

BOSTON MONDAY LECTURES.

SOCIALISM,

WITH

PRELUDES ON CURRENT EVENTS.

BY JOSEPH COOK.

“It is wicked to withdraw from being useful to the needy, and cowardly to give way to the worthless.” — EPICTETUS.

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I

SOCIALISM AND UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE.**PRELUDE ON CURRENT EVENTS.**

It is an Arabian legend, that, when the ostrich was told to carry a load, it answered, "I cannot, I am a bird;" and, when it was told to fly, it answered, "I cannot, I am a camel." It is also an Arabian legend, that, when the rats were taxed, the bat said, "I am a bird;" and, when the birds were taxed, the bat said, "I am a rat." The National Liberal Infidel League says it is not the Free Religious Association, and the Free Religious Association says it is not the National Liberal League. I am perfectly aware that they are two organizations, and that they are no more nearly connected than father and son. But why is the Free Religious Association now anxious to disown the National Liberal League?

In the city of Berne, in Switzerland, there is a statue of a hideous ogre eating a child. The pockets of the monster are filled with girls and boys waiting for the cracking of their bones and the extraction of their marrow between the teeth of the cannibal. This ghastly figure is a fit representation of the god which American infidelity, in clamorously demanding the repeal of all laws against the infamous use of the mails, has lately set up for public worship. It is a matter of painful notoriety, that, according to the testimony of an alarmed and protesting minority, a large majority of the National Liberal League of infidels have formally entered the service of this god of the slimiest part of the pit. Their lecturers and newspapers are his hierophants. The youth of the land, so far as he can reach them, are between his teeth. Unspeakably loathsome and abominable men and women, whose trade is the corruption of the young, dare to petition Congress, in the name of a free press, to abolish all laws against a debauched use of the mails;

that is, to allow this fiend, as odious as Astarte and as cruel as Baal, to reach his prey without let or hindrance. A majority of the National Liberal League of infidels seconds this desire. The greed of the pocket and the greed of the teeth are combined.

1. Of course it is evident, even to a mind uneducated in the law, that there must be a federal regulation concerning the use of the mails, if we are to keep the United States Government itself from assisting moral cancer-planters. Whoever sells infamous publications in any State of the American Union becomes amenable to the laws of that State. If, however, a ghoul of the slums sends his wares from one State to another by the mails, it is in most cases difficult or impossible to convict him under the laws of either. Even when the laws allow such conviction, it usually becomes impracticable on account of the difficulty of proof, and of ferreting out and securing the offender. Venders of infamous literature, therefore, do their business as much as possible through the mails. Purify the post-office from this traffic, and you confine it to comparatively narrow limits. The shield of State rights is greatly coveted by the corrupters of youth, and their scheme is to clamour against any federal regulation as to the transmission of their wares through the mails.

In 1873 Congress passed an excellent law forbidding venders of infamous literature to tamper with the national mails, and appointing an efficient postal expert, specially charged with the duty of exposing the violators of the statute.

It is highly significant that nobody complained, and nobody thought of complaining, of the law, except infidels, free religionists, and corrupt publishers.

A petition was sent to Congress in 1878, in favour of the repeal of the postal law of 1873. The New York agent of the Society for the Prevention of Vice was very much surprised to see, in the list of signatures to it, the names of several important firms who had usually been his friends. He asked these personally, if it was indeed true that they had petitioned for the repeal of the regulations of 1873. "We have never put our names down on any such petition," was the reply. "Are you willing to say so in writing?" They were of course not unwilling to place themselves outside the black ranks of those who had

signed this petition. The leading firms gave him written authority to say that their names on the document were forgeries. He appeared before a committee of Congress with this evidence, and in a very short speech defeated the petition. In New York so much forgery of this kind is done, that the procedure is regarded as an old trick; and, if public attention has not been called to it through newspaper discussion, it is because fraud of the sort has been so frequently attempted by corrupt publishers and infidel societies in large cities.

An official document, in which a committee of Congress recommends that the postal laws of 1873 should not be changed, contains, as a fly in amber, and in the evil conspicuity of an irreversible public record, the name of the foremost infidel lecturer in the United States.

“Forty-fifth Congress, second session: House of Representatives, Report No, 888. Repeal of certain sections of the Revised Statutes. May 31, 1878, laid on the table, and ordered to be printed.

Mr. Bicknell, from the committee on the Revision of the Laws, submitted the following report: —

The committee on the Revision of the Laws, to whom was referred the petition of *Robert G. Ingersoll* and others, praying for the repeal or modification of sections 1785, 3878, 3893, 5389, and 2491, of the Revised Statutes, have had the same under consideration, and have heard the petitioners at length.

In the opinion of your committee, the post-office was not established to carry instruments of vice or obscene writings, indecent pictures, or lewd books.

Your committee believe that the statutes in question do not violate the Constitution of the United States, and ought not to be changed: they recommend, therefore, that the prayer of said petition be denied.”

The unimpeachable authority of this document shows what was asked for, and who asked for it, and why it was not granted.

Under the law of 1873, it is possible to prevent the sending of corrupt matter from State to State, or by mail at all. If you can only execute the federal law against the corrupt use of the mails, you can do much to confine the corrupting of