

Just knowing Pete LaFarge was painful enough. He was one of those misfits who wear one subject to death. ~~You~~ No matter where or when you met him, he'd talk about liberty. What a fine and noble thing it was; but wasn't it a shame that there wasn't more of it. He wanted more and ever more ~~liberty~~ liberty and he was perfectly willing to deprive other people of theirs to attain it.

Pete had the same resonant quality that the Liberty Bell has, and he too was slightly cracked. He made a beautifully indignant Patrick Henry speech to his old man the day he left home.

"You can't tell ME what time to come in at night, Pop. I'm old enough to know what I'm doing. And I'm not going to be confined to the house every time you have a whim along those lines. So I'm leaving. I'm going out of here and so help me, I'll never come back. I want liberty and I aim to get it."

His father snorted like a contemptuous bull.

"Put some salt and pepper on ~~this~~ that stuff," he murmured, "and see if you can eat it. Now git out."...

\* \* \*

Pete came to New York and got all the liberty he wanted. He got so much of it that he spent most of us time breathing it in old Madison Square Garden. He soon found that everyone, even the pigeons, ~~ate~~ ate. All except him.

He tried hard to keep jobs, but soon as he started to talk about "liberty," the bosses eyed him suspiciously and Pete found himself with a blue slip on pay day.

When war was declared, he went into the Field Artillery. He was going to fight for liberty now and he could hardly wait for a chance to tell Pershing how to win it.

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But the Army was notoriously unsympathetic and made him groom a lot of ancient draught horses. The nags had a way of flicking their ears and rolling their eyes when Pete talked about liberty. When the sergeant heard that he was talking about lack of liberty in the Army, he was put to peeling spuds. Barrels of them.

Pete must have figured that, out of 4,000,000 men, they'd never miss a guy named Pete LaFarge, because he ~~was~~ just casually walked out of Camp Yaphank one night and never went back.

He was going to get his own brand of liberty, or else...

\* \* \*

Well, he got it, all right. He went back to New York, dyed his hair, grew a mustache, and went to Union Square. There, he got himself ~~at~~ a soap box and, from atop this pedestal, he told all who would listen, of the blessings of true liberty.

"What you have here," he shrieked, "is not liberty at all, but a spurious imitation. Now answer me this: Can you go on a subway without a nickel? Can you walk into the governor's mansion at Albany and say 'I'm a taxpayer and I'm going to stay the night?' Haw! You'd be tossed out on your ear! You'd be lucky if you weren't thrown into an asylum! And yet, you people pay for the governor's mansion.

"So what is liberty? It's complete freedom of thought, word and deed. That's true liberty. Ladies and gentlemen" on a confidential note, "you're intelligent people. At least you look intelligent. You know we're not fighting this war for liberty. Or democracy. Or anything else but Wall Street and the loans made to Great Britain.

"That's all we're fighting it for. And if enough of you people woke up--I mean really woke up--we could put an end to it. We could call all our boys back home and get Wall Street out of the saddle in Washington and all have liberty. Real liberty."

(MORE)

Pete rambled on and on. He was full of ideas. Sometimes, of course, he got socked on the nose by a real American. Someone in the audience would get sore at his reference to the flag, or the president, or the Army, and--whamo!--Pete slumbered.

When the Army came back, and the war was all over, he found new reasons why the country was no good. He screamed and shouted from every corner of Union Square and tried to out-radical the radicals and out-revolutionize the revolutionaries.

Finally, he realized that most of his audiences were just killing a few minutes listening to him. And that few, if any of them, were converted to ~~him~~ the beauty of "true liberty."

So he took to making bombs out of lead pipes. He got in with a crowd of anarchists and they showed him how. He told them he wanted to blow up the sub-Treasury first just to attract a little attention.

After that, he'd blow up Washington. All, dear gentle reader, for the sake of liberty.●...●

\* \* \*

Well, when the Federal Agents closed in on him it was like the Notre Dame backfield closing in on a Spearfish Normal ball-carrier. They took Pete and his bombs and rushed both to the Federal Detention Pen. And, after they got his fingerprints, they discovered that he was none other than little Petey R LaFarge of the United States Army, who had left without saying goodbye.

That made it lovely for Pete and his liberty. After much bickering, they decided to try him for desertion first. They did, and won a conviction, and the judge uttered the longest sentence he could, for that offense.

The last I heard of Pete was about five years ago. At that time, he was getting more liberty than he bargained for. Whenever he got up in the morning in his cell on Governor's Island, the huge object directly before his eyes was the Statue of Liberty.●...●

## Lovers of Liberty

A very peculiar man if ever there was one, was the hero of to-day's tale, John Higgins. From the time that John had been a kid, the one thing he wanted, and longed for more than anything else in the world was freedom and liberty. The one symbol of his life was liberty. And liberty was the uppermost thought in his mind. The one thing he would always see

before him. <sup>(2)</sup>

To begin with he didn't like school. That was too con-  
fining. He didn't like his home  
life because his parents kept  
him down too much. There he  
didn't have enough liberty. And  
when he finally grew up he de-  
cided that he wasn't getting  
enough liberty in the country.  
There were taxes to be paid. There  
was work to be done if a man  
wanted to survive. Taking it

(3)

all in all a man had absolutely  
no liberty. But - and it's a very  
large but - John Huggins decided  
that he was going to take care  
of that. He became the most radical  
of all the radicals. He was going  
to create a new kind of govern-  
ment. A government whereby he  
would be the king. The leaders  
who would have the liberty he  
had always looked forward to,  
and dreamed about.

(4)

One here stepped up on his first soap box and put the "blast" on the country when he was about twenty one years of age. Liberty, he screamed, that's what he wanted. More liberty. And that's what he was going to get. He personally was going to be the leader of a new movement, a movement which would guarantee more liberty for all.

One here stuck to his soap-box activities for a number of years. He kept screaming from the roof tops of his

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Desire for more liberty. He wasn't quite satisfied,  
tho, to stick to his soap box oratory. He  
wasn't gaining the much desired liberty fast  
enough. He began to plot and plan. He  
was going to do things to awaken the  
people. He was definitely there trying to  
get anyplace verbally. He was going to  
take action. He surrounded himself with  
as nice a crew of plotters as ever you did  
see. Between them they manufactured some  
real nice bombs. Gleeefully they decided  
it would be a nice idea to blow  
up the Treasury building, that would  
attract attention. That would awaken the people.

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John was in an ecstasy of joy as he sat with his cohorts and plotted. Soon he would have things running his own way, soon he would have the much desired liberty. And then something happened. The place was raided, John and his pals were arrested and convicted. The bombs were thrown away and the liberty loving John was thrown into the federal prison on Governor's Island.

But even in the prison John is constantly reminded of his desire. Because every morning when he wakes up the first thing he sees from his cell window is the Statue of Liberty.