

THE CANDID FRIEND

An Independent Review of Men and Things That Figure in the Contemporary Life of California

By Edward F. Cahill

JOHAN GRAHAM BROOKS the other day told a university audience at Berkeley that the country is passing through a revolution. We used to call it a "crisis," but "revolution" sounds more scientific and impressive. Just 50 years ago, when the country was going through a revolution, to which the present real or supposed convulsion is mere child's play, Artemus Ward amused himself by inquiring of everybody, "Have you met the crisis?" Perhaps we may be permitted to ask now, "Have you met the revolution?"

A JOB FAMINE IN ALAMEDA

Supervisor Bridge of Alameda county has met the revolution, and he knows what did it. Socialism, declares Supervisor Bridge, is due to the fact that there are not soft jobs enough to go around. His district has been annexed to Oakland and civil service rules have robbed him of his patronage and pie. Therefore there are no jobs and all his following have turned socialist. Let's talk of revolutions and crises. Of comfort, no man speak to this bereaved father of the district from which Oakland has carved a monstrous cattle out.



ONLY A STATE OF MIND

The Chronicle has seen the revolution and does not think much of it. The thing is not so much a convulsion as a state of mind. It is like this:

The recent advance in the prices of commodities is merely a natural phenomenon which has occurred many times in the history of the world. It is the resultant of the pressure of many economic forces, some of them obvious, others elusive, but all of them positive and unchangeable by any human power.

Prices may be reduced only by a change in the direction or intensity of these forces, which must come, if at all, only through the reaction of these forces upon each other.

It is not likely to come at all, and if it does we shall not like it. Nothing can prevent general prosperity under rising prices except social unrest resulting from the belief that increased prices are the result of somebody's extortion and a determination to find and punish the villain.

There is your state of mind—the "social unrest," the artificial product of demagogues, as the Chronicle goes on to explain in this shape:

This is known now by those who think intelligently on such subjects, and nothing more that is both important and true can be discovered. The fact that the majority of us are not informed on such subjects makes it possible for demagogues to propose preposterous "remedies" and get a hearing and social agitators to get support in their attacks on society.

A Fuddled Philosopher

It is not, therefore, the shortage of jobs bewailed by Supervisor Bridge nor the high cost of living that may denote the revolution. 'Tis the voice of the demagogue, you hear him complain. Your revolution is just a work of the imagination conceived in the brain of a college professor. If the pinch of prices afflict, take the Chronicle's advice that they can be "reduced only by a change in the direction or intensity of economic forces, which must come, if at all, only through the reaction of these forces upon each other." If you don't quite fathom this fuddled philosophy you might inquire of the editor of the query department for a prescription to cure your "unrest," this political insomnia that keeps the nation tossing and guessing. It is only a disease of the imagination caught from demagogues who go around the country roaring, as, for example:

The methods by which the Standard Oil people and those engaged in the other combinations of which I have spoken have achieved great fortunes can only be justified by the advocacy of a system of morality which would also justify every form of criminality on the part of a labor union and every form of violence, corruption and fraud, from murder to bribery and ballot box stuffing in politics.

The demagogue who uttered these words was president of the United States at the time and they were included in an official message to congress delivered on January 31, 1908. The demagogue class is large and catching.

BLAME THE POLITICIANS

No, it is not the revolution invented by a magniloquent college professor, nor is it merely a figment of the imagination as diagnosed by a fuddled philosopher suffering from curvature of the brain. But there is the poignant pinch of high prices squeezing people of fixed incomes. Wages have not risen in equal step with prices, and the

situation is further complicated by the fact that everybody wants to live in town. Of our three philosophers, Supervisor Bridge comes nearest the truth. There are not soft jobs enough to go around.

The Chronicle's amusing theory of the "unrest" is very popular in certain circles. For example, I find a New York firm of stock brokers issuing a circular, from which I quote:

As we look into the year 1912, this is what we see:
A dense haze.

It is occupied by a small number of persons who shout, gesticulate menacingly and move suspiciously about.

This strange spectacle is surrounded by ninety millions of people, trying to make out what is taking place in the haze, what the tenants of the haze are saying and why they seem to be about to destroy themselves and the universe.

The bewildered spectators are all those who are concerned in the question whether peace shall be maintained between the government and business.

The small number of persons occupying the haze are called politicians. They subsist upon strife between the government and business. When some of the more forward speculators would disperse the haze, or even so much as lift up a corner of it, the politicians puff up their bodies and emit new and terrible threats against business. They call upon all the people to be discontented and they make promises which are as empty as their threats.

The politicians have no friends and they won't mind if you put the whole blame on them. It is a comforting theory in Wall street that all discontent is due to imaginary or fictitious causes. But in the meantime the blind monster Demos, not understanding what hurts him, strikes out wildly with the first club that lies handy. This happens to be the so called socialism that attracted Supervisor Bridge's backsliding retainers when they lost their jobs and had to go to work for a living. That is enough to make any man turn socialist. Mr. Taft was once asked what shall a man do when he loses his job and he answered, "God knows." Supervisor Bridge knows. The man turns socialist.



PILLSBURY'S SERMON

As a result of the high prices that squeeze the dwellers in towns the farmers have become the most prosperous class in the community. I don't grudge them their new prosperity, for I used to know them well in the old days when they were desperately down on their luck. Now that they are on top of the heap one rejoices to find Brother Pillsbury in his capacity of chairman of the Industrial Accident board making appeal to the agricultural soul, to wit:

In our second article in this series we showed that the burden of industrial accident, which should all along have been a charge upon the industry in which the accident occurred, has been borne by property and poverty, and we asked if the "independent" farmers of California desired to be so subsidized, well knowing that they will not when they come to know where that subsidy comes from. And we hold that those legislators who have been quick to forfend the farmer in this matter, through the assumption that the farmer must of necessity be opposed to compensation, have done anything except to pay a merited tribute to the farmer's soundness of mind and heart. The farmer only needs to understand compensation in order to become a convert to it, for it is only another phase of the eternal issue of the rights of man, to no appeal of which did the American farmer ever turn a deaf ear.

This is an appeal to the farmer's better nature, to his higher self. It is "The Passing of the Third Floor Back" suffering a tedious resurrection in the body of a public document.



EXPENSIVE INFORMATION

This entertaining document appears to be the third installment of the \$15,000 worth of information designed to enlighten the California public so that they will be enabled to understand the meaning of the employers' liability law. In this connection Brother Devlin in the Santa Cruz News grows sardonic, like this:

We have seen some criticism of this appropriation, but after reading the explanations sent out by the state accident board \$15,000 does not seem so excessive. If that board can make the terms of the new law clear for that sum, if it can convince the people that the law is fair for all parties, it will be performing a very creditable feat indeed, and \$15,000 will be cheap. Pillsbury is doing great work. We have long been

accustomed to get our sermons out of a barrel, but it is a new and unexpected thing to see them fished out of the pork barrel.

A HISTORIC DROUGHT

Talking of the hardships undergone by the early settlers and farmers in California, my old friend J. M. Guinn, who used to teach school in Anaheim away back, tells of the great drought that scourged southern California in the sixties, in this wise:

The great drought began in 1862 and lasted two years. In the winter of 1862-63 the rainfall was less than four inches and in 1863-64 it was little more than a trace. By the fall of 1863 all vegetation had been licked up from the sunbaked plains by the hungry herds, and cattle were dying of starvation.

As the time for the rainy season approached the rancheros anxiously scanned the heavens for signs and portents of coming storms, but none appeared. The heavens were as brass and the former and the latter rains came not. The winter passed and the hot, dry summer was upon them. Cattle were dying by the hundreds every day. Herds of gaunt, skeleton-like forms moved slowly over the plains in search of food. Here and there, singly or in small groups, poor brutes, too weak to move on, stood motionless, with drooping heads, slowly dying of hunger.

In the long stretch of arid plain between Los Angeles and San Diego there was one oasis of luxuriant green. It was the vineyards of the Anaheim colonists, kept green by irrigation. The two square miles of colony ground were surrounded by a close set willow hedge and the streets were closed by gates. The starving cattle, frenzied by the sight of something green, would gather around the inclosure and make desperate attempts to break through. A mounted guard, armed, patrolled the outside of the barricade, day and night, to protect the vineyards from incursion by the starving herds. There was no relief from the wretched condition. There was no means of shipping the starving cattle out of the country and no feed to ship in. The small amount of feed raised by irrigation was scarce sufficient to keep a few domestic animals alive. Hay sold for \$150 a ton and feed barley for \$100.

SORROWFUL MEMORIES

The miseries of the Anaheim settlers were by no means ended by the war against the starving cattle. The second year of the drought vast swarms of grasshoppers came sailing into the settlement and no fence nor patrol could keep them out. They cleaned up every green thing within the fence and left the settlers for the time not much better off than the cattle outside.

That was a sore time in southern California. Los Angeles was then a small pueblo of some 6,000 people, mostly native Californians. A limited area was devoted to vineyards and oranges. The grasshoppers left them bare as the bald scalp of Julius Caesar. The memory of that unhappy period was kept alive for awhile by naming an outlying road Grasshopper street, but long ago the Los Angeles city fathers, regarding this name as an unlucky reminder of unprofitable sorrows, likely to hurt business and make people ask inconvenient questions, changed it to Figueroa street. It is now in the heart of the fashionable residence quarter of Los Angeles.



MORE THAN HALF DESTROYED

The loss of cattle and horses in southern California during those two years of drought was something frightful. The assessed value of property in Los Angeles county in 1860 was \$3,650,930 and in 1864 it was \$1,622,370. Considerably more than half the property in the county had been wiped out of existence.

Droughts of that severity may occur again in southern California, and it is quite doubtful whether the irrigation systems of that region will help much in a really dry year. They are now in normal seasons taxed to their utmost capacity.

North of Tehachapi there is no record of any such droughts. In 1862-3 the rainfall in San Francisco was 15.10 inches and in the following winter it was 21.64 inches. The last named figure is nearly up to normal for this region. South of Tehachapi there was no rain during those two years.

CARL BROWNE'S OBITUARY

Fame is a brief candle soon burned out. Here one finds the New York Sun writing obituary stuff for Carl Browne apropos of a visit by General Coxe to New York city. When Coxe marched his army of tramps and hobos from Oakland to Washington, D. C., in 1894, Carl Browne was his chief lieutenant, and thus the Sun:

Others have marched or are trying to march upon Washington and the White House. Other and not better trumpeters are depending, as Jacob depended, "upon the outpouring of the downtrodden people to sustain us in our mission for the salvation of the republic."

Just before General Coxe and his lieutenant, Carl Browne, were sentenced to twenty days in the district of Columbia jail and a fine of \$5 for treading on the people's grass Carl Browne told the court:

"I do not believe the people of the United States believe that such a lot of filth and stagnation exists as is in the courts here."
This was in 1894, not in 1912. Carl Browne, who like Robinson Crusoe made him a coat of the skin of a goat, is no more, we fear, but hail to Coxe, precursor of some of the most lauded patriots of today! Even if he has backslidden into capitalism he was a precursor. Coxe has turned plutocrat, instead of which Browne

lives in Calistoga. To be sure, he wrote me some time ago that he had become president of a corporation, but I guess it was not incorporated enough to hurt. He is still the same champion of the downtrodden and the stiff, stern, unbending foe of the Money Devil.



APPLAUSE FOR MR. HEARST

Mr. Hearst, through the Examiner, describes himself as "a national figure," and the Sacramento Union applauds like this:

In Thursday morning's issue of the San Francisco Examiner Mr. Hearst praised the eloquence of his own plea in behalf of China and told how the directors of the exposition had declared him a "world figure." There can be no doubt about the modesty Alfred Henry Lewis discovered in him.

WORKS AND HIS FAITH

Indeed, California is doing a large trade in national figures, as one may infer from the Philadelphia Record's word painting of our Senator Works at the Ohio progressive conference, to wit:

Senator Works of California impresses us as the fullest of pure, unadulterated, 95 degree spirit of progress. It was he that said, "We are at the parting of the ways." All of us know that famous fork in the roads. When a man talks about the parting of the ways we know what the old signpost is after; he is going to warn us against the broad road that leads to destruction and appeal to us to boost him up the narrow way that leads to virtue and celebrity.

"There is now in progress," exclaimed the Impassioned Works, "a great struggle between right and wrong, liberty and degradation, the people and the interests." That has the homiletic note to which Oyster Bay has accustomed us. It has the tone of alarm which has been handed down from progressive spirit to progressive spirit, and populist to silverite and silverite to progressive republican. These alert and soaring souls who are constantly in the vanguard of progress are always standing at the parting of the ways shouting to the human flocks to get out of the highway and haw into the straight and narrow lane that leads to higher purposes.

The senator is a harmless old foolie foisted on the state by a lot of crooked politicians and pledge breakers. His most active function appears to be to make California a laughing stock in the east.

DOUBLE CROSS FOR KENT

Instructive in a way is the double cross that these same politicians have given Representative Kent. Kent is altogether too much of a gentleman for the political game as it is played in California. He is as straight as a string and has the courage of his convictions. In a word, he is the exact and definite converse of the professional politicians that control the present legislature. Naturally they fixed him good and plenty with a congress district where it looks as if he might have as much chance as a snowball in Yuma.

Notwithstanding Kent's undoubtedly great abilities he will not, perhaps, be a serious loss to the California delegation. He is too positive and uncompromising to work in with the game as it is played. Politics is not a nice business.

AN OPEN FIELD

The open district is the third. It was fixed, of course, for Frank Devlin, and he is a good man as politicians go, as good as the game allows. But already one hears of a host of competitors. Among these, perhaps, the most formidable might be Hon. Charles M. Belshaw, sublime ruler of the illuminated and inverted order of woodrats. Further information about these creatures of the wild may be obtained from Cutler Bonestell or Charley Bonte by inclosing a two cent stamp.



CONVERTED STANDPATTERS

Some nonsense has been written about Needham moving out of the new seventh district, which includes the San Joaquin valley from Stanislaus county south. It should be obvious that the new district was fixed to suit him to a nicety, assuming that Representative Smith is eliminated by ill health. Needham poses as a converted standpatter and carries it off fairly well. The democrats hope to beat him with District Attorney Church of Fresno.

These two Los Angeles districts are destined to become the grave of many ambitions. In one of them the illustrious and talkative Lee C. Gates and the ingenious and literary Marshall Stimson are lumped with the incumbent, Representative Stephens. It seems as if two truly good men must go under. In the other district, which includes Pasadena, the candidates come in flocks. There is, for example, that ancient standby of the standpatters, James McLachlan, but he is not bigoted, and doubtless, like Needham, is willing to be converted. Then there is State Senator Bell, whose proudest boast is that he was once ejected from a caucus by bad men like Eddie Wolfe; bad, that is, in a purely political sense. Next gentleman is Senator Thompson, doubtfully illustrious as the putative father of the egregious reapportionment law. Don't let us forget Thum, who would like to have a finger in the pie. Thum is a mayor.