



ETERNAL VIGILANCE

*By the seers of antiquity and to this
day, man has been warned frequently:*

UNDERSTAND AND CHERISH FREEDOM,
LEST SLAVERY BECOME A HABIT.

*Yet, man forgets — which is our
justification for now reproducing
some of those earlier warnings.*

I. The Prisoner of Chillon

François Bonnivard, who had been held a political prisoner for four years in the underground dungeon of the Chateau de Chillon, an ancient castle on the eastern end of Lake Geneva, was finally released on March 29, 1536.

Lord Byron wrote a stirring description of Bonnivard's captivity, "The Prisoner of Chillon." After a detailed portrayal of the prisoner's abhorrence of his confinement — during which he was kept in chains and denied even the privilege of seeing daylight — Byron describes Bonnivard's release:

It might be months, or years, or days,
I kept no count, I took no note,
I had no hope my eyes to raise,
And clear them of their dreary mote;
At last men came to set me free;
I ask'd not why, and reck'd not where;
It was at length the same to me,
Fetter'd or fetterless to be,
I learn'd to love despair.

And thus when they appear'd at last,
And all my bonds aside were cast,
These heavy walls to me had grown
A hermitage — and all my own!
And half I felt as they were come
To tear me from a second home:
With spiders I had friendship made,
And watch'd them in their sullen trade,
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
And why should I feel less than they?
We were all inmates of one place,
And I, the monarch of each race,
Had power to kill — yet strange to tell!
In quiet we had learn'd to dwell;
My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends
To make us what we are: — even I
Regain'd my freedom with a sigh.

II. That Invaluable Jewel, Liberty

Before the time of Christ, Aesop's fable on how the horse lost his freedom prompted this comment from the Roman philosopher and poet, Horace:

THIS is the case of him, who, dreading poverty, parts with that invaluable jewel, Liberty; like a wretch as he is, he will be always subject to a tyrant of some sort or other, and be a slave forever; because his avaricious spirit knew not how to be contented with that moderate competency, which he might have possessed independent of all the world.

III. Security May Betray Us

Archibald Rutledge, noted author and owner of Hampton Plantation, McClellanville, South Carolina, shares this observation:

I LIVE on a great river, and westward from my place, for some 60 miles, there is not a human habitation. In another direction not far from where I live is a plantation, the owner of which is not satisfied with the size of the deer on his property. So he imported from Michigan a huge security-reared stag. This buck was kept for some time in an enclosure on the plantation, inside a 7½-foot wire fence. It was in the autumn, the mating season of the deer. A native buck from the man's own place jumped that wire fence at night, killed the great stag more than twice his size,

and, once more leaping the fence, escaped into the wilds again.

When wild creatures are given the artificial security of parks, zoos, and circuses, they never fail to deteriorate — certainly in a physical way, and, in a sense, in a moral way as well. They become soft, careless, dull-witted, degenerate. All the incentive for them to achieve and to maintain physical perfection and mental alertness has been withdrawn. They have been made to pay a fearful price for their safety.

Rarely except in affliction are we awakened to a sense of our own weakness and folly, or come to

realize how little all our acquisitions can conduce to our peace of heart, which perhaps is the only real triumph in life. By some kind of negative logic, hardship, which we are accustomed universally to lament, is a blessing; and security, for which we long so ardently and strive for so unremittingly, may betray us.

Whenever I hear that the *government* is helping someone, I feel sorry for that person. Or whenever I find that someone, by a monopoly grant of power, has a

sure market or a sure job, I feel sorry for him, too. Even helping a person to help himself may be a disservice to him, for you will probably — perhaps unconsciously — compel him to do it your way. Charity, if needlessly bestowed, probably will have a vicious effect. People who are promised support will hardly work. All grants, all subsidies, all rewards for services not rendered have a deleterious effect on character; and if character is not of foremost consideration, what is?

IV. Legislated Security Is Bondage

Samuel Gompers, the "grand old man" of labor and president of the AFL, 1886-1924, warned his union members to look behind the humanitarian slogans used by the advocates of government-guaranteed security.

Look over all the world where you will, and see those governments where the features of compulsory benevolence have been established, and you will find the initiative taken from the hearts of the people.

Social insurance cannot even undertake to remove or prevent poverty. It is not fundamental and does not get at the causes of social injustice.

The first step in establishing compulsory social insurance is to

divide people into groups, those eligible for benefits and those considered capable of caring for themselves. The division is based upon earning capacity. This governmental regulation must tend to fix the citizens of the country into classes, and a long-established insurance system would tend to make those classes rigid.

There is in the minds of many an absence of understanding of the fundamental essentials of freedom. They talk freedom, and yet

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would have bound upon their wrists the gyves that would tie them to everlasting bondage.

For a mess of pottage, under the pretense of compulsory social insurance, let us not voluntarily surrender the fundamental principles of liberty and freedom.

V. Contented Slavery

IT MAY seem strange that the slave, totally lacking in liberty, frequently feels no strong resentment toward the master who has enslaved him. In fact, the slave may even feel grateful toward his master who "so kindly gives me food and necessities with which to live, and without which I would surely die." It is said that many a newly-freed slave after the War Between the States feared liberty because, due to the narrow vision of his experience as a slave, he acquired this strange feeling of kindness toward his oppressor. A similar feeling is reported to have been held by the oppressed in Hitler's Germany, and in Stalin's Russia; and we have noted the same feeling among those who have acquired the habit of leaning on a benevolent government in our own country. All these victims of a lost liberty are unmindful of the fruits of liberty, due to the blindness which compulsory or voluntary slavery has caused.

Thus wrote F. A. Harper in Liberty: A Path to Its Recovery (1949) at about the same time Ralph Bradford, well-known business organizational official, was setting it to verse in his epic Heritage:

The tragic voice of contented
slavery!
Of all the evils man-invented,
Beyond the depths of conscious
knavery,
Beyond the limits of belief,
It is the truth, to mankind's grief,
That slavery can be contented!

The slave cries out when he is sold
Down river, or his back is scarred
With lashes; but when he is told
That safety minus risk is offered,

He does not see that chains are
proffered,
Or know he enters a prison yard.
And bondage is not always a chain,
Nor a prison pen, nor an auction
block;
It is not always labor and pain —
It may be privilege, comfort and
ease,
That hide the shackles he never
sees
And fasten the slave with a gilded
lock!

VI. Why Is Slavery Possible?

LEONARD E. READ

IT IS easy enough to see how a man who has once known freedom might be forced — against his will and despite his struggles — into captivity. It is no puzzle, for example, to understand how a man could be forced — at gunpoint — into a Siberian salt mine.

But what is the explanation when freedom declines among men who had known its blessings and yet put up no scrap to stay free? Why the lethargy all about us while American citizens submit to one control after another? Where are the scrappers — the defenders of individuality who might forestall this trend toward slavery? Surely, slavery could never succeed in the face of determined and continuing resistance.

For example, there wouldn't be a tiger in any zoo were the tiger to remain as ferocious as when first captured. Man simply would not put up with such a beast. The caged tiger, however, does not retain his ferocity. The wild beast soon becomes docile and as grateful for its food and other attentions as a house cat.

Why? The tiger was at liberty in its native habitat, had experienced freedom, but ferocity attends only the initial stages of cap-

tivity. Docility comes quickly and certainly with imprisonment. Could the reason be that the tiger has no understanding of the distinctions between liberty and serfdom? Knows no definitions? If the tiger has no knowledge or awareness of his liberty, he cannot remember a knowledge he has never possessed. His cage becomes the only habitat he knows, and he eats and sleeps, contentedly.

There never would have been any Negro slavery in America had the Negroes remained as intractable as when first taken in hand by the slave traders. They rebelled at first but soon became docile. They, too, had been at liberty in their African habitat. However, they were primitive men. They lacked the power of articulate expression in the field of ideas. They were not in possession of definitions and the distinctions between freedom and slavery. They lacked awareness; nor could they remember that which had never been known to them. They soon accepted as normal the slavery which became their lot. They had nothing but the normalcy of their slavery to serve them as a point of reference.

Symbolic of the modern trend toward serfdom is the imposition

of progressive taxation, especially the income tax. The Sixteenth Amendment would not be on our statute books had any substantial number of Americans foreseen its consequences.

In this instance of a growing serfdom or, conversely, a loss in freedom of choice, there was no abrupt change to arouse resistance. These progressive taxes were imposed ever so gradually. Hardly anyone noticed the "take" at first. Americans adopted the principle of progressive taxation because they did not understand it. They did not realize that this was a denial of the concept of equal treatment under the laws and a displacement of the methods of voluntary exchange with a government-enforced policy "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need."

Further proof that there was but little understanding of the liberty that was forsworn and the intervention that was accepted is the fact that as the "take" has increased over the years, there has been no rebellion, even on the part of those on whom the "bite" has been the greatest. Each succeeding increase is only a new normalcy greeted with the docility and indifference of the imprisoned tiger and the enslaved Negro. And, in my view, the reasons are the same: No understanding of the

definitions and the sharp distinctions between liberty and serfdom.

It is self-evident that tigers will never be freed from zoos by any doing of their own.

It is a historical fact that slavery was not abolished in America by any rebellion on the part of the Negroes.

It is equally plain that present-day Americans who have accepted or are indifferent to the growing encroachments of the state cannot be expected to rescue themselves.

Intellectual rebellion is not made of indifference or docility. It is made of sterner stuff. It has its roots in an understanding that liberty is the freedom to do as one pleases creatively; that restraint has no place except against destructive, predatory activity; that serfdom restrains creative action. It displaces self-control with control of self by others. To deprive a person of self-control leaves him little incentive to indulge in constructive or creative thought. Without the desire, one soon loses the capacity for self-control.

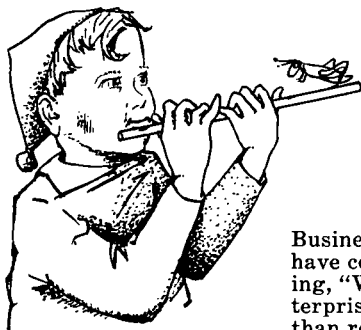
A person who understands these distinctions, even though he be in prison or in the salt mines at the point of a gun, cannot be called a serf. All that can be properly said of him is, "There is a free man restrained."

Free men, defined as those who understand these distinctions, are

the only ones who can rescue the indifferent and the docile from a growing serfdom. The burden is on them and them alone. The burden cannot be shared by anyone who is unaware.

Awareness of the difference between slavery and liberty is the individual's only defense against enslavement. Therefore, it is tre-

mendously important to preserve the ideals of self-control, reflected in the concepts of personal choice, private property, freedom of exchange, and government limited to the defense of these rights of the individual. To lose awareness of these ideals makes slavery possible, without a struggle. It is passive surrender of the only reason, if not the only chance, for life. ♦



THE BOY WHO DIDN'T CRY "WOLF!"

HELEN COPELAND

Business and conservative elements in America have continually injured their own cause by shouting, "Wolf!" too long and too often . . . Private enterprise has conditioned the public to accept rather than reject statism.

SYDNEY J. HARRIS

A SHEPHERD BOY was tending his sheep as usual when a grasshopper lit on the end of his flute. He caught it in his hand and called out in a loud voice that was heard way down in the city, "Grasshopper!" All of the important people in town and even some who were not im-

portant rushed to the hillside where the boy was intensely absorbed in watching the green bug eat a blade of grass. When they saw it was only a small insect, they were annoyed. "What's the matter with you, Boy?" the mayor scolded. "Yelling bloody murder over a little grasshopper!"

"But look at his sharp mandi-

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