two in twenty will understand or appreciate a measure, or foresee its consequences alike, even while they are voting for it. There may be ten thousand hidden, unconscious diversities among the voters which cannot be made manifest till the measure comes to be put in practice; when, perhaps, nine out of ten of the voters will be more or less disappointed, because the result does not coincide with their particular expectations.

I admit, that when we have once committed the mistake of getting into too close connections, it is impossible for each to exercise his right of individuality; that then, perhaps, to be governed by the wishes of the greatest number (if we could ascertain them) might be the best expedient. But it is only an expedient, a very imperfect one - dangerous when great interests are involved, and positively destructive to the security of person and property, from the uncertainty of the turning of the vote, or of the permanence of the institution arising from it. One man may turn the whole vote, and often for want of definiteness (individuality) in the meaning of the terms of the laws, their interpretation and administration are, of necessity, left to an individual; and this is despotism. The whole process is like traveling in a circle too large to be taken in at a glance, but yet, without being aware of it, we travel toward the point whence we set out, although we take the first steps in the opposite direction. Disconnecting all interests, and allowing each to be the absolute despot or sovereign over his own, at his own cost, is the only solution that is worthy of thought. Good thinkers never committed a more fatal mistake than in expecting harmony from an attempt to overcome individuality, and in trying to make a state or nation an individual. The individuality of each person is perfectly indestructible. A state or nation is a multitude of indestructible individualities and cannot, by any possibility, be converted into anything else. The horrid consequences of these monstrous and abortive attempts to overcome simple truth and nature are displayed on every page of the world's melancholy history.

Lamartine, in his admirable history of the first French Revolution, says, "Among the posthumous notes or Robespierre were found the following: 'There must be one will; and this will must be either Republican or Royalist, . . . all diplomacy is impossible as long as we have not unity of power.'"

We here see the very root of Robespierre's policy and the explanation of his sanguinary career. It was precisely the same root from which have sprung all the ancient as well as modern political fallacies. It was a demand for "unity," "oneness of mind," "oneness of action," where coincidence was impossible. The demand disregarded all nature's individualities, demanded the annihilation of all diversity, and made dissent a crime. Therefore, all were criminal by necessity, for no two had the power to be alike. The true basis for society is exactly the opposite of this. It is freedom to differ in all things, or the sovereignty of every individual.

Having the liberty to differ does not make us differ, but, on the contrary, it is a common ground upon which all can meet, a particular in which the feelings of all coincide, and is the first true step in social harmony. Giving full latitude to every experiment (at the cost of the experimenters), brings every thing to a test, and insures a harmonious conclusion. Among a multitude of untried routes, only one of which is right, the more liberty there to differ and take different routes, the sooner will all come

demand. Let no one move to an equity village, till has thoroughly consulted the demand for his labor, and satisfied himself individually that he can maintain himself individually.

It will now be found necessary to ascertain the amount of labor required in the production of all those things which we expect to exchange. This naturally suggests itself to each one in his own business, and if all bring in their estimates, either at public meetings, or have them hung up in a public room, they become the necessary data for each to act upon. It is this open, daylight, free comparison of prices which naturally regulates them, while land, and all trades, arts, and sciences, will be thrown open to every one, so that he or she can immediately abandon unpaid labor, which will preserve them from being ground by competition below equivalents.

If A sets his estimate of the making of a certain kind of coat at 50 hours, and B sets his at 30 hours - the price per hour and the known qualities of workmanship being the same in both - it is evident that A could get no business while B could supply the demand. It is evident that A has not given an honest estimate, or that he is in the wrong position for the general economy. But he can immediately consult the report of the demand, and select some other business for which he may be better adapted. If he concludes to make shoes, his next step is to get instruction in this branch. He refers to the column of supplies, and ascertains the name and price per hour of the shoemakers. He goes to one of them, makes his arrangement for instruction, then provides himself with a room and tools, sends for his instructor, pays him according to the time employed, and becomes a shoemaker.

The new shoemaker, having paid his instructor for his labor, has the proceeds of it, together with his own, at his own disposal, and if these be sold for equivalents, he will find his new apprenticeship quite self-sustaining.

We have now progressed far into practical operations without any combination or unity of interests. Every interest and every responsibility being kept strictly individual, no legislation has been necessary. There has been no demand for artificial organization. There being no public business to manage, no government has been necessary, and therefore no surrender of the natural liberty has been required.

Now let us imagine one small item of united interests, and trace its consequences. We will suppose that A and B get a horse in partnership, to transport their baggage to the new location. The horse is taken sick. A proposes a medicine, which B thinks would be fatal; neither party has the power to lay down his own opinion, and take up that of the other. These are parts of the individualities of each, which are perfectly natural, and therefore uncontrollable. A brings arguments and facts to sustain his opinion; B does the same. Still they differ, and the horse is growing worse. One dislikes to proceed contrary to the views of the other, and both remain inactive for the same reason. What can they do but call a third party to act in behalf of both? To this third party they both commit the management of the horse, and surrender their right of decision. This third party is government. This government cannot possibly decide both ways, and either A or B, or both, remain fearful and dissatisfied. The disturbance now extends itself to the third party, producing a social disease in addition to that of the horse. We must take another course, retrace our steps, look into causes, and we shall find the wrong in the unity of interests. To be perfectly harmonious, all interests must be perfectly individual.

Those who are most averse to collision with others will find this an invaluable truth. Natural individualities admonish us not to be dogmatical on this or any other subject, but to be careful not to construct any institutions which require rigid adherence to any man-made rule, system, or dogma of any kind; to leave every one free to make any application, or no application, of any and all principles proposed, and to make any qualification or exception to them which he or she may incline to make, always deciding and acting at his or her own cost, but not at the cost of others. If the horse, in the above instance should die under A's decision and treatment, while B held an interest in him, then A decides and acts partly at the cost of B, which is wrong and discordant. Let us now examine the motive for this partnership interest. Is it for economy? We have secured that in the operation of the cost principle, and therefore united interest is unnecessary. Under the partnership interest, A and B would each have half the labor of the horse, and would bear half of his expenses. If cost were made the limit of price, and A owned him individually, and should let him work for B half the time, the price would be half of his expenses: exactly the same result aimed at by united interests. The difference is only, that the one

exchange, with a view to have them recorded in a book kept for that purpose. As soon as a movement is made by any one to this effect, a book will be wanted as a record of this report of wants and supplies. At this point, when this is evidently wanted enough to justify it in the estimation of any individual, he or she can furnish such a book upon his or her individual responsibility. If the cost of this is sufficient to justify a demand for remuneration, the keeper of this book can make this demand, according to the labor bestowed in each case, or otherwise, as he or she shall decide, the voice of the majority having nothing to do with it.

We will now suppose that the wants of twenty individuals are recorded in one column of a book, and what they can supply in another column; and in another the price per hour which each demands for his or her labor. These become the fundamental data for operations.

Every one wishing to take some part in practical operations now has before him, in this report of wants, the business to be done. It will immediately be seen that land is indispensable, and must be had before any other step can be taken to advantage. Some one seeing this want, after consulting the wishes or demands of the co-operators, proceeds on his own estimate of this demand, at his own risk, and at his own cost, to purchase or otherwise procure land to commence upon, lays it out in lots to suit the demand, at sells them to the co-operators at the ultimate cost (including contingent expenses of money and labor in buying and selling). The difference in the price of a house lot thus bought and sold, compared with its price when sold for its value, will be found sufficient to make the difference between every one having a home upon the earth, instead of one half of men and women being homeless.

We will now suppose the lots purchased and paid for by each one who is to occupy them. They will want to consult continually together, in order to co-operate with each other's movements. This will require a place for meetings. As soon as this want is apparent, then is the time for some one to estimate this want and take it on himself to provide a room, and see himself remunerated according to cost, which cannot fail to be satisfactory to all in proportion as they are convinced that cost is the limit of his demands, which he can always prove by keeping an account of expenses and receipts, open at all times to the most public inspection.

At this public room, provided each one is properly preserved from the ordinary fetters of organization, all can confer with each other relative to their intended movements. If one has a suggestion to make to the whole body, he can find listeners in proportion to the interest that each one feels in proportion, and a decent respect to the right of every one to listen if he chooses, will prevent disturbances from the indifferent, just in proportion as the right of sovereignty in each individual is made a familiar element of surrounding opinion.

When business commences, the estimates of prices must commence, and the circulating medium will be wanted. For instance, if the keeper of the room for meetings has expended a hundred hours of his labor in keeping it in order, etc., and of there are twenty who have regularly or substantially received the benefits of it, then five hours' equivalent labor is due from each.

This calls for the circulating medium, and he may receive from the carpenter, the blacksmith, the shoemaker, the tailoress, the washerwoman, etc., their labor notes, promising a certain number of hours of their definite kinds of labor. The keeper of the room is now equipped with a circulating medium with which he can procure the services of any of the persons at a price which is agreed and settled on beforehand, which will obviate all disturbance in relation to prices. He holds a currency whose product to him will not be less at the report of scarcity. From year to year, he can get a certain definite quantity of labor for the labor he performed, which cannot be said, nor made to be true, with regard to any money the world has ever known.

An extraordinary feature presents itself at this stage of the operations of equitable commerce. When the washerwoman comes to set her price according to the cost or hardness of the labor compared with others, it is found that its price exceeds that of the ordinary labor of men! Of course, the washerwoman must have more per hour than the vender of house-lots or the inventor of pills. We must admit the claims of the hardest labor to the highest reward.

The larger the purchases of lumber, provisions, etc. at once, the cheaper will the prices be to each receiver upon the cost principle, and these economies, together with the social sympathies, will offer the natural inducements to associated movement. But there is great danger that even these inducements will urge many into such movements prematurely. We cannot be too cautious not to run before the

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to a harmonious conclusion as the right one; and this is the only possible mode by which the harmonious result aimed at can be attained. Compulsion, even upon the right road, will never be harmonious. The sovereignty of the individual will be found on trial to be indispensable to harmony in every step of social reorganization, and when this is violated or infringed, then that harmony will be sure to be disturbed.

Robespierre may have carried the old idea a little farther than some republicans, but he carried it no further than the Greeks, the Venetians, and even the ancient and modern advocates of community of property. In all of them, as well as in all forms of organized society, the first and great leading idea was and is, to sink the individual in the state or body politic, when nothing short of the very opposite, which is, raising every individual above the state, above institutions, above systems, above man-made laws, will enable society to take the first successful step toward its harmonious adjustment.

Lamartine: "Couthon said, 'Citizens, Capet is accused of great crimes, and in my opinion he is guilty. Accused, he must be judged, for eternal justice demands that every guilty man shall be condemned. By whom shall he be condemned? By you, whom the Nation has constituted the great tribunal of the state.'" Here, by a jumble of sounding words, "great crimes," "eternal justice," "great tribunal of the state," all of which mean nothing whatever but the barbarian imagination of the speaker, a phantom is got up called the state, which is made to absolve the murderers from the responsibility of the murder. If this responsibility had rested individually upon Couthon, where, in truth, the whole of all that he was talking about, he would have shrunk back from taking the first step. But throwing all the responsibility upon the soulless phantom called the state, there was no longer any check to crime.

The state, or body politic, must result from individuality, instead of crushing it. If we would have a prosperous state, it must arise from the prosperity of the individuals who compose the state. Where every individual is rich, the state will be rich. Where every person is secure in his person and property, the nation, or state, is secure. Where every individual thrives, there will be a thriving state or nation. Where every individual should do justice, there justice would reign in the state or nation. Where every individual should be free, there would be a free state or nation.

Nothing is more common than the remark that "no two persons are alike," that "circumstances alter cases," that "we must agree to disagree," etc., and yet we are constantly forming institutions that require us to be alike, which make no allowance for individuality of persons or circumstances, and which render it necessary for us to agree, and leave us no liberty to differ from each other, nor to modify our conduct according to circumstances.

"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven: A time to be born and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill and a time to heal; a time to break down and a time to build up; a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance; a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to get and a time to lose; a time to keep and a time to cast away; a time to rend and a time to sew; a time to keep silence and a time to speak; a time to love and a time to hate; a time a time of war and a time of peace."

Such is the individuality of times.

There is an individuality of countenance, stature, gait, voice, which characterize every one, and each of these peculiarities is inseparable from the person; he has no power to divest himself of them - they constitute parts of his physical individuality; and were it not so, the most inconceivable confusion would derange all our social intercourse. Every one would be liable to the same name. One man would be mistaken for another. Our relations and friends would be strangers to us. No security of persons, of possessions; no justice between men; no distinction between friends or foes. All would be mere guess-work or chance, and universal confusion would reign triumphant. How much, then, are we indebted to individuality, even in these four particulars of physical conformation. The fact that these peculiarities of each are inseparable from each - not to be conquered - not to be divided or separated from each, is apparently the only part of social order that man, in his mad career of "policy" and expediency, has not overthrown or smothered. I have spoken of only four of the peculiarities of human character, and if these confer such benefits upon society, what may we not expect on a full development of all the ca-

capacities, physical, mental, and moral, with which every one is to a greater or less extent, invested, but no two alike. And if the little intellectual development now extant results in an individuality that makes men and women restive and ungovernable under the existing institutions, what are we to expect from the future? Not only are no two minds alike now, but no one remains the same from one hour to another. Old impressions are becoming obliterated, new ones being made - new combinations of old thoughts constantly being formed, and old combinations exploded. The surrounding atmosphere, the contact of various persons and circumstances all contribute to make us more the mirrors of passing things than the possessors of any fixed character, and we have no power to be otherwise; therefore, to require us to be stationary blocks, all of one size, hewn out by laws, institutions, or customs, is a monstrous piece of injustice, and it is impossible in the very nature of things.

To what purpose, O legislators, do ye say "thou shalt not steal?" To what ends are all your horrid inventions of punishment? Stealing still goes on, and ye only repeat "Thou shalt not steal," and still punish, even though you said at first that punishment was a remedy! Ye have no remedy, but only inflict tenfold more evils by your abortive attempts to overcome effects without consulting causes, or opening your eyes and ears to explanations. Our security against fire and gunpowder is in our knowledge of their natures and their incalculable modes of action, which knowledge raises us above their dangers, and renders them useful and comparatively harmless. Our remedies and securities against social evils are in our knowledge of our own natures, our inevitable modes of action, our true positions with regard to each other, and to our institutions.

Even man-made laws, rules, precepts, dogmas, counsel, advice, may all be rendered comparatively harmless and useful by not allowing them to rise above the higher law, the highest utility, the sovereignty of the individual. We are liable to be deceived and disappointed in ourselves as well as others, until we are aware of this liability, which raises us above the danger; and we are subject, not only to constant changes, but to actions and temporary reactions, over which at the time we have no control whatever. The intrinsic philosophy of reactions may be beyond our reach, but the facts are notorious, that the reaction of fatigue of mind or body is rest; that the reaction of intense friendship is intense enmity; that the reaction of intense love is indifference, a temporary or intense hatred; the reaction of great benevolence is temporary malevolence; the reaction of philanthropy is misanthropy; the reaction of great hope or expectations is temporary or great despair; the reaction of great popularity is sudden unpopularity; and it is known that the greatest benefactors of the race, from high popularity, have often suddenly fallen victims to an unaccountable public hatred.

It is also notorious, that all of us are liable to strange inconsistencies of character, and that no effort on our part can prevent it; that the most reasonable are sometimes very unreasonable; the most accurate observers are very often under mistake; the most consistent are sometimes inconsistent; the most wise are sometimes foolish; the most rational sometimes insane. How unreasonable, then, how inconsistent, how unwise, how absurd, to promise for ourselves, or to demand of others, always to be reasonable, correct, consistent, and wise under all these changes, and actions, and reactions, and inconsistencies of character, over which at the time we have no control whatever. How difficult to regulate ourselves. How impossible to govern others.

## 2. The Proper, Legitimate, Just Reward of Labor

It is now evident to all eyes, that labor does not obtain its legitimate reward; but on the contrary, that those who work the hardest fare the worst. The most elegant and costly houses, coaches, clothing, food, and luxuries of all kinds are in the hands of those who never made any of them, nor ever did any useful thing for themselves or for society; while those who made all, and maintained themselves at the same time, are shivering in miserable homes, or pining in prisons or poor-houses, or starving in the streets.

Machinery has thrown workmen out of their tenth-paid employment, and this machinery is also owned by those who never made it, nor gave any equivalent in their own labor for it. These starving workers have no resource but upon the soil; but they find that this is also under the control of those who never made it, nor ever did any thing as an equivalent for it. At this point of starvation, we must have remedy, or confusion.

At this point, society must attend to the rights of labor, and settle, once for all, the great problem of

Were cost made the limit of price, the vender of goods would have no particular motive to purchase them at the very lowest prices that he could grind out from manufacturers; and they would, therefore, have no motive to under-work and destroy each other. There would be no more of each than enough to supply the demand, no motive to import what could be made with equal advantage at home; and the manufacturer would be obliged to assume the individual responsibility of his work, because where profit-making did not stand in the way, the merchant would not otherwise purchase of him. And where land is bought and sold at cost, every man of business would own the premises where the work was done, and could not easily get away from the character of it. This must be kept good, or another would immediately take his place. Here, then, in the cost principle, is the means of rendering competition not only harmless, but a great regulating and adjusting power. Under its mighty influence should we not only escape national ruin from excessive importation of worthless articles, but should have good ones always insured, by their manufacturers being within reach of tangible responsibility. The scramble for unlimited profits in trade being annihilated by equitable exchanges between nations, the imports and exports would be naturally self-regulating, and limited to such as were mutually beneficial. Each would have a co-operating interest in the prosperity of the other. When this takes place, the armies and navies now employed in consuming and destroying will be compelled to turn to producing, at least whatever they consume, and thus take off another crushing load from down-trodden labor.

Wars are, probably, the greatest of all destroyers of property, and they originate chiefly in two roots. First, for direct or indirect plunder; secondly, for privileges of governing. Direct plunder will cease when men can create property with less trouble than they can invade their fellow-creature's. Indirect plunder will cease with making cost the limit of price, thus cutting off all profits of trade. The privileges of governing will cease when men take all their business out of national or other combinations, manage it individually, deal equitably with each other, and leave no governing to be done.

## 6. Natural and Intellectual Wealth

Metals in the earth are natural wealth, and the cost principle would pass them to consumers at the cost of labor in digging, preparing, and delivering them.

The inventor of a machine may put wheels, weights, and levers together in a certain relation to each other, which may produce great and valuable results to the public, but this value is no measure for its compensation. The cost to him of putting them together is his legitimate ground of price. The qualities of a circle, the power of a lever, and the gravitating tendency of a weight are natural wealth, and are rightly the property of all.

Likewise, a teacher of music may communicate the principles of composition, which may be of great value to the receiver, but this value is derived chiefly from the inherent qualities and relations of sounds to each other, nor has man any right to make them the ground of price in communicating them to others. If a teacher of music be paid for his labor in an equivalent only, then the natural wealth inherent in musical elements, becomes accessible to all without price. The same may be said of all sciences, arts, trades, mysteries, and all other subjects of our commerce, whether pecuniary, intellectual, or moral. One may devote his time and labor upon an intellectual production, but who can measure its value? This depends chiefly upon the new truths developed or communicated. It is the cost only that can be equitably made the ground of price, and when this is refunded by an equal amount of labor, equally repugnant or disagreeable, and equally costly in its contingencies, the writer is legitimately compensated. The rest is natural wealth.

## Part II. The Application

### 1. Elements of New Society

The first step to be taken by any number of persons in these practical movements appears to be that each individual or head of a family should consider his or her present wants, and what he can give in



direct iniquity, stagnates exchanges, interrupts or stops supplies, and involves every thing in uncertainty and confusion, discourages arrangements and order, and prevents division and exchange.

Another great obstacle to the development of this branch of economy, is the uncertainty, the insecurity of every business. Men dare not make investments for carrying on business to the best advantage while the markets for their products are unsteady - where prices "rise at eight o'clock" and "fall at twelve." If prices were equitable adjusted by the cost principle, we should know, from year to year, from age to age very nearly, the prices of every thing. All labor being equally rewarded according to its cost, there would be no destructive competition. Markets would be steady. Then we might subdivide the different parts of manufactures to any extent that the demand would justify at any time.

Another great obstacle to extensive division of labor and rapid and easy exchanges seems to be the want of the means of effecting exchanges. We cannot carry our property about us for the purpose of exchanging. If we could do this, and give one thing for another at once, and thus settle every transaction, such a thing as money, or a circulating medium, never would have been known; but, as we cannot carry flour, shoes, carpentering, brick-work, store-keeping, etc., about us to exchange for what we want, we require something which represents these, which representative we can always carry with us. This representative of property should be our circulating medium. Theorists have said that money was this circulating medium, but it is not. A dollar represents nothing whatever but itself; nor can it be made to. At no time is it any demand on any one for any quantity of property or labor whatever. At one time a dollar will procure two bushels of potatoes, at another time three, at another time four, and different quantities for different persons at the same time. It has no definite value at any time, nor if it had would its value qualify it for a circulating medium. On the contrary, its value and its cost being inseparably united with its use as a representative, disqualifies all money for acting the part of a circulating medium. It should have but one quality, one definite purpose: that of standing in the place of the thing represented, as a miniature represents a person.

Money represents robbery, banking, gambling, swindling, counterfeiting etc., as much as much as it represents property; it has a value that varies with every individual that uses it, and changes as often as it is used. A picture that would represent at one time a man, at another a monkey, and then a gourd, would be just as legitimate and fit for a portrait, as common money is for a circulating medium.

We want a circulating medium that is a definite representative of a definite quantity of property and nothing but a representative, so that when we cannot make direct equivalent exchanges of property, we can supply its deficiency with its definite representative, which will stand in its place. And this should not have any reference to the value of property, but only its cost, so that if I get a bushel of wheat of you, I give you the representative of shoe-making, with which you should be able to obtain from the shoemaker as much labor as you bestowed on the wheat - cost for cost in equivalent quantities. And to effect these exchanges with facility, each one must always have plenty of this representative on hand, or be able to make it on the occasion, and so adapt the supply of the circulating medium to the demand for it. Where there is no circulating medium, there cannot be much exchange or division. On the other hand, where every one has a plenty of the circulating medium always at hand, exchanges and divisions of labor would not be limited for want of money. A note given by each individual for his own labor, estimated by its cost, is perfectly legitimate and competent for all the purposes of a circulating medium. It is based upon the bone and muscle, the manual powers, the talents and resources, the property and property-producing powers of the whole people: the soundest of all foundations. The only objection to it is, that it would immediately abolish all the great money transactions of the world - all stock-jobbing, money corporations, and money movements; all systems of finance, all systems of national policy and commercial corruption; all distinctions of rich and poor - and compel every one to live and enjoy at his own cost.

Everything being bought and sold for the greatest profit the holder can get, it becomes his interest to purchase every thing as cheap as possible; the cheaper he purchases the more profit he makes. This is the origin of the present horrid system of grinding and destructive competition among producers, who are thus prompted to under-work each other. Thus too it is that there is scarcely any article of food, clothing, tools, or medicines that is fit for use; we are always purchasing to throw away, to be cheated out of our money and time, and disappointed in our supplies. Responsibility rests nowhere. The vender does not make them, but imports them from those beyond the reach of responsibility. Why is every thing imported, even shoes, tools, woolen and cotton cloths? For profit.

its just reward. This appears to demand a discrimination, a disconnection, a disunion between cost and value.

If a traveler, on a hot day, stop at a farm-house, and ask for a drink of water, he generally gets it without any thought of price. Why? Because it costs nothing, or its cost is immaterial. If the traveler was so thirsty that he would give a dollar for the water, rather than not have it, this would be the value of the water to him; and if the farmer were to charge this price, he would be acting upon the principle that the price of a thing should be what it will bring, which is the motto and spirit of all the principal commerce of the world; and if he were to stop up all the neighboring springs, and cut off all supplies of water from other sources, and compel travelers to depend solely on him for water, and then should charge them a hundred dollars for a drink, he would be acting precisely upon the principle upon which all the business of the world has been conducted from time immemorial. It is pricing a thing according to what it will bring, or according to its value to the receiver, instead of its cost to the producer. For an illustration in the mercantile line, consult any report of "prices current," or "state of the markets." The following is a sample, copied from a paper, the nearest at hand:

"No new arrivals of flour - demand increasing, prices rose since yesterday, at twelve o'clock, 25 cts. per barrel. No change in coffee since our last. Sugar raised on Thursday, half ct. per pound, in consequence of a report received of short crops; but later arrivals contradicted the report, and prices fell again. Molasses, in demand, and holders not anxious to sell. Pork, little in market and prices rising. Bacon, plenty and dull, fell since our last, from 15 to 13 cents. Cotton, all in few hands, bought up on speculation."

It will here be seen, that prices are raised in consequence of increased want, and are lowered with its decrease. The most successful speculator is he who can create the most want in the community, and extort the most from it. This is civilized cannibalism.

The value of a loaf of bread to a starving man, is equivalent to the value of his life, and if the price of a thing should be what it will bring, then one might properly demand of a starving man his whole future life in servitude as the price of the loaf. But any one who should make such a demand would be looked upon as insane, a cannibal, and one simultaneous voice would denounce the outrageous injustice, and cry aloud for retribution. If the producers and venders of the bread had bestowed one hour's labor upon its production and in passing it to the starving man, then some other articles which cost its producer and vender an hour's equivalent labor, would be a natural and just compensation for the loaf. I have placed emphasis on the idea of equivalent labor, because it appears we must discriminate between different kinds of labor, some being more disagreeable, more repugnant, requiring a more costly draft upon our ease or health than others. The idea of cost extends to and embraces this difference, the most repugnant labor considered the most costly. The idea of cost is also extended to all contingency expenses in production or vending.

A watch has a cost and a value. The cost consists of the amount of labor bestowed on the mineral or natural wealth, in converting it into metal, the labor bestowed by the workmen in constructing the watch, the wear of tools, the rent, firewood, insurance, taxes, clerkship and various other contingent expenses of its manufacturer, together with the labor expended in its transmission from him to its vender; and the labor and contingent expenses of the vender in passing it to the one who uses it. In some of these departments the labor is more disagreeable, or more deleterious to health than in others, but all these items, or more, constitute the costs of the watch. The value of a well-made watch depends upon the natural qualities of the metals or minerals employed, upon the natural qualities or principles of its mechanism, upon the uses to which it is applied, and upon the fancy or wants of the purchaser. It would be different with every different watch, with every purchaser, and would change every day in the hands of the same purchaser, and with every different use to which he applied it.

Now, among this multitude of values, which one should be selected to set a price upon? Or, should the price be made to vary and fluctuate according to these fluctuating values, and never be completely sold, but only from hour to hour? Common sense answers "neither," but, that these values, like those of sunshine and air, are of right the equal property of all; no one having a right to set any price whatever upon them. Cost, then, is the only rational ground of price, even in the most complicated transactions.



One may inform another that his house is on fire. The information may be of great value to him and his family, but as it costs nothing, there is no ground of price. Conversation, and all other intercourse of mind with mind, by which each may be infinitely benefited, may prove of inconceivable value to all; where the cost is nothing, or too trifling to notice, it constitutes what is here designated as purely intellectual commerce.

The performance of a piece of music for the gratification of oneself and others, in which the performer feels pleasure but no pain, and which is attended by no contingent cost, may be said to cost nothing; there is, therefore, no ground of price. It may, however, be of great value to all within hearing.

The intercourse of feelings, which is not addressed to the intellect, and has no pecuniary feature, is here distinguished as our moral commerce.

A word of sympathy to the distressed may be of great value to them; and to make this value the ground and limit of a price, would be but to follow out the principle that a thing should bring its value. Mercenary as we are, even now, this is no where done except by the priesthood.

A man has a lawsuit pending, upon which hangs his property, his security, his personal liberty, or his life. The lawyer who undertakes his case may ask ten, twenty, fifty, five hundred, or five thousand dollars, for a few hours of attendance or labor in the case. This charge would be based chiefly on the value of his services to his client. Now, there is nothing in this statement that sounds wrong, but it is because our ears are familiarized with wrong. The cost to the lawyer might be, say, twenty hours' labor, and allowing a portion of his apprenticeship, twenty-one hours in all, with all contingent expenses, would constitute a legitimate, a just ground of price. The laborer, when he comes to dig the lawyer's cellar, never thinks of setting a price upon its future value to the owner; he only considers how long it will take him, how hard the ground, what will be the weather to which he will be exposed, what will be the wear and tear of teams, tools, clothes, etc.; and in all these items, he considers nothing but the different items' cost to himself.

The doctor demands of the wood-cutter the proceeds of five, ten, or twenty days' labor for a visit of an hour, and asks, in excuse, if the sick man would not prefer this rather than continuous disease or death. This, again, is basing price on an assumed value of his attendance instead of its cost. It is common to plead the difference of talents required: without waiting to prove this idea false, it is, perhaps sufficient to that the talents required, either in cutting wood, or in cutting off a leg or an arm, so far as they cost the possessor, are a legitimate ground of estimate and price; but talents which cost nothing, are natural wealth, and, like the water, land, and sunshine, should be accessible to all without price.

If a priest is required to get a soul out of purgatory, he sets his price according to the value which the relatives set upon his prayers, instead of their cost to the priest. The same amount of labor equally disagreeable, with equal wear and tear, performed by his customers, would be a just remuneration.

All patents give to the inventor or discoverer the power to command a price based upon the value of the thing patented; instead of which, his legitimate compensation would be an equivalent for the cost of the physical and mental labor, added to that of his materials, and the contingent expenses of experiments.

A speculator buys a piece of land of government, for \$1.25 per acre, and holds it till surrounding improvements, made by others, increase its value, and it is then sold accordingly, for five, ten, twenty, a hundred, or ten thousand dollars per acre. From this operation of civilized cannibalism whole families live from generation to generation, in idleness and luxury, upon the surrounding population, who must have the land at any price. Instead of this, the prime cost of land, the taxes, and other contingent expenses of surveying, etc. added to the labor of making contracts, would constitute the equitable price of land purchased for sale.

If A purchases a lot for his own use, and B wants it more than A, then A may properly consider what his labor upon it has cost him, and what would compensate him for the inconvenience of parting with it; but this is a very different thing from purchasing it on purpose to part with it, which costs A no inconvenience. We here discriminate between these two cases, but in neither do we go beyond cost as the limit of price.

A loans to B ten thousand dollars at six percent interest, for one year, and at the end of that year receives back the whole amount loaned and six hundred dollars more. Why? Because it was of that value to the borrower. For the same reason, why not demand of the starving man ten thousand dollars for a

Division and exchange are naturally carried to a greater extent in cities than in the open country. This, probably, in part explains the enigma of so many being sustained luxuriously in cities apparently almost without labor, while men in the country are always hard at work, but rarely have comfortable things around them. Being so remote from division and exchange, they are obliged to supply many of their own wants without the ordinary means of doing it: without tools, without instruction, without practice, they must mend a gate, repair their harness, make their own shoes, and expend, perhaps, three times the labor that a workman would require in the same operations, and it is badly done at last. They must also have as many kinds of tools as the different operations demand, which it requires care to preserve and keep in order, and between all their time and capital are frittered away to little purpose. Five hundred men thus scattered too remote from each other, or from other causes being unable to procure the advantages of division and exchange, must have five hundred pairs of bench planes and other tools for working wood; five hundred sets of shoe-making tools; five hundred places and fixtures for working iron; and five hundred equipments in every other branch of business in which they are obliged to dabble. Now, if these five hundred men or families were within reach of each other, and each one were to apply himself to one business, and all should exchange with each other, each one would require only one set of tools, and one trade, instead of thirty or forty. His work would be well done instead of ill done. And if exchanges were equal, the wants of each would be well supplied, at perhaps the cost of one fourth the labor that is now required to supply one half their wants in an inferior manner.

If such are the enormous advantages of division and exchange, how can we account for the fact that so large portions of all countries are deprived, and that even in cities division is not carried out, excepting in a very few branches of manufacture? I attribute this barbarous condition of the economies chiefly to two causes. First, the practice of making value the standard of price - asking for a thing just what it will bring - balances the motives of the purchaser, so that a man wanting a pair of shoes, being asked as much as he would give for them, makes him form the habit of going without whenever he can, or of making them himself even at a disadvantage. Whereas, on the contrary, if he could always get them for that amount of his own labor which they cost the expert workman, he could have no motive for doing without them, nor to spend three times as much labor in making them himself. The same cause and the same reasons ramify into all our supplies.

In society where even the first element of order had made its way into the intellects of men, there would be some point at which all would continually make known their wants, as far as they could anticipate them, and put them in a position to be supplied. All who wanted employment would know where to look for it, and the supply would be adapted to the demand. The adaptation of the supply to the demand, although it is continually governing the bodies of men, seems never to have made its way into their intellects, or they would have made it the governing principle of their arrangements. It is this which prompts almost every action of life, not only of men, but other animals: all animated nature. All man's pursuits originate in his effort to supply some of his wants, either physical, or mental, or moral. Even our intellectual commerce is unconsciously governed by this great principle, whenever it is harmonious and beneficial, and it is discordant and depreciating where it is not so regulated. An answer to a question is but a supply to a demand. Advice, when wanted, is acceptable, but never otherwise. Commands are never in this order, and produce nothing but disorder. The sovereignty of the individual must correct this.

Almost every movement of every animal is from nature's promptings toward the supply of some of its wants. Nay, more, if it is wounded, there is naturally an action toward the formation of new skin, or new parts to supply the deficiency created. The same principle runs even into the vegetable kingdom. The bark of a tree being torn away, nature goes to work to the demand thus produced, with new bark, which otherwise never would have occupied that place. Even a pumpkin vine having run too far to draw nourishment from its original starting point, strikes down new roots, to draw a supply of nutrients necessary to its progress. Had "the combined wisdom" of any country equaled that of a pumpkin-vine, that country would have had some arrangement for adapting the supply to the demand. But this will never be, while speculations are made by throwing the demand and supply out of their natural proportions, or while value, instead of cost, is made the limit of price. This false principle of price, in addition to all its

condition not contemplated beforehand, and if he can withdraw his investment at pleasure; then there is no violation of his natural liberty or sovereignty over his own. Or, if he chooses to make a permanent investment and lay down all future control over it, for the sake of prospective advantage, it is a surrender of so much of his property (not his liberty) to the control of others. But, it being a definite quantity and the risks and conditions all being made known and voluntarily consented to beforehand, the consequences may not be serious to him. And although he may discover, in the course of the business, that the principle is wrong, yet he may derive ultimate advantage, under some circumstances, from so much combination - some may be willing to invest more and others less. If each one is the supreme judge at all times of the individual case in hand, and his free to act from his own estimate of the advantages to be derived to himself or others, as in the above instance, then the natural liberty of the individual is not invaded. It is when the decision or will of others is made the rule of action, contrary to his views or inclination, that his legitimate liberty is violated.

But now let us contemplate another degree of combination: combination as the basis for society, involving all the great interests of man: his liberty, his person, his mind, his time, his labor, his food, the soil he rests upon, his responsibilities to an indefinite extent, his security, the education and destinies of his children, the indefinite interests of his race. In such combinations, whether political or social, the different members can never be found always possessing the same views and feelings on all these subjects. Not even two persons can perform a piece of music in order, unless one of them commences or leads individually, or unless both agree to be governed by some third movement, which is an individuality. The same is true with regard to any combined movement. In political and social combination, men have sought to mitigate the horrid abuses of despotism by diffusing the delegated power, but they have always purchased the relief at the expense of confusion. The experience of all the world has shown, that the business of such combinations cannot be conducted by the whole of its members, but that one or a few must be set apart to lead and manage the business of the combination. To these, power must be delegated just in proportion to the amount of business committed to their charge. These constitute the government of the combination, and to this government all must yield their individual sovereignty, or the combination cannot move one step. If their persons, their responsibilities, and all their interests are involved in the combination, as in communities of common property, all these must be entirely under the control of the government, whose judgment or will is the rule for all the governed, and the natural liberty or sovereignty of every member is entirely annihilated, and the government is as strong and absolute as government can be made, while the members are rendered as weak and dependent on the governing few as they can be rendered, and consequently, their liberty and security are reduced to the lowest practicable degree. If only half of the interests of the individual are invested in the combination, then only half the quantity of government is required, and only half of the natural liberty of the members need be surrendered; but as this definite quantity cannot be measured and set apart from the other half, and as government once erected, either through the indefiniteness of language in which the power is delegated or by other means, will steal the other half, there is no security, no liberty for mankind, but through the abandonment of combination as the basis of society.

When one's person, his labor, his responsibilities, the soil he rests on, his food, his property, and all his interests are so disconnected, disunited from others, that he can control or dispose of these at all times, according to his own views and feelings, without controlling or disturbing others; and when his premises are sacred to himself, and his person is not approached, nor his time and attention taken up against his inclination, then the individual may be said to be practically sovereign of himself and all that constitutes or pertains to his individuality.

## 5. Economy in the Production and Uses of Wealth

The first and greatest source of economy, the richest mine of wealth ever worked by man, is the division and exchange of labor. Where a man is so isolated from society as to be deprived of the advantages of the division and exchange of labor, and has to supply all his own wants, like Robinson Crusoe, there is nothing to distinguish him from the savage. It is only in proportion as he can apply himself to one or a few pursuits, and exchange his products for the supply of all his wants, that he begins to emerge from the crudest state of existence, to surround himself with conveniences and luxuries, and to reduce the burthen of his own labor.

loaf of bread because it saves his life? The legitimate, the equitable compensation for the loan of money, is the cost of labor in lending it and receiving it back again.

Rents of land, buildings, etc., especially in cities, are based chiefly on their value to the occupants, and this depends on the degree of want or distress felt by the landless and houseless; the greater the distress, the higher the value and the price. The equitable rent of either would be the wear, insurance, etc., and the labor of making contracts and receiving the rents, all of which are different items of cost.

The products of machinery are now sold for what they will bring, and therefore its advantages go exclusively into the pockets of its owners. If these products were priced at the cost of the machinery, its wear, attendance, etc., then capitalists would not be interested in its introduction any more than those who attended it; they would not be interested in reducing the wages of its attendants.

One of the most common, most disgusting features of this iniquitous spirit of the present pecuniary commerce, is seen and felt by every one, in all the operations of buying and selling. The cheating, higgling, huckstering, and falsehoods, so degrading to both purchase and vender, and the injustice done to one party or the other, in almost every transaction in trade, all originate in the chaotic union of cost, value, and the reward of labor of the vender all into one price. A store-keeper selling a needle, cannot get paid cannot get paid for his labor within the price of the needle; to do this he must disconnect the two, and make the needle one item of his charge, and his labor another. If he sell the needle for its prime cost, and its portion of contingent expenses, and charge an equal amount of labor for that which he bestows in purchasing and vending, he is equitably remunerated for his labor, and his customer's equal right is not invaded. If he add three cents upon each yard of calico, as his compensation, his customers may take one yard, and he does not get equivalent for his labor. If the customer take thirty yards, he becomes overpaid, and his customer is wronged. Disconnection of the two elements of price, and making cost the limit of each, works equitably for both parties in all cases, and at once puts an end to the disgusting and degrading feature of our pecuniary commerce.

## 3. Security of Person and Property

Theorists have told us that laws and governments are made for the security of person and property; but it must be evident to most minds, that they never have, never will accomplish this professed object; although they have had the world at their control for thousands of years, they have brought it to a worse condition than that in which they found it, in spite of immense improvements in mechanism, division of labor, and other elements of civilization to aid them. On the contrary, under the plausible pretext of securing person and property, they have spread wholesale destruction, famine, and wretchedness in every frightful form over all parts of the earth, where peace and security might otherwise have prevailed. They have shed more blood, committed more murders, tortures, and other frightful crimes in the struggles against each other for the privilege of governing, than society ever would or could have suffered in the total absence of all governments whatever. It is impossible for any one who can read the history of governments, and the operations of laws, to feel secure in person and property under any form of government or any code of laws whatever. They invade the private household, they impertinently meddle with, and in their blind and besotted wantonness, presume to regulate the most sacred individual feelings. No feelings of security, no happiness can exist under such circumstances. They set up rules or laws to which they require conformity, while conformity is impossible, and while neither rulers nor ruled can tell how the laws will be interpreted or administered. Under such circumstances, no security for the governed can exist.

A citizen may be suddenly hurried away from his home, shut up in a horrid prison, charged with a crime of which he is totally innocent; he may die in prison or on the gallows, and his family may die of mortification and broken hearts. No security can exist where this can happen; yet, all these are operations of laws and governments; which are professedly instituted for "the security of person and property."

A young girl is knocked down and violated in the country where law "secures person and property." She applies to law for redress, and is put in prison and kept there for six months as a witness, to appear

against her violator, who is running at large, forfeits his bonds, and disappears before his victim is restored to liberty.

A woman is abandoned by a worthless husband, and reduced to the necessity of permitting a villain to board with her a year without remuneration. He has consumed her last loaf; she appeals to the law for redress; the villain brings the drunken husband to court. The law (for the protection of person and property) forbids the woman to apply for redress while her husband is alive (though drunk). Her appeal is suppressed - she is nonsuited, and put in prison to pay the cost of her protection.

Governments involve the citizen in national and state responsibilities from which he would choose to be exempt. They compel him to desert his family, and risk or lay down his life in wars in which he feels no wish to engage. Great crimes are committed by the government of one nation against another, to gratify the ambition or lust of rulers; the people of both nations are thus set to destroy the persons and property of each other, and would be martyred as traitors if they refused.


Some of our best citizens are torn from their families and friends and thrust into loathsome prisons, for not believing in a point of religion prescribed by law; another, for working in the field on a day set aside by the law for idleness. One case of this kind is enough to show that no security exists for the governed. But the greatest chance for it is with those who can get possession of the governing power; hence arises the universal scramble for the possession of power, as the preferable of the two conditions. These struggles and intrigues for power increase a thousand fold the insecurity of all parties. Rulers kill the members of society as punishment for offenses, instead of tracing these offenses to their own operations; and their pernicious example and prescriptions becoming authority for the uniformed, prompt them to kill their neighbors for an offense - to become their brother's judge or their neighbor's keeper; and crimination and recrimination, and slander, wrangling, discord, and murder are the natural fruits of these laws "for the security of person and property."

If B has done what the law forbids (although it be the preservation of a fellow creature), he is insecure while there are witnesses who may appear against him; and all these are insecure as long as B feels insecure. A large portion of all the murders since the invention of laws have been perpetrated to silence witnesses.

Again, words are the tenure by which every thing is held by law, and words are subject to different interpretations, according to the views, wills, or interests of the judges, lawyers, juries, and other functionaries appointed to execute these laws. In this uncertainty of interpretation lies the great fundamental element of insecurity which is inseparable from any system of laws, any constitution, articles of compact, and every thing of this description. No language is fit for any such purposes that admits of more than one individual interpretation, and none can be made to possess this necessary individuality; therefore no language is fit for the basis of positive institutions. To possess the interpreting power of verbal institutions, is to possess unlimited power.

It is not generally known, or practically admitted, that each individual is liable, and, therefore, has a right, to interpret language according to his peculiar individuality. A creed, a constitution, laws, articles of association, are all liable to as many different interpretations as there are parties to it; each one reads it through his own mental spectacles, and that which is blue to one is yellow to another, and green to a third; although all give their assent to the words, each one gives assent to his peculiar interpretation of them, which is only known to himself, so that the difference between them can be made to appear only in action; which, as soon as it commences, explodes the discordant elements in every direction, always disappointing the expectations of all who had calculated on uniformity or conformity. Every attempt at amendment only produces new disappointments, and increases the necessity for other amendments and additions without end, all to end in disappointment and the greater insecurity of everyone engaged in or trusting to them. To be harmonious and successful we must begin anew; we must disconnect, disunite ourselves from all institutions or rise above them.

But how, you ask, can this be, where each is a member of the body politic - where obedience to some law or other is indispensable to the working of the political machine? If every one was the law unto himself, all would be perfect anarchy and confusion. No doubt of this. The error lies further back than you have contemplated. We should be no such thing as a body politic. Each man and woman must be an individual, no member of any body but that of the human family. Blackstone says, "It is the wants and the fears of individuals which make them come together," and form society. In other words, it is



for interchange of mutual assistance, and for security of person or property, that society is originally formed. Now, if neither of these objects has ever been attained in society, we have no reason for keeping up a body politic. With regard to economy in the supply of our wants, this will be treated of in its proper place. With regard to security, we see that in the wide range of the world's bloody history, there is not any one horrid feature so frightful, so appalling as the recklessness, the cold-blooded indifference with which laws and governments have sacrificed person or property in their wanton, their criminal, or ignorant pursuit of some blind passion or unsubstantial phantom of the imagination. We have not the space, nor is it necessary, to enter into details. Let the reader refer to any page of history; let him remember that laws and governments are professedly instituted for the security of person and property, and let him consider each page an illustration of their success, then he will be able to appreciate a proposal to secure them by some other means.

The security of person and property requires exemption from the fear of encroachments from any quarter. And, although governments have always been the greatest depredators upon the rights of persons and property, yet, there are other sources of insecurity which call for remedy, and which demand the operation of the cost principle. It will be seen, upon reflection, that value being iniquitously made the basis of price produces all the ruinous fluctuations in trade, the uncertainty of business, the uncertainty of the reward of industry, and the inadequacy of its reward. It produces poverty and the fear of poverty, avarice, and the all-absorbing pursuit of property, without regard for the rights or sympathy for the sufferings of others, and trains us, in the absence of all knowledge or rule of right, mutually to encroach upon and invade each other.

#### 4. The Greatest Practicable Amount of Liberty to Each Individual

What is liberty? Who will allow me to define it for him, and agree beforehand to square his life by my definition? Who does not wish to see it first, and sit in judgment on it, and decide for himself as to its propriety? And who does not see that is his own interpretation of the word that he adopts? And who will agree to square his whole life by any rule which, though good at present, may not prove applicable in all cases? Who does not wish to preserve his liberty to act according to the peculiarities of future cases, and to sit in judgment on the merits of each, and to change or vary from time to time with new developments and increasing knowledge?

You and I may associate together as the best of friends, as long as our interests are not too closely connected; but let me become responsible for your debts, or let me, by joining a society of which you are a member, become responsible for your sentiments, and the discordant effects of too close connection will immediately appear. If my interest is united with yours, and we differ at any point in its management, as this difference is inevitable, one must yield, the other must decide, or we must leave the decision to a third party. This third party is government, and thus, in united interests, government originates. The more business there is thus committed to governmental management, the more must each of the governed surrender his liberty or control over his own, and the greater must be the amount of power delegated to the government. When this becomes unlimited or indefinite, the government is absolute, and the liberty and security of the governed are annihilated; when limited or definite, some liberty remains to the governed. Experience has proved, that power cannot be delegated to rulers of states and nations, in sufficient quantities for the management of business, without its becoming an indefinite quantity, and in this indefiniteness have mankind been cheated out of their legitimate liberty.

Let twenty persons combine their means to build a bridge, each contributing twenty dollars. At the first meeting for business it is found that the business of such combinations can be conducted only by electing some one individual deciding and acting power, before any practical steps can be taken. Here each subscriber must trust his twenty dollars to the management of some one, yet as the sum is definite and not serious, its loss may not disturb his security, and he prefers to risk it for the prospective advantages of himself and his neighborhood. In entering his twenty dollars into this combination he submits to the control of others, but he submits nothing more; and if he is aware beforehand that the business of all combinations must be conducted by delegated power, and if he is not compelled to submit to any