

[For THE INDEX. June 22, 1876]

PROUDHON AND HIS TRANSLATOR.

BY STEPHEN PEARL ANDREWS.

Benj. R. Tucker, the business partner and *confrère* of E. H. Heywood of Princeton, Mass., has translated and published, in an elegant volume of nearly 500 royal octavo pages, the most renowned of the politico-economical works of the justly celebrated P. J. Proudhon. The title of the work in English is: *What is Property? An Inquiry into the Principle of Right and of Government*. I am requested to write a review-notice of the work. The temptation is strong to expand into an exhaustive review, but I am not certain of any avenue to the public for such a treatise, and I shall confine myself to the smaller plan. First, as to what is usually put last. The volume as a book is superb. Print, presswork, paper, and binding are at the top of the powers of the bookmaking art, and the price (\$3.50, or \$6.50, according to style) is not excessive. The work of the translator is also conscientiously and well done, and is nearly faultless from the literary point of view. A few Gallicisms may be pointed out, but they are exceptionally few, and the translator's personality is completely sunk in the labor of love which he evidently had before him.

The work itself consists of two "Memoirs," the first of which is the more important, and is that to which my comments will mainly apply. Proudhon was confessedly one of the great thinkers of France, at a time, thirty years ago, when France abounded in distinguished men. He combined the metaphysical subtlety of the German with the vivacity of the Frenchman, and the dead-in-earnest character of the genuine reformer. His was a truly religious nature, in the right sense. He was in love with truth, and on fire with devotion to its promulgation; and he struggled hard with the problem of its solution. His scope was not confined to social affairs. He traversed the whole field of philosophy, and, as I think him more characterized by analytical than by constructive power, I cannot but regard his *Creation de l'Ordre* as a more remarkable and valuable work than that which Mr. Tucker has chosen to introduce him to the American public, although I have no doubt that he has been judicious in his choice, as that would find a still smaller circle of minds prepared to appreciate it.

Proudhon had the genius of discovery, a wonderful depth and clearness of perception, wonderful accuracy of statement, in the main, and wonderful strength of intellectual grasp upon his conception; but after all he is by no means, always, a luminous writer, sometimes because he had not reached the bottom of his subject, and sometimes because his love of epigrammatic and paradoxical statement betrayed him into astounding rather than convincing the reader. For example, he heads a long succession of propositions with the repetition of the statement that *property is impossible*, and proceeds to show, under each head, why it is so. But if property is impossible, then it cannot exist; and if it cannot exist, then it does not exist; and why should Mr. Proudhon write a big book to do away with what does and never did have any existence? Of course the literal meaning of what he says is absurd; but if you have the patience to study him intensely, you will find out that what he intends by this expression is: that property (in so far as he is here considering it, as that what gives *increase*) contains within itself a suicidal principle; that it is self-defeating; that it is constantly "killing the goose that lays the golden egg." His statement *covers*, but it does not *convey*, that idea. The idea is, in part, true; is profound, and profoundly important; but his way of saying it is afflicted with the same evil; it is repellent, self-defeating, and suicidal of his supposed purpose, that of being understood by the reader.

But what, in fine, does Proudhon mean by property? His startling epigrammatic thunderbolt, *property is robbery*, aroused, bewildered, and repelled all Europe. Perhaps not a dozen persons from his time till now have ever studied him severely enough to understand exactly

what he meant. It is just possible that he did not quite understand himself, and that if he had done so, he would never have put his statement in that form. What he meant covers an immensity of truth, of new truth (at that day), and of important truth, but is it all true, to the extent of maintaining such a sweeping indictment? Let us see what he meant by property. He did not mean possession, enjoyment, usufruct of the land and of the products of labor. These he contrasts with "property," and maintains and defends. What he means by property is that subtle fiction which makes that mine or thine of which we are out of possession, for which we have no present use, but which by this subtle tie we may recall at our option, using it, in the meantime, to subjugate others to our service, by taking *increase*, for its *use* in the form of rent, interest, and the like. He uses the term property, therefore, in a very rigorous and technical sense; and unless this is constantly borne in mind, he is certain to be misunderstood, and the truth which he is representing will be lost sight of. "Possession," he says, "is a right; property is against right."

It is, however, not true that property, even so restricted in definition, is robbery, pure and simple. The acute thinker has still not discriminated closely enough. It is not proprietorship, but the use of proprietorship to extort increase, which is vicious in principle, or else proprietorship applied where, in the true nature of things, it is not applicable, as in the case of land. The product of the labor of the free laborer, equitably and fairly produced, is in justice his property, and the argument of Proudhon to the effect that he owes it to society even before it is produced, and holds it only on sufferance, seems to me, at least, the weakest part of his First Memoir. It (the product) is his (the producer's) to lend, to own while out of possession, to recover back in kind or in equivalent, and in all senses precisely as ownership is understood in the world and defined in the law-books. The simple distinction between natural wealth which, while it can be possessed and enjoyed when needed, ought not to be *owned* in the technical sense (except temporarily, as adjunct to improvements, to secure the repayment for them), and proprietary wealth as the product of labor, sets the whole matter right. There may be an ethical inhibition against abusing one's own, but not rightly a social one, that is to say, a man's neighbors should not be set upon him to decide when he is rightly using and when he is abusing what belongs to him by a perfect title. All that the law means here is that the decision on that point is best left to the individual and the law of the land and the law of sociological right are in perfect harmony in that particular, and Proudhon is wrong.

This right of the free and unlimited disposition of what is really one's own is, in this property domain, precisely that individual sovereignty which, without the name, Proudhon so vigorously defends, elsewhere, against communism; and the endangering of which is his grand objection to communism. His error in denouncing property, in this limited and just sense, as robbery, is as fatal to his own system as if he had averred that the individual owes *himself*, absolutely, to the community from birth, and should, therefore, submit to established authority with a loving and unquestioning obedience. Such a view (which the Comtists now virtually affirm) would, of course, have been the reversal of his whole doctrine but not more so than this fundamental error in denying to the individual the control over the products of his own industry. Indeed it may be said, quite generally, that he fails to distinguish between ethical and sociological questions—those matters which appeal to the conscience of the individual, as a member of society, and those matters which authorize society to intervene, to constrain, or to regulate the conduct of the individual. He also leaves us very much in the dark as to the precise social machinery by which he would have the world organized and run. He is far more specific with regard to what he would abolish than with regard to what he would construct.

Another of Proudhon's startling paradoxes, seemingly so at least, and I think we shall see really so, is the use of the term anarchy, to denote not chaos and confusion, but the basis of order in the freedom of the individual from the control of others. Etymologically, this use of

the term has a show of reason as it merely means *absence of government*, and a writer has the right, if he choose so to revert to etymological origins; and frequently there is a great advantage in so doing. There is a loss it is true in the temporary obfuscation of the mind of the reader, but, it may be, a more than compensating advantage in arousing deeper thought, or in furnishing a securer technicality. But in this ease the disadvantage is certainly incurred; and neither advantage is secured. There are two very different things covered by the term government: personal government by *arbitrium*, and the government of inherent laws and principles. Proudhon is denying the rightfulness of the former, and affirming the latter. Now the Greek *arche* meant both of these things; but if either more peculiarly than the other, it meant the government of laws and principles, whence the negation of such rule by the prefix *an* has meant, and rightly means, chaos. Proudhon undertakes to make the Greek word mean exclusively the other idea, whereby he spoils one excellent technicality without getting for his other purpose a secure and good one in place of it.

At the 56th page the author propounds the theory that there was a primitive state of social equality; that our departure from it is a degeneracy; that we are to return to the state of nature, etc. Surely our social theories are in advance of that idea now. We might as well assume that the acquired use of knives and forks is a degeneracy. Men will be just as much in a state of equality if their property rights remain, and are made equal, by equity, as they would be if they returned to a state of nature, and so had no property rights. Man never returns to prior conditions. He advances to new conditions which reproduce the *spirit* of primal states, but in *still newer* forms, which embody also the good of what now is. We pass from an undifferentiated state to differentiation, and thence not backward but forward to integration. Everything is subordinated to "The Law of the Three States" in a larger sense than is meant by the author of that phrase. So the equality which Proudhon so aspired after will never come in the simple primitive form, but it will come in a higher and scientifically adjusted form,—as a permeative factor in a highly complex order of society. That form Proudhon failed to discover and formulate. Both his argument and his remedy for existing evils, on that head, are fallacious. One side of the truth of the subject, the individualistic side, Warren, more fortunate than Proudhon, did discover and formulate; the other side, the opposite and counterparting side, is communism, best represented as yet, on any large scale, by the Oneida Perfectionists. These two opposite ideas and types of life are to be reconciled and united, not merely despite of their appositeness, but *because of their oppositeness*. Everything that approximates perfection is made up, primarily, of two opposite factors. This is the meaning of sex in the universe, the type and model of the reconciliation of opposites. We must and shall attain, therefore, to the mutual adjustment, harmony, and balanced vibration of sundered equality and communistic unity in the bosom of a higher reconciliative unity. That Proudhon did not attain to this idea condemns him as a lover of thought for our epoch. It makes of him what Fourier would call a simplist, a man of one idea, of the vision of one side of the truth, and, in this case not a clear vision of that.

Now that we have this book in English, it should go into every library; should be consulted, and, if leisure permits, read by every advanced student of these high questions, and should be prized as a contribution to the history of the evolution of thought in this line. But every reader should be notified that it is already superseded by better thought on the same subjects; and it seems hardly worth while on the part of Mr. Tucker to import at great cost the less perfect lucubrations of even a truly great thinker of a past epoch, when the later thought of our home production, and of our day, is so superior, even to the extent of the whole difference between failure and complete solution. Mr. Tucker, in disposing of himself, is recommended to study the doctrine of RELATIVE VALUES. It is not enough that such a man should be engaged in doing a *good thing*. He should be quite certain that he is engaged in doing *the very best thing*. He should, in other words, economize himself, on the ground that *good men are scarce*.

There is, nevertheless, a sense in which this and the other works of Proudhon have an intrinsic value altogether. above and beyond that which attaches to his particular dogmas and solutions. I mean in respect to method. No man of his epoch, perhaps, in the whole world, understood so well; none, I am certain, insisted so earnestly and effectively upon the true scientific method; that which carries everything by analysis back to first principles; but in this also he is superseded now by a better understanding of that method. Permit me, in conclusion, to point out some inaccuracies even in his closest reasonings.

The deepest conviction, the intellectual worship, of Proudhon was invested in the idea of equality. In this nobody is, by organization and conviction, more profoundly sympathetic with him than I am, but within limits which are also imposed upon me by intellectual analysis. I am compelled to see that intrinsically, metaphysically, mathematically, scientifically—every way,—equality has, set over against it, inequality, as a counterparting principle, equal in validity and extension to itself. Proudhon was grandly precise, and impressive, and almost unique, in his assertion of the principle that all science must be carried back and down to mathematical origins, before it can claim to be truly scientific. But he merely *sensed* the principle, and dogmatically maintained it. He failed to discover the method of it, so as to make it a corrective, or a canon of criticism upon his own reasonings and the reasonings of others. By the mathematical analogies, equality refers to the equal or even numbers, and inequality to the unequal or odd numbers, and both are alike fundamental in the mathematical series. What does it mean, then, when this great thinker affirms that justice and society itself are absolute synonyms of equality; except simply, that he is mistaken? It means that he came short of a full understanding of his subject, and that he was not true to, because he did not comprehend, the method which he, with such utter fidelity, believed in. It was his immense merit to have "intuited" its validity and to have deferred, even theoretically, to its demands; but it was not given to him to thread its intricacies, or rather to discover its almost infinite simplicity.

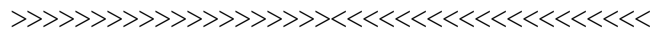
He could not fail to meet the consequences of his lack of mastery of the true method. He came unprepared for the satisfactory answers of some of his own most pregnant questions. I cite, as instance, the whole of page 236. "Does it follow," he asks, "that the preferences of love and friendship are unjust?" Certainly it does, if justice means simple and absolute equality. Equality is impartiality, and preference is partiality; and if justice is equality, pure and simple, which is the author's prime postulate, then justice excludes absolutely all favoritism, all partiality, the preferences of love and friendship included. Justice and equality being co-extensive and synonymous with society, there is no place left in society for grace and favor of any kind. Straightlinism has excluded the possibilities of curvature, and consequently of grace or gracefulness.

There is no avoidance of this logic. The efforts of the author to escape from his own trap are painful. "Within universal society," he says, "there exist for each of us as many special societies as there are individuals; and we are bound, by the principle of sociability itself, to fulfill the obligations which these impose upon us, according to the intimacy of our relations with them." But there was nothing said of universal and special when the prime postulate was propounded; and, what principle of sociability? By the prime postulate the *only* principle of sociability is equality, which prohibits absolutely what is now asserted. This introduction, on the sly, of an opposite principle of sociability, referring it to the degree of "intimacy of our relations with others" and to "social compact," new and unheard-of factors in the calculation, is what the philosophers call a "surreptitious interpolation"; and through this loop in his logic, the proprietor of every grade escapes from the force of any part of it.

What a writer discussing this subject, radically, should have done, would be, first, to lay down the proposition that society rests upon two equal and equally fundamental bases; the one impartiality or equality, and the other partiality or inequality, then to inquire and

ascertain in what spheres impartiality should prevail, and in what spheres partiality should be indulged and fostered- and then what is the proportion between them, their balanced vibration, their ultimate reconciliation. Proudhon is wholly right in his conclusion, that commercial exchanges should rest, like the administration of public justice, on the basis of equality; but he is wholly wrong, when in order to reach the conclusion, he affirms that equality is the sole factor of society itself, or that the two (equality and society) are synonymous. Indeed, it is my anxiety to place his conclusion on an absolutely safe logical basis, which he has not done, that forces me to criticize his logical procedure.

I should like to say more of the author's use of the terms justice, *équité*, and proportionality, but I must resist the temptation, and let this suffice for the present. I will observe, however, again, in conclusion, that it seems a pity to continue any longer the wholly vague, or the partially scientific, treatment of social subjects, now that science is competent to cover that whole domain. Proudhon belongs as definitively to the past, at this day, and to the mere history of ideas, as Ptolemy after Copernicus; and, while I have conceded that, from that point of view, it is well to read him, I fear that, incidentally, Mr. Tucker's enterprise may contribute to the wasting of the time of new students. Such certainly would be the case, if all that is known on the subject were published and accessible. As it is, perhaps the best that can be done is to read Proudhon.



PROUDHON AND HIS CRITIC.

BY BENJ. R. TUCKER.

The student of Proudhon must have laid down THE INDEX of June 22d, containing Stephen Pearl Andrews' article on "Proudhon and his Translator," with a feeling of pleasure not unmixed with pain; pleasure at meeting at last with an elaborate and scholarly criticism of this author and his work, dealing in argument rather than ridicule; and pain at finding this same criticism so alloyed with error and careless misstatement as to greatly detract from its value. The wicked lies and stupid sneers with which the press has almost uniformly greeted the translation into English of *What is Property?* I have chosen not to notice, believing that a book which cannot defend *itself* against assaults of such a character had better die at once; but when so able and keen a critic as Mr. Andrews is known to be carelessly misrepresents—by implication rather than direct statement—the theories advocated in the work, justice to his author's memory compel the translator to fulfill the duty imposed upon him by the function which he has assumed, by entering a protest and insisting on fair play. Those who have intelligently read the book already, will discover, without further help of mine, the discrepancy between Proudhon's doctrines as stated by himself and the idea that a novice would form of them in taking them at secondhand from Mr. Andrews. That those also, whose knowledge of Proudhon is yet to be acquired, may appreciate this discrepancy, I shall endeavor, as far as possible, in this article, to "let the master speak for himself." Before proceeding, however, to a detailed examination of the matter in hand, I must first thank Mr. Andrews for his handsome recognition of Proudhon's virtues and abilities, and his clear and accurate insight into his character. Had he understood his writings as well as he understands the man, there would be no call for this expression of dissent.

The first point calling for attention is the critic's assumption that Proudhon, in saying that "property is impossible," meant that it cannot exist even temporarily or contingently. He says: "But if property is impossible then it cannot exist and if it cannot exist, then it does not exist and why should Mr. Proudhon write a big book to do away with what does not and never did have any existence?" Now let us listen to Proudhon (page 40, outlining his arguments): "Considering the fact of property in itself, we shall inquire whether this fact is

real, whether it exists whether it is possible. Then we shall discover, singularly enough, that property may indeed manifest itself accidentally; but that, as an institution and principle, it is mathematically impossible. So that the axiom of the school—*ab actu ad posse valet consecutio*: from the actual to the possible the inference is good—is given the lie as far as property is concerned." True. Mr. Andrews says immediately afterwards: "Of course the literal meaning of what he says is absurd"; and proceeds to show what he really did mean, but then where is the pertinency of our critic's first argument? Why should Mr. Andrews write half a paragraph to refute what Proudhon never did mean? the only effect of such a course is the same as that which the former repeatedly charges upon the latter's writings, *viz.*, the confusing of the reader's mind. It is virtual misrepresentation.

In the next two paragraphs we find the same thing repeated. The critic first makes the following lucid statement of Proudhon's understanding of the word *property*, for which he deserves great credit, nearly all previous critics having failed to grasp and state this vital point: "What he means by property is that subtle fiction which makes that mine and thine of no present use, but which by this subtle tie we may recall at our option, using it, in the meantime, to subjugate others to our service, by taking *increase* for its *use*, in the form of rent, interest, and the like." Then, after warning (very properly) his readers that unless this sense of the term property is constantly borne in mind, the author is certain to be misunderstood, he immediately dismisses it from his own mind, and indulges in the following remarks: "It is however, not true that property, even so restricted in definition, is robbery, pure and simple. It is not proprietorship, but the use of proprietorship, to extort increase, which is vicious in principle." What is the meaning of this sudden twist in the critic's logic? If this "vicious use of proprietorship" is the very thing which Proudhon regards as the essence of proprietorship, how can Mr. Andrews deny that property, according to Proudhon's restricted definition, is robbery? The state of the reader's mind when he reached this point of the criticism, must have been "confusion worse confounded." Indeed, the present writer hardly dares follow this line of thought further, for fear that, despite his intimacy with the views in question, he will begin to feel muddled himself.

The critic next falls into the error of supposing that his author favors the forcible intervention of society to control the property relations of individuals. This misapprehension, in view of the slightly misleading character of some of Proudhon's phrases, is partially excusable; but a close reading reveals the fact that the only control which he favored is that which is exercised, not through institutions based on physical force, but through the natural operation of the law of equitable exchange. "He (Proudhon) also leaves us very much in the dark as to the precise social machinery by which he would have the world organized and run. He is far more specific with regard to what he would abolish than with regard to what he would construct." Why should he treat of organization in a work devoted to analysis? This objection is thus answered by Proudhon in the closing passage of his preface: "On the following conditions, then, of subsequent evidence, depends the correctness of my preceding arguments: the discovery of a system of absolute equality in which all existing institutions, save property, not only may find a place, but may themselves serve as instruments of equality: individual liberty, the division of power, the public ministry, etc.,—a system which better than property, guarantees the formation of capital and keeps up the courage of all; which, from a superior point of view, explains, corrects, and completes the theories of association hitherto proposed, from Plato and Pythagoras to Babeuf, Saint Simon, and Fourier; a system, finally, which, serving as a means of transition, is immediately applicable." Proudhon was no less keenly alive to the necessity of organization than is Mr. Andrews himself. He fulfilled the above promise in his subsequent works by developing his theory of mutualism, which was to find its first external expression in the organization of credit on a gratuitous basis by a system of banking which he devised, the results of which would be so vast and beneficent that one

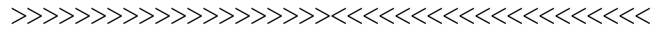
fears to present even the barest outline of them, for fear of so awakening the incredulity of the reader as to blind him to the truth of the principles involved

Mr. Andrews next objects to Proudhon's use of the term anarchy to denote order, for the reason that while the Greek *arche*, from which it is derived, meant both "personal government by *arbitrium* and the government of inherent laws and principles," Proudhon confined it to the former of these ideas. It is difficult to see why he had not as good a right to confine it to the former, as had Mr. Andrews, when coining the word Pantarchy, to confine it to the latter.

The worst instance of misrepresentation, however, contained in the whole criticism, occurs in the following sentences: "At the 56th page the author propounds the theory that there was a primitive state of social equality; that our departure from it is a degeneracy; that we are to return to that state of nature, etc. Surely our social theories are in advance of that idea now. Man never returns to prior conditions. He advances to new conditions which reproduce the *spirit* of primal states, but in *still newer* forms, which embody also the good of what now is. We pass from an undifferentiated state to differentiation and thence not backward but forward to integration. So the equality which Proudhon so aspired after will never come in the simple primitive form, but it will come in a higher and scientifically adjusted form." Now, it is assumed here that Proudhon said the precise opposite of what he really did say. Suppose we compare this rendering of the 56th page with the 56th page itself (and I ask any fair-minded person if it is not expressed in terms so unmistakably plain that no ordinarily careful reader could fail to understand it): "To suppose original equality in human society is to admit by implication that the present inequality is a degeneration from the nature of this society,—a thing which the defenders of property cannot explain. But I infer therefrom that, if Providence placed the first human beings in a condition of equality, it was an indication of its desires, a model that it wished them to realize *in other forms*; just as the religious sentiment, which it planted in their hearts, has developed and manifested itself in various ways, Man has but one nature, constant and unalterable: he pursues it through instinct, he wanders from it through reflection, he returns to it through judgment, who shall say that we are not returning now?" And yet in the face of this, Mr. Andrews would have us believe that Proudhon wanted to go back, not only to the old spirit, but to *old forms*! The fact is, the idea expressed by Mr. Andrews in his formula of unism, duism, and trinism, was completely developed by Proudhon in 1845 in his *Contradictions Economiques* (the only difference being that the latter used the terms thesis, antithesis, and synthesis), and for him to say that "Proudhon never attained to it" is almost impudent. Proudhon borrowed it from Hegel, to whom he credited it; and Colonel William B. Greene traces it back even further than this, finding its origin in the Jewish Kabbala.

The criticism of Proudhon's remarks upon equality is, I confess, partially correct. He claimed too much when he said that equality was synonymous with society, and made a more accurate statement afterwards in calling it a *sine qua non* of society; but that this trivial error affords a "loophole of escape to the proprietor of every grade" from the crushing logic of the rest of the work, I utterly fail to see. I must not close without referring to the *animus* of Mr. Andrews' article, which is best exhibited in his statement that "Proudhon belongs as definitively to the past, at this day, and to the mere history of ideas, as Ptolemy after Copernicus." Has it come to this, then, that in this fast age we progress so rapidly that a single decade suffices to blot out the memory and destroy the usefulness of one of whom the Pantarch even is compelled to speak so highly? The hint is a very broad one; and it does not take the eye of Argus to discover that the Copernicus of our social system is named Stephen Pearl Andrews; and when Proudhon's translator is advised to waste no further time on such a useless task, but to be sure that he is doing the "best thing possible," it is evident that the best thing possible, in the critic's view, is to join the Pantarchy, and work therein. The whole article is an almost shocking revelation of the practice of the Pantarch in

persisting in selfishly subordinating what he considers the comparative worthlessness of others to what he considers his own superlative worth.



[For THE INDEX.]

"PROUDHON AND HIS TRANSLATOR" AGAIN.

BY STEPHEN PEARL ANDREWS.

In THE INDEX of July 13, 1876, Mr. Benj. R. Tucker criticizes my criticism of Proudhon, published in a previous issue of THE INDEX (June 22). Permit me to use a small portion of space for a reply. For the most part the tone of Mr. Tucker's article is elevated and courteous his appreciation of what he approves in mine ample and generous, and his discriminations in behalf of Proudhon full of a devotedness alike honorable to the head and heart of the disciple. In some of the eases in which he finds fault with me I think he has misapprehended me; in others our judgments differ; in one or two he is partially right, and in one, at least, he is in danger of falling below the dignity of the occasion, and dealing in the insinuation of bad motive, and in vituperation

In my comments on Proudhon's use and repeated use of the phrase "property is impossible," I did not deny, but distinctly affirmed, that, in the sense he meant, he made out his case. I was simply showing that it was a blinding statement for the ordinary reader, instead of an illuminating one; more calculated, as I said, to astound than to convince; to repel than to attract; to confuse than to enlighten—wholly apart from the question whether there might or might not be a hidden sense in which it was true and in which, if the reader would go along with him a fact rendered doubtful by the seeming absurdity), he might convince him of its truth.

In my first sentence (objected to), I was stating, not my own ultimate estimate of the proposition, which I reserved for the next sentence, but the natural train of reasoning which would pass through the mind of the reader at its announcement; the first-blush impression, and it seems that I, too, presumed too much, as I was accusing Proudhon of doing, upon the intelligence of my reader, and for want of more explication of the idea failed to be understood. I was endeavoring to show that the love of such surprises—stating what, in a sense to be afterwards explained, is essentially true, but which when first put seems absurd—sometimes prevents Proudhon from being lucid or easily apprehended. It was a trivial criticism, if you will, upon style merely; but it was what I thought, and I think so still.

Mr. Tucker's next point is allied with this. He adopts and praises my rendering of Proudhon's meaning in his celebrated aphorism, *Property is robbery*. I had said this: What he means by property is that subtle fiction which makes that mine or thine of which we are out of possession, for which we have no present use, but which by this subtle tie we may recall at our option, using it in the mean time to subjugate others to our service by taking increase for its use, in the form of rent, interest, and the like. In this definition there are two branches, one covering the proprietorship, and the other a nefarious use of that proprietorship, which I say, and Mr. Tucker assents, Proudhon consociates, as if inseparable, with the proprietorship itself. Either the necessity or the propriety of this consociation I deny, and because I do so, Mr. Tucker accuses me of forgetting and departing from the beautiful definition I had just made of Proudhon's formula. I hope that simply showing that I understand a man does not bind me to agree with him. Having defined Proudhon's meaning, I then dissent, in part, from the correctness of his idea. Mr. Tucker's head is set whirling, he says, by this complication of discriminations, and he is

afraid he will get muddled if he does not at once desist from the effort to comprehend me. I would gently encourage him to try again. He will get possession of his wits presently, and the whole thing will come clear to him.

If Mr. Tucker had been old enough to have taken an interest in the old anti-slavery discussions, he would have been familiar with the question, whether slave holding is; *in itself*, sinful, or whether it is the abuses of the power it gives which are so. The same question arises here whether it is proprietorship, *per se*, which is wrong, or only an oppressive use which *may be made* of the power it gives. Differently from my verdict in the case of slavery, I was now favoring the latter view, pointing out the fact that Proudhon involves the two things in the same definition, and objecting that they ought not to be so confounded. Is there anything so awfully confounding in all this? Whether Proudhon is right or I am right, I am certain that Mr. Tucker's mental capacity is amply good for the comprehension of the difference.

The space which I can presume on in the columns of THE INDEX will not allow me to make a full answer to Mr. Tucker's points in his next paragraph. He concedes that I am partially justified in one of my view by the language of Proudhon, though he thinks Proudhon meant otherwise. In that particular the *onus* lies with him. Upon the other point, my mere opinion and general estimate, not from this particular book, but from his whole labors, that the genius of Proudhon was, in predominance, critical and destructive, rather than constructive, I have at least, in respect to manner, the concurrence of an authority to which Mr. Tucker greatly defers. What I said was mildness itself compared with a *dictum* of his friend William H. Green. I quote from his little work called *Mutual Banking* (pp. 21, 92) He is speaking of *Money and Banking*, a work by William Beck, assuming also Mr. Beck to be the writer. "In the pages of Proudhon," Mr. Green says, "socialism appears as an avenging, fury, clothed in garments dipped in the sulphur of the bottomless pit. and armed for the punishment of imbeciles, liars, scoundrels, cowards, and tyrants; in those of Mr. Beck, she presents herself as a constructive and beneficent genius, the rays of her heavenly glory intercepted by a double veil of simplicity and modesty. Mr. Beck's style has none of the infernal fire and profundity which cause the reader of the *Contradictions Economiques* to shudder; you seek in vain in his sentences for the vigor and intense self-consciousness of Proudhon; yet the thoughts of Proudhon are there."

I come now to what Mr. Tucker most, and with most show of reason, complains of. I said that Proudhon proposed a return to a primitive state of equality, whereas (as I also meant) the true thing is a constant advance to higher states of scientific harmonization between equality and inequality. Mr. Tucker admits, if I understand him, that I am right in insisting on the inequality, as an equal factor,—what Proudhon wholly omits,—and I admit that my language does not imply a sufficiently careful reading of the fifty-sixth page. I was misled by the insistency on equality of conditions as the whole truth; the designation of the departure from an assumed primitive equality as a "degeneracy" (which from my point of view would be a growth); the phrase that if Providence placed the first human beings in a condition of equality it was an indication of its desires, etc., and by the repeated use on the same page of the phrase "returning to," with reference to this idea of equality. My eye catching these phrases, I thought that I recognized the old, familiar doctrine about returning to a state of nature, and I partly overlooked the modifying words "in other forms," which I ought to have noticed. Measured, therefore, by the standard which I now see Proudhon entertained, I did him injustice, but measured by what *I had in mind*, as the true mode of viewing the subject, and by his failure explicitly to insist on the ideas of *growth* and *advance*, instead of *degeneracy* and *return*, I doubt whether the injustice is more than apparent. Such as it was and is, however, it was wholly unintentional that I should fail to present his idea fairly, and I am obliged to Mr. Tucker for correcting me. I could make

myself better understood on this difference between growth and degeneracy with more space to expand the subject.

As if to pay me off for this oversight, Mr. Tucker adds in this connection, that my three universological principles, Unism, Duism, and Trinism, were known to Proudhon from Hegel in Germany, called by them Thesis, Antithesis, and Synthesis; that they go back to the Kabbalists, etc. In the announcement of all this, substantially, I am beforehand with Mr. Tucker, as more familiarity with my ideas would have made him aware; only, to be particular, it was Fichte, back of Hegel, who first explicitly propounded Thesis, Antithesis, and Synthesis. In *The Basic Outline of Universology*, I have traced the same ideas also to Pythagoras, and, indeed, with proximate definiteness they form the staple of thought of all the great classifiers and thinkers of all ages and countries. But they are not, for that reason, either, on the one hand, false, nor, on the other hand, sufficiently explicit and definite to have a specific scientific value. Unism, Duism, and Trinism, while substantially like the other trio, are still *vitally* different. The likeness, or sameness, is readily apprehended, the difference not so readily, without a conscientious study of the subject. It consists in identifying Thesis, Antithesis, and Synthesis with the root-ideas of the mathematics, thereby carrying them over from vague philosophizing generalizations, and converting them, by this new alliance, into the basis of the unity of the sciences, and into an absolute guide for all classifications; mental and physical, from the broadest generalizations to the minutest particulars. The difference is, therefore, the *new* and the *main* element, and it is that which Mr. Tucker has failed to appreciate.

Frankly, then, it is to the study and comprehension of this discovery that I hoped to divert Mr. Tucker's attention, as I once thought he gave me some reason to think that I might. In my first article I veiled my intention somewhat, *ex gratiâ modestiæ*, to assert the existence of a better way; although I have never quite comprehended why it should be immodest to tell a truth simply because it is a big one. But Mr. Tucker has penetrated the "*animus*" of my allusion to prior great changes in the scientific *status* of things.

Yes, certainly, it has come to this, that a single decade is quite sufficient to change the proper method of scientific investigation, provided that, during that decade, a real and all-comprehensive discovery touching that very matter has been made. Whether such a discovery has been made or not is a simple question of fact, and need not be the occasion of bad blood. It has been said, I think by the editor of some of Proudhon's works, that he discovered nothing, but elucidated much. If, then, to his genius of elucidation and device are due views so profound that "one fears to present even the outline of them, lest he may overtop credulity," how much more critical the situation, if a discovery as single and definite as anything of Kepler or Newton were in question and which claimed to traverse the ground traversed by Proudhon, to furnish a canon of criticism upon what has been done, and to reveal an ocean of new truth not heretofore dreamed of!

Yes, precisely what I mean is that Mr. Tucker would ward off future regrets, and save half a lifetime, if he could and would come squarely up abreast of the real questions of the hour, and cease to act upon old methods when a better is known. I am sorry it is an offense for me to tell him so. The Pantarchy is not exactly something to be "joined," as one joins the Methodist Church, or a debating society, but rather something to be arrived at by increased knowledge; but one can be helped in the matter, if he is not too captious. Mr. Tucker may, perhaps, recognize the probability that there were, in France, during the lifetime of Proudhon, several brave and noble-minded young Tuckers, whose clear and impartial comprehension of him, and whose sympathy and devoted help, would have been everything to "the master", but that they were too busily and earnestly engaged in just waking up to the appreciation of the thought of some thinker of the just-previous age and consequently, perhaps, predisposed to disesteem him, without any adequate effort to understand him. He

Mr. Andrews has hung the matter now on the right peg. Let him explain to us, in THE INDEX, what that higher doctrine (which he says he possesses) is. I think you and I would be, both of us, more capable of comprehending a concise statement than a popular one. Perhaps we shall not be able to understand him at all, or, if we understand him, to agree with him. But, if he can convince us that he possesses a doctrine such as he has described, and claims to possess, it is our duty to follow his lead—provided, however, that he first makes good the claims which he puts forth in his second article.

Yours truly,

WM. B. GREENE.