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61 BEEKMAN STREET, NEW YORK.

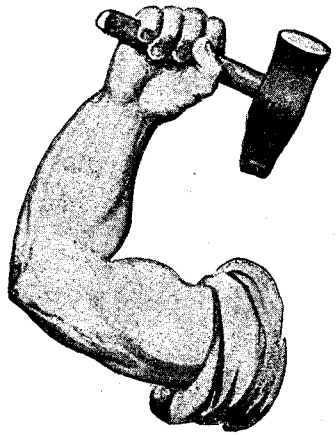
PUBLISHED QUARTERLY.

Entered at New York Post-Office as Second-Class Mail Matter.

Vol. I — No. 4. JULY, 1899. Subscription Price, 60c. per Year.

I.

TAXATION.



II.

GENESIS OF RELIGION.

III.

The S. L. P. Vote in Greater New York.

PRICE, 5 CENTS.

ALLIED PRINTING TRADES UNION LABEL COUNCIL NEW YORK CITY

NEW YORK, 1899.

Published by the NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. S. L. P., 61 Beekman St., New York.

TAXATION.

"Taxes!—A matter, to the bourgeoisie of deep, to the workingmen, however, of very slight concern. That which the workingman pays in taxes goes, in the long run, into the cost of production of labor-power, and, accordingly, must be borne by the capitalist."—FREDERICK ENGELS.

Everybody now admits that wealth in its multiple form is the product of human labor, aided by the forces and exerted upon the materials which nature gratuitously supplies. Inasmuch, then, as government is a consumer of wealth, whether the wealth which it consumes be procured by levying taxes or contracting debts, or even to some extent by employing labor in productive services, it is from labor, applied to the development of natural resources, that government—like any other aggregation, body or class of persons, active or idle, useful or useless, beneficent or harmful—derives all its means of existence.

Of the absolute truth of this primary statement there can be no question. It remains true whether the tax be laid upon the necessaries of the poor or the luxuries of the rich, upon wages or upon profits, upon one kind of property or upon another kind. It remains true, also, regardless of the uses to which the revenue from taxation is put. Whether the purpose for which the tax is laid be destruction, preservation or construction; whether the amount raised be spent wastefully or economically; whether its effects be to enrich some or to pauperize others, to widen or to narrow the economic distance between men or classes, to stimulate or discourage certain industries, trades or professions; in a word, no matter how its expenditure may affect the citizens individually, or the classes severally, or the nation as a body, it necessarily implies a consumption of wealth, and therefore a corresponding expenditure of labor power.

But when all this is admitted we have solved no problem. We have merely stated, in language more or less forcible or comprehensive, more or less concise or prolix, the fact, otherwise sufficiently obvious and now universally recognized, that "Labor (i. e., the working class) produces all wealth" and therefore, Atlas-like, carries the Social World on its shoulders. How much of this social world is cumbersome rubbish, that might profitably be cast away; how much of it is necessary baggage, that could not be spared and might even be profitably increased; on what parts of it and in what proportions the weight of taxation is pressing down, are questions that cannot be answered without an intelligent examination of those parts and of their mutual relations.

Are these questions, however—and especially the last—worth answering? Is it not all-sufficient to know that, whatever the burden may be, Labor carries the whole of it? "Quid refert mihi, dum clitellas portem meas?" (What matters it to me, so long as I wear the pack-saddle?) exclaimed the donkey of the fable. Smart saying this, to be sure, for a donkey, who, born an ass, must accept his saddling as a finality; but nothing more, after all, than asinine rhetoric for the laboring Man.

Of course, so long as the worker considers himself a beast of burden, his only thought can be of the weight of his load, and his only longing for the provender he will get at the end of the day. From time to time he may,

donkey-like, kick against the burden or cry out for better pittance; then, in a fit of despair, lie down on the bare ground and swear he will not go one step farther. But as the provender is safely locked up in the load on his back, the whip of hunger, if not of his master, soon enough will set him upon his feet again and start him running.

Nor is it, then, of much benefit to him that he has in some way obtained the right to vote; for, proud as he may be of his citizenship, he no more understands the class use of the ballot as a weapon for economic war than he does the nature of the social arrangements by which he, the all-producing giant, is made the starving drudge of idle pigmies. On the eve of election day the classes that ride upon his back send out to him their respective political lackeys; innate bamboozlers, sleek logomachists, who, bowing low, call him the great, the just, the sovereign people and their only master; then proceed to roundly denounce each other for all the wrongs of which he may have to complain. If Taxation be "the issue," they will all endeavor to show him that the total burden which he must anyhow carry can be lightened by merely changing the relative positions of its parts; the only question being as to which of the idle classes will ride free and easy on the top of all. Manifestly, in believing that and accordingly taking sides with the one or other of his oppressors, he will prove himself even less sensible than Æsop's donkey.

But here comes the class-conscious man of labor and takes a good look into this social world; investigates its wheel work and at last comprehends the nature of the fight that is going on there, right upon his shoulders; discovers also the secret of his own servitude and traces to its anchor the chain that holds him. No side issue for him; no shifting of burden; no participation in capitalists' quarrels; no tinkering at their infernal machine; no hasty overturning of it either. He now knows what he has to do, and in this social world which he must still carry he plainly sees the tools which he must first grasp to make himself free.

These tools—weapons we might call them also—are the Public Powers. Most of them, on the day of final victory, on the day of complete emancipation, he will so transform as to make them unrecognizable. In the meantime, wherever he may gain a foothold and establish his authority he will of course turn them, such as he finds them, to the advantage of his class and against its exploiters. From the load on his back, where they are a dead weight, they will pass into his right hand, serving him as a staff on his hard journey, and as a club in fighting his way through.

THE POWER OF TAXATION.

Of these tools—or weapons—some are peculiarly complex; varying in construction and mode of operation according to time and place, because, in the course of historic evolution, the various branches of the human family, starting from the same low basis and tending through devious ways to the same high objective point, have not advanced at the same rate of speed and along the same lines of motion.

Such are, in a higher degree of diversity than any other, the mechanical forms taken by the Power of Taxation. They differ widely in different countries, although the power itself is of identical nature everywhere. Observe, furthermore, that the universal recognition of this power, despite the limitations to which it is subjected by the forms devised for its exercise, involves the admission of a basic social principle; namely, that Society, regardless of the po-

litical, economic, or other fictions by which the mutual relations of its parts may be determined, whether its sovereignty be vested in an absolute monarch, in a class parliament, or in itself, is the actual owner of all the property enjoyed by its members.

The social power issuing from this principle would under a truly social system manifest itself in its full force as a Power of Cooperation. Under the perverse systems that have heretofore prevailed, it has been perverted into a Power of Taxation. Yet, not only the basic principle in question remains plainly visible through the thick mass of private property in the modern structure of Capitalism, but every restriction and discrimination with which it is applied for class purposes in the exercise of the taxing power, or of the right of eminent domain, emphasizes its underlying existence. It baffles all efforts to conceal or even to weaken it by means of constitutional or legal expedients designed to strengthen the institution of private property. Individual possessions, regardless of their origin or of the title by which they are held, remain liable to be taken by Society, in whole or in part, as social necessity may require.

When the thirteen original states of the American Union formed themselves into an independent political body, private property was the corner stone of their economic system, and their constitution went so far in its recognition of it as to secure the slave owners in the possession of their human cattle. Even this was not deemed sufficient and a guarantee was demanded against the possible "encroachments" of the Government upon individual property rights. Hence the Fifth Amendment, abruptly winding up a series of provisions for the administration of criminal law with the unrelated declaration, "Nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation;" that is—according to the obvious intent and general understanding of it—without payment, by the Government to the private owner, of a sum of money representing the fair value of the property taken for public use. Now, not only does this constitutional amendment recognize the superior right of Society to "take" private property for its own use, although subjecting the exercise of that right to a "just compensation;" but it does not and cannot abrogate or abridge the previously asserted right of taxation, by which private property may be taken without compensation. Moreover, the constitution does not define the kind of property that may, and the kind that may not, be taken without indemnifying the owner. It does not even define "private property." The whole matter is left in that incongruous state, to be further dealt with by lawmakers according to their own judgment; that is, according to the development of Capitalism, and always, in the last resort, for the best interests of the ruling capitalist faction.

Capitalism, indeed, does not merely consist in robbing the wage-worker of his "surplus value" (that is, of the value produced by him over and above the "market value" of his labor power), although this is the essential condition of its existence. Its development implies at every step the expropriation of some capitalists by other capitalists. And, as we shall see later on, in this process of inter-capitalistic spoliation taxation may be used as a quickening element of considerable effect. Hence the growing bitterness and the increasing frequency of the political fights between capitalist factions upon issues of a purely fiscal character.

Of course, when Capitalism was still in its infancy and a powerful plutocracy had not yet emerged from the middle class, it was already of the utmost

importance for it to gain political power, but for other reasons. In fact, it gained this power by degrees, through its ability to pay taxes out of the surplus value produced by labor, until at last, by revolutionary means wherever its ends could not be achieved otherwise, it came into full control of the government. Arrived there, its first steps were to cut up into private property the vast estates of the crown, of the nobility, and even of the clergy, the revenue from which, ever so ill-managed, had previously been to a more or less extent used for public purposes. Then, proceeding further in accordance with its cunningly formulated dogma, that "the government should do nothing which individuals could do," it dispossessed the people of their valuable franchises, assumed the performance of every public service that could be made to yield a profit, and finally established a state of affairs such that the government could do nothing and the capitalists could do everything. Of the practically unlimited public powers once vested in the absolute monarch and wrested from him by the middle class with the aid of the proletariat, nothing remained to the people as a corporate body but the power of taxation, necessary to the performance of those few functions, chiefly of a police character, which the capitalist class could more or less openly control, but could not profitably or safely undertake to convert into private enterprises. Such services as remained public were therefore looked upon by that class as "necessary evils" and the labor employed in them as "unproductive," while the expenditure they required was considered a "burden," which should be made as light as possible and distributed "equally." Insomuch as these views are still entertained by a number of people we may give them here some consideration.

THE THEORY OF "EQUAL TAXATION."

What the middle class capitalists of former days meant by "Equal Taxation" has never been plainly stated, for the simple reason that it baffles the human power of statement. Taxation being the offspring of inequality, the phrase in question necessarily involves a contradiction in terms and the non-existence of the thing so named. Yet it took shape in the brains of "bourgeois" as a beautiful image of ideal justice weighing money. All spoke of it commendably, each, however, doing his best to make any sort of tax unequal in so far as he was personally concerned by evading his own share to the fullest possible extent.

The nearest approach to a definition of it is from the early pen of Adam Smith and reads as follows: "The subjects of every state ought to contribute to the support of the government, as nearly as possible in proportion to their respective abilities; that is, in proportion to the revenue which they respectively enjoy under the protection of the state. In the observance or neglect of this maxim consists what is called the equality or inequality of taxation." To Adam Smith himself the first part of his "maxim" (i. e., the part concerning the equalization of abilities and duties) was evidently nothing more than a glittering generality, so vague upon close inspection that he felt the necessity of precising somewhat by suggesting the mode of taxation through which the incorporal object in his mind could be reached. But it was soon found (1) that this mode of taxation, considered theoretically and supposing it to be carried out to a point approximating the standard of perfection, would still be productive of considerable inequality; and (2) when it was practically tried, that the very principle upon which it rested—a principle by no means of general equality and justice, but of mere fairness among the beneficiaries of a system rooted in in-

equality and injustice—brought out in full force all the dishonesty of the capitalist class.

There is no need of Socialist testimony to substantiate this statement. We may readily credit the leading supporters of the competitive system when they record a fact so discreditable, not merely to the class, but to the system itself. After a lengthy argument on the Income Tax as originally proposed by Adam Smith, replete with suggestions of possible theoretical improvements by amendment or addition—such, for instance, as the exemption of the small incomes and the taxation of land values—John Stuart Mill observes: "An income tax, fairly assessed on these principles, would be, in point of justice, the least exceptionable of all taxes. The objection to it, in the present low state of public morality, is the impossibility of ascertaining the real incomes of the contributors. *** Rents, salaries, annuities, and all fixed incomes, can be easily ascertained. But the variable gains of professions, and still more the profits of business, which the person interested cannot always himself exactly ascertain, can still less be estimated with any approach to fairness by a tax collector. The main reliance must be placed, and always has been placed, on the returns made by the person himself. No production of accounts is of much avail, except against the more flagrant cases of falsehood; and even against these the check is very imperfect, for if fraud is intended, false accounts can generally be framed which it will baffle any means of inquiry possessed by the revenue officers to detect; the easy resource of omitting entries on the credit side being often sufficient without the aid of fictitious debts or disbursements. The tax, therefore, on whatever principles of equality it may be imposed, is in practice unequal in one of the worst ways. The unscrupulous succeed in evading a great proportion of what they should pay; even persons of integrity in their ordinary transactions are tempted to palter with their consciences, at least to the extent of deciding in their favor all points on which the smallest doubt or discussion could arise; while the strictly veracious may be made to pay more than the state intended, by the powers of arbitrary assessment necessarily intrusted to the commissioners as the last defence against the tax-payer's power of concealment." And Mill concludes: "It is to be feared, therefore, that the fairness which belongs to the principle of an income tax, cannot be made to attach to it in practice; and that this tax, which is apparently the most just of all modes of raising a revenue, is in effect more unjust than many others which are prima facie more objectionable."

To the proposition advanced by John Revans in 1847, that a Tax on Domestic Expenditure would be better than an income tax, for the reason, among others, that it would tend to check unproductive consumption and especially luxurious waste, the reply was obvious that "the only security of the state would still be the veracity of individuals;" that "the expenditure of most persons being composed of many more items than their income, there would be more scope for concealments," and that the object in view, if desirable, could be reached indirectly but more effectively by a tax on such commodities as might be deemed luxuries.

The two modes of taxation "fairest in principle" turning out to be the unfairest in practice, a third one remains, similar in both respects; namely, the equal taxation of all kinds of property. As this is the chief mode in operation in this country for state and municipal purposes, we can readily judge of its merits by comparing its theoretical claims with its practical results. In Greater New York, for instance, where the estimated value of personal property is

about three times as great as that of real estate and should therefore contribute three-fourths of the total tax imposed on those two kinds of wealth, it contributes hardly one-sixth. Returns from all parts of the United States show an irrepressible tendency of personal property to bear a constantly decreasing proportion of the so-called "burden" of government, despite its increasing ratio of the total wealth.

From the very nature of Capitalism, the problem of Equal Taxation is practically more insoluble than the squaring of the circle. A square can be found approximating the area of a circle within any given fraction; whereas the more equality is sought by taxation, the more inequality is produced. The more intelligent among the "statesmen" who make fiscal legislation their special business now lose no time in considering that problem or even listening to the interested clamor of despoiled despoilers for relief from inequality. Leaving Adam Smith and all such on the dusty shelf, they have adopted Turgot's maxim: "Taxation is the art of plucking the goose without making her cry."

EVOLUTION OF TAXATION.

Turgot's saying was by no means a purely humorous utterance. It truly stated the modern character of taxation. There was, indeed, a time when the levying of taxes was by no means an art, although the taxpayer was already a goose.

In the earlier part of the feudal period wage labor did not exist. The domestic servants of the lord were actual slaves, while the villeins, bound to the soil, eked a living out of it subject to any services which the lord deemed fit to impose. Gradually, however, not only these services became less arbitrary, more fixed in kind and quantity, but a growing number of them were either absolutely commuted or made optionally commutable into specified sums of money. At the same time, and by the action of these changes, the villein class was steadily differentiating into two sub-classes more and more distinct: one beginning to own, ever so precariously, the tools of production; the other owning nothing but its labor power. The latter got "wages" in money or in kind, which were, in fact, a portion of its product; while the latter got the remaining portion (the surplus value) as "profits," less the rent and taxes exacted by the lord. Of course, insomuch as the employer was also, in those days, a worker, he got in that double capacity the full product of his own labor, less a proportionate share of rent and taxes. In other words, he got that portion of his product which he would otherwise have had to pay to a wage worker, plus that remainder, or surplus value, which he would anyhow have appropriated to himself, subject to the exactions of his lord.

Manifestly, then, both the rent and the taxes came out of the "surplus value" and not out of the "wages." They affected the condition of the employer, as such, and not the condition of the worker, a such.

It is evident, also, that the value of labor power for a given period of greater or less duration, was fundamentally determined by the standard of requirements of the wage workers in that period, not only regardless of rent, taxes and other seignorial exactions, but even regardless of the prices of necessaries. For a long time these workers received but little money; they were, as a rule, fed by their masters, and most of them, in the city as well as in the country, slept under their master's roof. So long as nothing occurred of such widespread economic importance as to bring about a sensible modifica-

tion of their standard of requirements, their fare remained substantially the same, whether taxes and prices increased or decreased. In other terms, wages, expressed in necessaries, remained the same; expressed in money, they followed prices.

But incidentally, at rare intervals, events took place that brought about a modification of the standard of requirements; for the "labor market" was already then, as it is now—though less fitfully then than now—subject to variations, consequent upon any marked change that might occur in the ratio between the supply of labor and the demand for it. For instance, after the great plague of 1349, that swept off a large portion of the population of England, labor became "extremely dear." But all attempts to reduce it—first by royal proclamation, and at last by the famous "Statute of Laborers," which provided fines, imprisonment and corporal chastisements for its enforcement—proved abortive. Again, the growth of the industrial arts, by drawing labor from agriculture to the cities, caused a steady rise in the value of labor power, despite all further attempts of Parliament to keep down, not only wages, but the standard of living by regulating the diet and apparel of laborers, servants, artificers, etc.

Coincidently with this improvement in the condition of the laboring class, the "burden of taxation" increased steadily. The monarchial power having everywhere risen above the feudal structure could no longer depend upon the revenues of the royal domain for the means of meeting its enlarged and constantly enlarging expenditure. As the agricultural tenantry had to support the lords, and as every demand of the king upon the lords was apt to be followed by some attempt of the latter to shift the burden upon their tenants, thereby creating widespread discontent, the chief source of royal income was obviously to be found in the growing wealth of cities.

The diversity of this wealth, of its forms, uses, origin and destination, permitted also of a far greater variety of taxing devices than the raw produce of the land. Its value could by no means be so well ascertained, and some of it could readily escape detection. No small part of it depended for its continued production upon the skill, knowledge and secrets of individuals, who could not be bound to the soil and must not be frightened away. The process of taxation, which in the purely agricultural period consisted in the mere brutal act of directly taking the goose and plucking her openly, now became, as Turgot termed it, an "art" full of refinement and requiring proper consideration for the feelings of the goose.

Aye, it became a wonderful art. To such extent wonderful that in the course of time it made the goose cry for more plucking of the right sort; the plucking, namely, of her sister goose. This seemed to make her fat at the expense of that sister. By taxation, with proper discrimination, each trade was protected from the other trades, each nation from the other nations, and in every case the stronger mercantile adventurer from the weaker.

There were imposts, duties and prohibitions of all kinds, according to every possible mode of taxation except the so-called "equal" one, invented later by Adam Smith and found impracticable. That the taxes fell somewhere, no one doubted; but upon whom many of them fell, was a matter of dispute. The same tax, in fact, according to circumstances, seemed to fall now upon one, then upon another.

For these and many kindred reasons there was a feeling at times that

things might be better than they were; that the luxury of kings, ever so profitable to a few tradesmen, was not a boon to the others, who were "the many"; that the discrimination, so necessary in taxation matters, was not what it should be; that the lords and the high clergy, who owned the land and lived "sumptuously upon "rent" (exacted for the use of the God-given sources of all existence and wealth), contributed but little, if anything to the support of government; and that what in reason ought to be free from all burdens and impediments was "Labor." Not, of course, the labor of the laborers, who were mere beasts of burden and got their accustomed provender under all circumstances, but the labor of their employers, who by means of industry, thrift and enterprise carried the whole social structure.

To one king at least, these remonstrances were not unpleasant. He was the king of France, Louis XV., hard pressed for money. Between one debauch and another he listened complacently to his physician, Dr. Quesnay, the original prophet of the single tax ("l'Impôt Unique"). So did in our days the trolley king, Tom Johnson, between two franchise grabs, listen to Henry George, the revivalist of Quesnay with a few humbugological improvements. But the lords were too strong for such a weak king as Louis-the-beloved, and it required a mighty revolution—not to tax them, for this would have been a mere fiscal bourgeois reform—but to dispossess them entirely. And when at last the lords were dispossessed, when at last their landed possessions were stepped into by the middle class, this fully emancipated class, now its own king also, knew enough to forget Quesnay and his single tax. Not until the present day, not until the American plutocracy had emerged from the conflict of middle class interests, could a country be seen gradually advancing towards this *ideal capitalistic tax*, irresistibly, spontaneously as it were, by the mere action of its economic forces and in utter disregard of its fiscal legislation.

It is but little over a century since the true capitalistic era began with the introduction, on a practical scale, of steam-moved machinery. But all the countries did not enter it at the same time. England inaugurated it; the United States followed closely; then France; then, fifty years ago, Germany. Such countries as Austria, Italy and Russia have still more lately entered it. In each of the old nations the mode of taxation had grown in accordance with its economic conditions., As they crossed the line between the previous industrial system and the new, they had to adapt their respective fiscal arrangements to the double action of internal and external developments. This was a slow and difficult task. Traditions, modes and standards of living, long established interests, class differences, etc., stood in the way of "reform" at every step. England herself did not find it easy to overcome the opposition of the very men who were to be most benefited by a change of fiscal policy. Owing chiefly to the imbecility of her own capitalists—for the capitalists as a class, necessarily imbued with that spirit of selfishness that must guide them in all their business operations, are everywhere short-sighted, narrow-minded and conservative, all popular notions to the contrary notwithstanding—it was not until nearly the middle of this century that Great Britain repealed her "corn laws" and initiated "free trade," which she had then to carry on alone, whereas she could have imposed it upon the continental nations at the end of the Napoleonic wars. To this day Europe retains, for national and municipal revenue purposes, some of the most obnoxious taxes imposed in the middle ages.

THE AMERICAN SYSTEM OF TAXATION.

Not so with the United States. Here, at the beginning, no traditions worth mentioning, no cast iron modes and standards of living, no interests so deeply rooted that they could not easily be moved, and—until the comparatively recent advent of the plutocratic power—no class differences so wide as to forbid compromise. Chattel slavery was the only factor of irreductible disagreement. More homogeneous, socially, than any other political aggregate; imbued with the capitalistic spirit of the earlier competition period; intensely patriotic in the strictly middle-class sense; possessed of boundless resources; determined to reach a point where it could depend upon itself alone for nearly all the necessaries and luxuries that its people might require, this country set itself to the work of "manufacturing domestic manufacturers" while developing its agriculture on a stupendous scale of product as well as of middle class ownership. With this end in view it adopted the simplest system of taxation that had yet been devised; a system which was also, upon the whole, the least unequal until the American plutocracy had accumulated a vast amount of personal property and began to put into practice the Single Land Tax theory. Leaving the taxing of real estate to the States and municipalities for their respective fiscal purposes, the national government undertook to raise all its revenue by levying duties upon foreign goods. Such has always been, to this day, in so far as practicable, the national fiscal policy of the United States. But, whenever circumstances made it imperative to increase the revenue by levying internal taxes, the two chief articles selected for this purpose were liquor and tobacco.

From 1789 to 1813, inclusive, the aggregate collected from customs was 215 millions of dollars, as against 8 millions only from domestic taxes, direct and indirect. The war with England somewhat altered this proportion; yet, in the six years, 1814-1819, the customs yielded a total of 113 millions, as against an internal revenue of only 26 millions. Then the internal taxes practically disappeared. There was not even the least trace of them from 1848 to 1863. But when the Civil War came, the enormous drafts on the Treasury consequent upon it necessitated their re-establishment on a scale unprecedented in the annals of nations. The famous liquidation period, 1864-1868, is the only one in the history of the United States, during which the yearly revenue from domestic imposts was larger than that of the customs; the aggregate of the former for the whole period being 1,076 millions, and of the latter 707 millions. Observe also, by the way, in order to fully realize the magnitude of the burden, that during the war the national debt rose from $90,000,000 (in 1860), to $2,700,000,000 (in 1865); that one-half of the country was desolated, and that the population, divided against itself in internecine conflict, was then numbering only 31,000,000.

Nevertheless, it does not appear that this tremendous burden, made up of all kinds of direct and indirect taxation, indebtedness and destruction of wealth, had the effect of reducing the wages of American labor, computed either in money or in commodities. On the contrary, it appears that never before or since were wages so high in this country, the workers so steadily employed, and their condition so good in every respect. Then, as yesterday; then as in the pestilential year 1349; then as ever since labor power became a merchandise, its value, fundamentally and primarily determined in any given period of years by the standard of requirements of the workers, was affected in its oscillations during that period, solely by the supply of it and the demand for

it, regardless of the mode or extent of taxation, or of any circumstance affecting similarly the net profits of capitalists, or the division of those profits among them.

During the Civil War period (including the years immediately following), the prices were high, partly because of taxation, partly because of the great consumption incident upon the war, partly because of the depreciation of paper money, and partly for sundry other reasons. But the price of labor power rose in a higher proportion. In the first place it had to rise to the full extent of the increase of the retail prices of necessaries in order to preserve the standard of requirements existing at the beginning of that period; a standard which obviously could not be lowered either by taxation or by capitalistic resistance in a period of great industrial activity. In the second place, it even passed the line marked out by that standard: on the one hand because of the comparative scarcity of labor resulting from the organization of armies numbering one million men, who were thus transferred from their ordinary occupations (or lack of occupation) to the operations of war; and on the other hand because of the large demand for workers in the many industries, old and new, either engaged in supplying the armies, or fostered by the high tariff on foreign goods.

Facts of an exactly similar character have repeatedly been observed in this and other countries. They were again observable here lately, during the Spanish War. But never so strikingly as in the Civil War did all the economic phenomena combine to expose in their glaring absurdity the "Wage Fund" theory, the "Savings" theory of the formation of capital, the theory that taxes on the necessaries of life fall upon wages, the theory even that taxation is necessarily a burden to the capitalist class, the consequent theory of "Economical Government," and many other theories, formulated in the days of middle class rule.

WAGES AND TAXATION.

As we proceed with our subject, it becomes constantly more evident that taxation must be considered by the workingman, not only from the consumer's but from the producer's standpoint; that is, not only in its possible effects upon the prices of his necessaries, but in the effects that its expenditure may have upon the employment of labor and consequently upon wages. While it may seem to a person who has the benefit of some economic training that this should of itself be sufficiently plain at first sight, yet it appears that it cannot be made too plain for popular understanding. In view of what has just been said concerning effects of the latter sort, it will best serve the purpose of consecutiveness to first carry on our inquiry further in the same direction.

The middle class notion—expressed by economists of the middle class period, such as Adam Smith, J. B. Say, Ricardo, Mill, etc.—is still widely prevailing, that the rate at which capital accumulates is necessarily diminished by increased taxation, and that the wherewith to employ labor (the so-called Wage Fund) is thereby made less than it would otherwise be. In the flood of light cast by Karl Marx upon the nature of Capital and its process of formation, the absurdity of this notion becomes immediately so glaring that Marx himself deemed it superfluous to devote so much even as a brief chapter to a special exposure of it, or, indeed, to the whole question of taxation. And we should certainly follow the same course if every reader of these pages could be induced to make himself familiar with the magistral work of that eminent Socialist. There is no room here for a reproduction or even for a condensation of his exhaustive analysis; but it is hoped that the following statement of a few im-

portant facts and considerations will prove quite sufficient for our present limited object.

In the first place, it is absolutely untrue that the rate at which capital accumulates is necessarily diminished by increased taxation. As we have already observed, the very opposite phenomenon generally occurs: for the simple reason that the purposes for which an increased public revenue is required are usually such as to afford an enlargement of the capitalistic field of opportunities and enterprise, and therefore to induce a quickening of industrial activity. Now, the means of the capitalist class to improve its opportunities are not limited by a so-called "Wage Fund." This bamboozling capitalistic term implies a pre-existing definite quantity, destined to buy labor power and incapable of immediate expansion. But under Capitalism the worker produces his own wage—the value of his labor power—before he receives or consumes it. He produces at the same time a surplus value, the larger portion of which is consumed by the capitalist class, while the remainder is converted into capital. Again, of this remainder a portion usually consists in "labor-saving" machinery, through which the worker is thrown out of employment unless the capitalist class proportionally increases its waste of wealth or finds a foreign outlet for the increased surplus that can be produced. The so-called wage fund is therefore an elastic quantity with no other limit to its capability of expansion than the number of workers. This limit, as we know, is never reached. In this country there never was a time, even during the Civil War, when the industrial activity was so great that the government could absorb all the unemployed labor. But, of course, whenever a greater proportion of the laboring class was afforded an opportunity of working—that is, of producing its own wages, besides a surplus value—not only its earnings were relatively higher, but the surplus value in the hands of the capitalists was absolutely greater, despite any increase of taxation.

In the second place, as was already intimated in our prefatory remarks, taxation is a mere transfer of purchasing power from the taxpayers (whoever they may be) to the government. Given a certain condition of industrial affairs, and supposing an increase of taxation with no object in view calculated to enlarge the field of capitalistic opportunities; in a word, supposing a case of government truly wasteful in the capitalistic sense; manifestly the purchasing power of the office holders will be increased to the exact extent of the decrease in the purchasing power of the taxpayers. While the ratios which manufacturing, domestic and professional employments bear to each other may be slightly altered if there happens to be any difference between the average modes of living of office holders and of taxpaying profit makers, respectively; if, for instance, more whiskey is consumed and fewer liveried lackeys are kept on exhibition; yet the total value of production and services—in a word, the total amount of labor employed and consequently the rate of wages—will remain unchanged. As to the claim which may again be advanced, that any portion whatever of the increased taxation would have been converted into capital if it had not been taken from capitalists, its preposterousness has already been shown. No new capital is created until there is some need for it; and when its need is felt, it springs into existence, solely through the creative action of labor, regardless of taxation. It is through this action alone that a country ravaged by war, a valley devastated by inundation, a city destroyed by fire, recover so quickly that no trace is soon left of their misfortune, unless their population has been annihilated.

Having shown that an increase of taxation cannot of itself reduce wages, computed in money, but that it may raise them if its effect is the employment of additional labor, it now remains to be seen whether it reduces their purchasing power by increasing the prices of the necessaries of life.

PRICES AND TAXATION.

Reserving for some future occasion the broader international view of the subject, we shall especially deal here with American conditions, in order that the tactical position of American Socialists may the more perfectly be comprehended.

It were a waste of time to undertake a classification of the various taxes, with the expectation that a correct or permanent theory could be deduced as to the operation of each class. Even in the case of direct taxes, we have shown that they seldom, either of themselves or from the manner of their collection, act as professedly intended. Indirect taxes, in particular, operate so variously that each of them requires constant watching. A certain tax calculated to develop a certain interest in a certain country might destroy the like interest in another country, or in the same country at another time. It might also yield much revenue here and none at all there, more at one time than at another, etc., etc. Hence the "art," as defined by Turgot. We might well call it the "black art."

True, there are some taxes upon which a general agreement has been reached, owing to their special unvarying character, shown by universal experience. For instance, it is admitted that a tax on Rent—or on its equivalent, the Value of Land—falls upon the owner; that a tax on incomes, or on personal property, or on occupations, falls upon those who pay it. As to the popular notion, that the constant increase of the tax on improved City Real Estate is paid by the tenant, nothing is more erroneous. An effect here is obviously taken for the cause. As a rule, the rent is not raised because the tax is increased, but the tax is raised because the rent that can be demanded, and therefore the capitalized value of the property, increases. But when we come to things commercially known as staple articles of consumption, the utmost confusion is apparent. A tax on wheat, for instance, would not increase its price, which is determined by its supply on the world's market; but a tax on Brazilian coffee, which we must import and which is chiefly consumed in the United States, would unquestionably affect its wholesale price here, unless the decrease of consumption were such as to throw the tax upon the foreign producers. There is no end of such various cases.

Right here, however, we reach the point of greatest importance in the whole question, and one general fact, very plain, very tangible, is about to issue from all this chaos.

This great fact, established by the most exhaustive statistical inquiries (one of which, conducted by the writer, covered the period of 13 years, 1880-1892), may be briefly stated as follows:

"The retail prices of necessaries are not affected by the fluctuations of the wholesale market."

Singular as this may appear to the thoughtless person, who, while buying his supplies from day to day at the same store has never observed it, the explanation of it is simple enough. Having gauged the requirements and incomes of his customers, each retail dealer establishes his scale of prices accordingly, with a margin of profit as great as possible and practically including what might be termed an insurance premium against wholesale fluctuations. Under

the present middle class system of distributive trade (which is now being slowly modified by the advent of the Trust and the Department Store), the retail prices, therefore, while remaining substantially the same at the same store for a long period of years— sometimes extending over a decade—vary from place to place, and even from quarter to quarter in the same city.*) We might mention differences so great between the constant retail price of an article at one place and its constant retail price at another place, as to exceed several times any tax ever imposed upon it; also, similar differences on the prices of articles that have never been taxed; also numberless instances of declining wholesale prices after a tax had been imposed, or of rising wholesale prices after the tax had been removed, without any change in the retail prices. From all this the conclusion is obvious, "that the consumers are made to pay all that their purchasing ability permits, regardless of taxation; and that the tax is paid out of the profits of the retailer, unless the conditions of the wholesaler be such that he may have to bear the whole or a portion of it."

Hence a struggle between the two skinners of the laboring class, each trying to force back the burden upon the other; a struggle in which the stronger is finally the more successful and incidentally uses any tax that may be imposed on the necessaries of life to further weaken the weaker. Neither of them, however, actually favors such a tax: neither the middle class trader, because he must bear it wholly or chiefly, nor the great employer of labor, because it is an artificial impediment to the lowering of the *money* rates of wages. Therefore, "in the United States"—that is, in the most capitalistically advanced of all countries—"the amount of taxation upon the commodities consumed by the wage working class (except distilled liquors, beer and tobecco, which are not, properly speaking, necessaries of life, and the tax upon which affects the dealer only) is so insignificant as to hardly deserve notice;**) and with this statement we might well dismiss the tax question from among the issues deserving the attention of wage working people, were it not that the aspect of it is changed by the use which the Socialists propose to make of the Power of Taxation.

POSITION OF THE S. L. P. ON TAXATION.

The position taken by the Socialist Labor Party of the United States on the subject of Taxation is the only one absolutely consistent with all the observed facts and tendencies of Capitalism at its present stage of development in this country. It is an impregnable position; and from the solid base which it affords for well defined, clear-cut Socialistic tactics on the political battlefield the party can safely advance against the Republican plutocracy without

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* For further inquiry, see the Report of the United States Senate on Retail Prices, 1892; also, the chapter on "Cost of Living," in the Tenth Report of the New York Bureau of Labor Statistics; "Bradstreet's" annual statistics of wholesale prices ; "Journal of Commerce"; "American Grocer"; three articles translated from N. Y. "Vorwärts," and published in "The People," May, 1899; etc.

** A workingman's schedule of expenditures may be divided into four categories, as follows: 1. Rent, fuel and light; 2. Food; 3. Clothing; 4. Miscellaneous. None of the items under the first head is affected by taxation. Of the articles of food only three, namely, Sugar, Tea and Spices, are now affected in their wholesale prices by a customs duty. Of spices it is not worth while speaking. The Spanish War duty on tea is 10 cents per pound; the per capita consumption is just one pound; the average import price is 17 cents (or 27 cents including the duty), while the retail price of the inferior qualities known as "popular grades" is not less than 50 cents. The average per capita consumption of sugar is 64 pounds, but it is considerably less among working people, and it is safe to say that the contribution of the average working class family to the expenditure of government through its consumption of sugar does not exceed 75 cents a year. The working people's clothing, including materials, is entirely made in this country and is not, therefore, increased in price, even at wholesale, by taxation. We export cotton goods, boots and shoes, and for the past few years have been exporting ready-made clothing (sweat shop product). The chief expenditure under the head, "Miscellaneous," are Liquors, Beer and Tobacco, the tax upon which falls entirely upon the dealers.

any fear of Democratic middle-class ambushes or flank movements of a bogus reform character.

In substance the premises and conclusions of the party, as they appear from its official declarations, supplemented by the utterances of its official organs, candidates and authorized mouthpieces generally, may be briefly stated as follows:

In the course of capitalistic evolution the American government has necessarily become an agency of the Plutocratic Class, having for its almost exclusive object to maintain and extend the economic dominion of that class. Its sphere of action, its domestic and foreign policy, and therefore also its mode of raising the necessary revenue, must in every respect conform with the interests of the American Plutocracy.

Now this plutocracy is by far the largest employer of wage labor. It owns all the great manufacturing industries, the mines, the railroads, the ships, the telegraphs, the banks and the vast enginery of wholesale commerce; to which may be added the municipal services performed by privileged corporations.

It has practically freed from taxation all its mercantile interests by casting the State and municipal burdens upon real estate and providing for the national revenue, in part with a high tariff that gives it a monopoly of the home market, and in part with internal taxes chiefly born by the middle class.

What it now needs is cheaper labor—constantly cheaper—in order to extend its supremacy abroad and thus dispose of the vast surplus product for which it can find no domestic outlet. This it cannot get by any mode of taxation. Even if the taxing of necessaries could result in reducing the purchasing power of wages and thus making the workingmen pay a part of the cost of plutocratic government, little would be gained because it would render more difficult their reduction *in money*. It is, in fact, the *price* of labor, even more than the standard of living, that the plutocracy mpst first reduce in order to accomplish its object; for it is with low prices only that it can gain command of the world's markets. Rather, then, give the workingpeople a "free breakfast"—free from taxation—if it can do any good to those who may be able to pay for it. But, manifestly, this is of very little importance. The plutocracy must achieve its purpose by the direct method of placing the worker in growing competition with his fellow worker, and all the workers in growing competition with the constantly improving machinery of production.

To that simple and direct plutocratic policy the Socialist Labor Party of the United States opposes this simple and direct proletarian policy:

Wherever it may get control of the public powers, it will wield the Power of Taxation, among others, with relentless energy for the benefit of the working class. Not only it will impose an income tax as specifically provided in its national platform, but it will tax all property of any kind (equally assessed at its full value), to the full extent required to carry out its palliative measures of relief and improvement.

L. S.

GENESIS OF RELIGION.

The respective characteristics of Infancy, Youth, Manhood and Old Age, that have led to the division of man's existence into the four periods just named, mark also very strongly the several epochs in the development, or life, of natural religions.

The first attempt of man to comprehend Nature resulted in the notion that certain physical bodies, endowed with properties which he did not possess, or with forces which he could neither resist nor direct, were living beings of a particular kind and superhuman power. In other words, as he could not separate in his infant mind the imponderable forces of Nature from the ponderous forms through which their outward manifestations were seen or felt, he conceived each of these forms to be a physical god, or *Fetish*, which he endeavored to propitiate by various performances expressive of fear and submission. Morality, of course, had no part whatever in this primitive conception of the divinity, which was essentially fetishic and zoomorphic. Anything was regarded as divine that displayed immense power, exhibited unique properties, or produced incomprehensible phenomena in the performance of its *natural* but *superhuman* functions. Its sphere of action established its individuality, and its special character, beneficent or harmful, suggested its name. In that age there was, properly speaking, no worship of the gods, which were few in number. Widely different in size, structure, motion, and general properties, they were not even conceived as belonging to the same family; and although some were deemed more powerful than others, they were respectively independent; for the unity of Nature, which in a later age suggested a supreme will and consequent hierarchy, was not then recognized. No priestcraft, no ceremony, no temple, no statue. The relations of man with the powers of Nature were direct: by Invocation, consisting either in Conjuration when aid was needed, or in Deprecation when harm was feared. Of course, invocation was the germ of ceremony, and likewise we can see the germ of priestcraft in the spiritual authority of the father, or patriarch.

There is a large portion of the Rig Veda which, in the words of Max Müller, "consists in simple invocations of the fire, the water, the sky, the sun and the storms, often under the same names which afterwards became the proper names of Hindu deities, but as yet nearly free of all that can be called irrational or mythological." In the hymns to which this eminent Orientalist refers we have literary monuments of great antiquity, that illustrate the first steps of religious infancy. Not that it may be claimed for these particular hymns that they were composed in the earliest days of the social state; for it is apparent from the perfection of the language in which they were sung, and other marked features of social advancement, that numberless centuries of social existence must have preceded the epoch of their production. But they clearly belong to an age in the life of the Sanskrit-speaking people when zoomorphic conceptions of the divinity were still prevailing among the god-makers of that people.

If the question were asked, "Which of the common phenomena of Nature most obviously suggests danger, provokes fear, and awakens in the ignorant mind a sense of human helplessness in the presence of superhuman forces?" most people would undoubtedly answer, "The thunder storm." In their reverential deprecations to this first fetish our prehistoric ancestors learned to submit

in abject terror and with corresponding admiration to violence and brutality. The time has not long passed—has not, indeed, passed altogether—when the voice of God was heard in the tempest; and it is a debatable question, whether Franklin with his kite, or Galileo with his telescope, dealt the most deadly blow to Superstition.

By dividing itself into its three elements, Storm soon evolved into the first trinity of gods: Wind, Fire, Water. And right here, in this first evolutionary step of the Fetish idea, we may observe that process of differentiation and specialization, which is more or less perceptible in the whole physical and intellectual world. Water was material and visible. Fire was visible but immaterial. Wind was invisible and apparently immaterial, yet could plainly be felt. Not in the tempest alone, but by the slightest motion of man himself, aye, by a mere whisper, was the presence of Wind revealed. Hence the later notion, strengthened by various phenomena, of a divinity that was invisible, omnipresent, and from which nothing could be concealed. Later again, as breath is wind, Wind became the giver of life. Such a fetish was fairly entitled to the highest worship, and duly obtained it.

There are two distinct zoomorphic periods in religious infancy, which may respectively be called the period of sensation and the period of notion.

In the first, everything in Nature is accepted as it appears to the senses, and no attempt is made to conceive a superhuman power in any other form than that through which it is seen or felt. The error, then—as I have already explained—consists simply in the confounding of mechanical force with animal life; that is, in seeing animal life in every object possessed of mechanical force. But it is a fundamental aberration; and as truth evolves into greater truth, so does error evolve into greater error.

In the second period we see the dawn of the poetical age, when imagination, slowly breaking through its childish envelope, descries an animal in the moon, a gigantic serpent in the serpent-like river, or the figure of a wolf in the profile of that dark mountain over yonder, where no wise shepherd ever ventures his flock. It is then that Wind—the god of wind, god of war also, the future Supreme God—takes the form of an eagle. No one had ever seen him, until one day, a day of titanic devastation, the stormy clouds nearing the zenith, the foremost of them was plainly seen by the whole tribe to be an eagle.

Passing from Infancy to Youth, the idea of divinity undergoes a radical transformation. With the dawn of reason the action of mind on matter becomes apparent. In all the visible manifestations of life some invisible force of will is conceived to be at work. The personality of the god emerges, largely intellectual, from the physical object with which heretofore he was supposed to be one, and through which hereafter he will be felt manifesting his power. Man, realizing the superiority of his mental sight over the purely sensual instincts of the brute, casts away his primitive notion of the animal nature of those divinities, at least, which he deems friendly to his kind. They sympathize with him; they do for him what he would do "were he a god." In their power of command over natural forces they are supernatural; but in their feelings and passions they are human. In his eyes, then, they have the human figure; and while unfriendly deities, beastly demons, inferior spirits and such like may still be clothed in animal garb, the conception of divinity in its higher sphere will henceforth be anthropomorphic, as it is anthropopathic. But mark, above all things, that the gods are no longer "superhuman;" they are "supernatural."

With the admission of the supernatural a boundless field opened to the

imagination of the poet, whose boldest flights to the regions of fancy were not restrained by the scanty knowledge of the day. The poet, in fact, to a large extent and in his own way did the work of the scientist: he saw, he observed, he thought. And there was much to see, to observe, to think over in those days, for one who could walk with his eyes open through the wilderness of primitive Nature. Many ways also of looking at it. In the first place titanic conflicts; the world everywhere bore traces of that. Mighty powers had met in battle array, the god-like against the monster-like, contending for sovereignty. A fit subject, this, for the first epopee; and in the grasp of it every race of men came out in the full strength of its own poetical genius, shaped by natural surroundings.

Take, for instance, the Norse mythus of the "Creation," as tersely condensed in the following words of Carlyle: "The gods, having got the giant Ymer slain—a giant made of 'warm wind,' and much confused work, out of the conflict of frost and fire—determined on constructing a world with him. His blood was the sea; his flesh was the land; the rocks his bones; of his eyebrows they formed Asgard, their gods' dwelling; his skull was the great blue vault of immensity, and the brains of it became the clouds. What a Hyper-brobdignagian business!" Aye, Brobdignagian enough, to be sure; but not more so than the nebular theory; not more so than what a poetically inclined astronomer can see every day in the heavens with a good telescope. It is a perpetual wonder to me that those prehistoric poets, with their own intuition only for guide and their unbridled imagination for steed, did not wander away from the real far more than they did. Carlyle himself, with better opportunities I should say, did not always do so well. Suppress the fetish fiction, which hampered our Norse poet. Where he said "the gods," read "the constructive forces of nature"; where he speaks of the giant Ymer slain, and of his blood, and of his flesh, and of his bones, and kindred things, imagine that he means—as he must surely have meant—an immense body of matter, formerly flying about, now compressed by those forces into a round mass of earth, of water and of air, that obeys the law—the god—of gravitation. What then? Have you not a scientific account of the formation of a planet? And observe that he knew for certain that the earth was round. Herodotus, who knew everything that the priests of Greece and Egypt knew in his day, laughed heartily when some one, who possibly had it from a more or less distant relative of the Norse poet, told him that the earth was round. They laughed at it in the middle ages; that is not so very long ago. Now tell me the height of that peak of poetry where that poet could fly, to see that the earth was round.

And so the gods of thunder and of wind and of fire and of like forces, having shaped this inert giant of dead matter into a round ball, assigned it a place in the "Ginunga Gap," where they put also the sun, the moon and the stars. *Ginunga Gap!* literally, the Yawning Jaws; the wide-open mouth of the Infinite in space and time; a monster of the wolf kind, a destroyer, just like the Hindu god Siva. Those jaws, some day, will close upon the world. This also, I believe, is quite scientific.

And right here let it be observed that the victorious gods shaped the earth; they did not create it. No one in those remote ages, even though gifted with the creative power of a Norse or Hindu imagination, could have conceived that anything came out of nothing. This expression, "the creation," is, I dare say, an invention of far more recent date. It savors strongly of revealed

faith. Applied to the myths of the time and people we speak of, it is glaringly inappropriate.

Not only, then, did their gods create nothing, but, as beneficent forces and intelligent beings, they were a later race, the junior offspring of that same chaotic Nature out of which the rude giant Ymer had first come to life through the conflict of frost and fire. Of this race Odin himself—the great Odin—was by no means the ancestral root, but an improved scion. Too perfect a god was he to be thus vomited outright from the womb of chaos. Think of it: Perfection contemporaneous with chaos! Is that possible? These Norse people had common sense. Far less finished than Odin, but better adapted to the shapeless environment, was his ancestor Buri—whose name, by the way, conveys the idea of fixedness and settlement, in opposition to the wild cosmic forces that kept in a state of senseless rioting and aimless wandering the particles of that primeval, fluid Nature, in which as yet there was no world. Even he, this Buri, the dawning of intelligence, was of slow growth as compared with Ymer, the beginning of organic matter. For if we can trust the old bard, than whom this first god, Buri, could hardly be more uncouth, it took the celestial cow not less than three divine days—three ages, I suppose—to lick him out of the ice into a shapely, honest, manlike figure.

Now then, mark this genesis, for it is in itself a far greater marvel than the things or beings of which it tells. In the first place, chaos. The great brute force of Fire in conflict with frozen Inertia. From this conflict, or intercourse, Ymer—a stupid giant, containing in his chaotic body the elements of organic matter. Then, from this same conflict, by slow degrees, the conservative and intelligent forces that will shape Ymer into a world and rule it. Now, let me give you an extract from the "Antiquity of Man," by Sir Charles Lyell, the contemporary and friend of Darwin: "Far from having a material tendency, the supposed introduction into the earth, at successive geological periods, of life in this ascending scale: 1, Sensation; 2, Instinct; 3, the Intelligence of the higher mammalia bordering on reason; lastly, the improvable Reason of Man himself—presents us with a picture of the ever-increasing dominion of mind over matter."

Well, don't I hear you say: "Are we to believe that this Norse poet, this rough child of intuition, was the precurser of Lamarck, of Lyell, of Darwin?" And why not? The Nineteenth Century has no patent right to human intuition, whatever its claims may be in the domain of positive science. Years before Newton had formulated the law of gravitation, Shakespeare felt it in himself, and spoke of it as if he knew all about it. Intuition, on the whole, is right enough. What is wrong is the willful perversion of it in the infant brain by the weak-minded or the designing: A greater crime than this blinding or distorting of the inner sight—this paralyzing of our chief sense, without which our other senses know not each other—I cannot conceive. Give intuition fair play, and in the light of experience, all its possible aberrations must inductively undergo correction. In this age, especially, we need much less to be cautioned against the vagaries of our untrammelled imagination, than to guard it well from the false teachings of our spiritual instructors.

There are degrees in the supernatural, and they mark the age of fictions. The oldest may be grotesque in the extreme; they are true to nature if stripped of their swaddling clothes. The next in age are less grotesque, yet more absurd; and not until we reach the latest do we find the most obviously unnatural, the most impertinently miraculous

Now take a corresponding myth in the sacred traditions of India, which the sculptor of a later epoch has artfully represented in the form of Vishnu resting on the serpent Ananta (eternity); Vishnu, evidently for the purpose of art, taking here the place of Brahm, the Supreme Spirit, that no one must name or presume to figure. The world—a former world—has been destroyed; and as far even as a god can see in the profound darkness, nothing is to be seen but the vast expanse of water, over which the great serpent of Eternity glides softly with his precious burden. The god is sleeping. Eternity alone, with serpentine wakefulness, silently moves on. Behold! the Supreme will has rested long enough, and in the refulgence of his first look an immense human form, lifeless, rises from the deep. It is the world. The spirit wills, he looks, says the sacred text: the mouth bursts open; from the mouth the speech, from speech the god of speech, which is Fire. Again the Spirit looks: the nostrils burst open; from the nostrils the breath; from the breath, the god of breath, which is the Wind. The eyes burst open; from the eyes, the sight; from sight, the god of sight, which is the Sun. And thus, one by one, burst forth all the organs of the World-man, from which emerge in dazzling glory the protecting gods, whose energies impart life to that immense body.

Here, then, as in the Norse myth, we have again the giant world, all matter, mere ignorance; and the gods issued from matter itself, yet all spirit, mere energy; but we have, furthermore, Brahm, the Supreme Will, all existence, knowledge and bliss. Nothing grotesque here. Everything noble, grand; so grand that nothing grander in that style ever flashed out of the brain of man. The opening novelette in the Old Testament, with which it has a family resemblance somewhat puzzling to the ethnologist, does not hold a candle to it. But it is already a much evolved myth and full of abstraction. Though God—the supreme God—does not yet create matter, we feel man at work creating a creator, and the supernatural action, upon the physical world, of a great will productive of energy is already quite apparent.

The depth of Hindu meditation in those days was only surpassed by the splendor of the imagery through which metaphysical concepts were transmitted by the poet to the understanding of the less perceptive dreamer. See, for instance, the form of beauty under which this idea of Will-producing Energy was made a concrete, visible thing to him whose mental vision might be deficient. The power of the Trimurti—a will power merely, as you must bear in mind—is threatened by some gigantic force of ignorance, which I fancy must have been Inertia. Instantly coming together from the remotest points of the infinite, Brahma, Vishnu, Siva view each other with intense delight and overflowing love; and there, in the radiance of that triple look, springs into being a virgin of celestial loveliness, reflecting in the triple color of her divine form the combined glances from which she was produced. She is the Soul of Nature; white as the dawn of day, red as the noon in a tropical sky, and black even as a starless night. At the command of Brahma, she divides herself into three forms. The white is Suraswati, the wife of Brahma, who presides at the dawn of things; the red is Lackshmi, the beloved of Vishnu, who, as Preserver of the world, rules at its noon, in the full activity and glory of life; the black is Parvati, the consort of Siva, who, as Destroyer, is fitly associated with the power of darkness. Each is the *Sacti*, the omnipotent energy of the master will that she is to love and obey. And if sometimes, in the grand epics of that age, she appears overbearing and uncontrollable, do not hastily mock the poet,

but rather admire his penetration; for he knew that energy, in most enterprises, carries the will far beyond the limits of its own first self.

This, again, is a most refined myth, and evidently less primitive still than the former. It was plainly intended by the poet for a class of people in whom social rank and aristocratic ways of life might be supposed to have developed a certain elegance of taste and a perception of the beautiful in the concrete, if not in the abstract. The populace—"Herr *Omnes*" (Mr. Everybody), as Luther calls it—was not expected to feed its tumultuous mind on such serene imagery. And it did not. It had its own poets, its own artists, who wrought out its primitive gods into forms of which it could say: These are gods indeed; for they are wonderfully like me and like everything about me.

Of such gods we have suggestive types in those monsters of stone which the caves of Ellora and Elephanta have more or less fairly preserved from the two relentless destroyers—Time and Man; whereas in many parts of the sacred books, and in subsequent epics, we may contemplate gods of the metaphysical order, undoubtedly issued with the others from the same ancestral fetishes, yet conceived in an entirely different spirit.

To the superficial historian, who never grouped his facts scientifically, and therefore knows little, if anything, of the laws of human evolution, this stupendous fall from the spiritual concepts of the sacred bard to the materializations of the devout artist is a deep mystery and a constant source of blunder. Shallow critics find themselves in the same sorry plight. From those sights, repulsive I must confess, of fire-spitting dragons and the like, they turn away with disgust, doubting not, in their polished ignorance, that such "unnatural" fancies, roughly carved out in the heart of the rock, in deep caverns where the glare of torches lends them an awful appearance of monster-life and a serpent-like suddenness of motion, were the works of rude barbarians, blind to the rules of Art, deaf to its commands. Why, gentlemen, this is Art, nevertheless—grand, noble, honest—art, indeed, of the highest order, such as truly reflects the condition of man in the race and at the epoch that produced him.

In searching for the souls of nations in the stones through which they spoke to posterity, we soon find that the first steps of man in the field of art were not taken in his infancy. The carver was unskilled, but the generation that put a chisel in his hand and bade him to be the exponent of its religious tenets was already far advanced in knowledge, in thought, in literature, and therefore in political organization. In the genesis of the artistic world the thinker, the poet, must precede the artist, as thought and poetry, in the artist himself, precede execution. The humble artisan—nay, the great artist—who changed the rocks of Ellora and Elephanta into life-like monsters, belonged, as we all know, to an age when the simple creed of the much earlier Vedic epoch had already undergone a portentous transformation among the masses of the people. By the light of the Vedas, we see very plainly that he pictured, not the simple zoomorphic notions of his ancestors, nor the spiritual creations of later bards, but the tenets of a class that was rapidly evolving downward. For, though we must admire the honesty of his performance, we cannot deny that this wholesale god-making of brutal forces and beastly forms is extremely revolting; and the Hindu Pantheon of his time becomes a subject of increasing wonder when we see, towering above it, the idea, well defined and clearly expressed centuries before, of a pure spirit of good. How it came to pass that a people among whom the power of thought had manifested itself by literary monuments of extraordinary grandeur, expanded, as it seems, the materialism

of its worship, instead of enlarging the spirituality of its creed, is one of those questions which the Sphinx of history delights in propounding to the student of facts. But no one can answer it who does not see that a double movement of evolution was imparted by the social state to the "Fetish Fiction"—that is, to the original conception of the divinity—as soon as the social body had been divided into masters and mastered: a movement upward, limited to the few, and a simultaneous movement downward, carrying the mass. He, however, who has so classified and compared the facts of history that he can without difficulty see this double movement at work, not only among the ancient tribes and empires, but among the most advanced of modern nations will readily see also that the bard who went on idealizing primitive fetishes into poetical allegories or metaphysical abstractions, and the artisan who went on metamorphosing the same fetishes into capricious monsters, though descended, like their own respective gods, from the same ancestor, were not of the same caste, did not worship at the same shrine, and did not speak to the same class of men.

Nevertheless. one tendency they had in common. As we watch the development of myth through the age of religious youth, whether it be in the productions of the bard or in those of the artist, we see that the action of the divinity is no longer, as it was in the period of infancy, regular, mechanical and unchangeable. It becomes more and more voluntary and fanciful, like human action. What the gods are—their nature as physical or spiritual forces—is constantly growing of less moment than what they have done or may be doing. All forms of life, all natural phenomena, and finally all human events, are readily explained by the capricious influence of the deity. The myth, which was originally a faithful picture of what was seen by man in the way he saw it, becomes *epic*, and in that form is accepted by all, or nearly all, as a sacred history. And as all that is worth knowing is supposed to be derived either from the gods or through their inspiration, the collection of myths, by successive additions, is made to embrace all the knowledge of the day.

Then comes the age of religious manhood. To the flaming imagination of the poet succeeds the cold calculation of the priest. Of the poet himself we hear no more, except, perchance, when the contrast between wealth and misery moves him to tears or to indignation. Even then, little pity of a true kind is expressed for the poor. The poet might lose caste if his heart went fully to the outcast. For instance, we read in the Mahabharata: "There is fruit on the trees in every forest, which every one who likes may pluck without trouble. There is cool and sweet waters in the pure rivers here and there. There is a soft bed made of the twigs of beautiful creepers. And yet wretched people suffer pain at the door of the rich!" This was a plain rebuke to the beggars of that day. Such rebukes are daily administered to our idle poor by a virtuous aristocracy of idlers, who own every tree in the forest, every inch of water front along the pure rivers, every twig of the beautiful creepers, and every tool with which the disinherited might be able to eat bread in the sweat of his brow.

At any rate, things had come to that point where the world was good enough—for the powerful and wealthy. Faith, institutions, misery and all must be crystallized, and Manu promulgates his law. Hear! Hear!

"If the world had no king, it would quake on all sides through fear; the ruler of this universe, therefore, created a king for the maintenance of his system.

"A king is formed of particles from the chief guardian deities, and consequently surpasses all mortals in glory. Like the sun, he burns eyes and

hearts; nor can any human creature even gaze on Him. He is fire and air; He the god of criminal justice; He, the genius of wealth; He, the lord of the firmament. * * * In his anger, death!

"For the use of the King, Brahma formed, in the beginning of time, the genius of punishment. * * * Punishment, with a black aspect and a red eye, governs all mankind; punishment alone preserves them; punishment wakes while guards are asleep; the wise consider punishment as the perfection of justice. If the King were not, without indolence, to punish the guilty, the stronger would roast the weaker, like fish, on a spit. The whole race of man is kept in order by punishment; for a guiltless man is hard to be found."

Manu, you perceive, was a wise man. Yet, despite "punishment with a black aspect and a red eye," the Sudra might have rebelled had a glimmer of Vedic light penetrated his dark mind. But the Sudra had evolved downward. He was plunged in the meanest fetishism. He no longer worshipped the few rude and somewhat authoritative but honest and kindly gods of his ancestors. In common with the fifteen classes of slaves to which he had given birth, he worshipped monsters of wood or stone by the million, frogs and lizzards, owls and crows, charms and amulets, and what not. And it was necessary to social order that he should continue to do so. Therefore, while Manu pretended that he had expressed in his code the whole sense of the Veda, he thoughtfully instructed the Brahman to keep the Veda itself from the Sudra, and enacted the most severe penalties against any infringement of this fundamental law. He of humble birth who heard a sacred hymn had boiling oil poured into his ears, which were then sealed with wax forever.

And so at last was seen in the world a society petrified at its root; with its caste of laborers, subdivided into classes according to their respective trades or functions, which were determined, not by their tastes or aptitudes, but by their birth. For, even in that caste, there was a scale of degradation, just as in the foundation of an edifice there are upper and lower layers of stone. Some were so low that their presence in a city would have polluted it. The Chandalas, for example, must not enter the town; they must roam from place to place, wearing the King's badges, and removing the corpses of those who died without kindred. They must wear no other clothes than those of the dead, no other ornament than rusty iron. Their dishes must be rusty pots, and their sole wealth dogs and asses. The Meda, the Andhra and others were especially appointed to slay the wild beasts of the forest; while the Cohattri, the Ugra and correlated classes were confined to the killing of rats and such animals as live in holes. The carpenter, the fisherman, the pedler, the cart-driver, the doctor, were held in higher esteem; but they were all Sudras, working for wages, and Sudras they must remain, they and their posterity, to the end of time. Manu had solved, in his own way, the labor problem.

Manu, did I say? No, not Manu. No mere codifier ever attempted more than to take a social body at a certain point of its evolution and crystallize it in the form which it had come to assume. And his work was more or less enduring according to the circumstances of that body.

In relating these facts, I don't pretend to say anything new, or to say it better than many historians have done before me. Most people know that this system of castes was by no means confined to India; that it existed in Egypt from time immemorial, and that, finally, it prevailed throughout the Roman Empire. What I want to impress upon my readers, because I think their attention has not been sufficiently directed to it, is precisely this final univer-

sality of caste system, and the corresponding sets of fetish notions in corresponding castes, both evolving simultaneously in countries widely distant from each other, and under circumstances seemingly different, into forms that differ somewhat in appearance, but not at all in reality. While the student of mythology finds all religions singularly alike everywhere in their process of evolution, the student of history finds, moreover, that similar stages of religious development in various countries correspond to similar conditions of society.

Lastly, comes old age, decrepitude and death. Through the double movement of evolution in opposite directions, so great has the distance between the base and the apex grown to be, so loose are the cementing bonds not only between distinct parts, but between their respective components, that the social fabric must fall, a heap of ruins, unless a new faith, a new soul—a new fiction, perhaps—enter the expiring body, and give it new life and a younger form.

It is then that the prophet appears. Not the prophet of Carlyle's fancy, who, God-like, shapes the world after his image; but the embodiment, in one great heart, of the chaotic aspirations of his time; he, of fearless utterance, who speaks in trumpet tones the unspoken thoughts of his fellow men. He is a Moses among the Jews; a Zoroaster in Persia, a Buddha in the Far East, a Mahomet in Arabia, a Christ—or rather a Paul—in the Roman province of Palestine. The source of his illumination is love, liberty, justice; things eternal and absolute, which, as a whole, he calls Jehovah, Brahm, Ormuzd, Allah, meaning thereby perfect goodness, moral law. Of these great things I hear it said sometimes—and by most thoughtful people, too—that we may give them any name we please, provided its meaning be never lost to our minds. A serious, downright mistake this, as I see it. Not to call a thing by its own right name is to know it not, or to wilfully confuse the understanding of it. Language is a precious tool; through it reason is sharpened; through it, also, reason is blunted. Beware of words.

Of the prophet's sincerity I have no doubt. No more doubt have I of his sincerity than of his ignorance as to the power that makes him a prophet. He truly hears a great voice—the voice of his oppressed brothers clamorous for freedom on earth—but takes it to be the voice of a despotic father in the heavens. And in the name of that cosmic despot, he proclaims human liberty. Poor prophet! You know the sequel.

A queer kind, this human kind, perpetually seeking its center outside of itself; wandering so far in quest of what is so near; stubbornly shutting its eyes to the light of the obvious knowable and opening them wide to the darkness of the "unknowable!"

A queer kind, this human kind, for ages striving to be other than itself; ignoring its own plain law and wilfully acting in violation of it; devouring a part of itself to satiate the other part; making itself tiger and sheep, hawk and linnet, spider and fly—all but man and man!

Let us at last be men, since men we are. Let us have a new faith, that will not be a new fiction: a faith in our own power to be humane—a power issuing not from an imaginary center of the heavens, but from the real center of mankind, the human heart.

Then will knowledge and solidarity accomplish together what neither the cold philosopher nor the impulsive prophet ever did single-handed:—take from the pit of servitude a mass of ignorance, and with "that" make a free people.

LUCIEN SANIAL.

CITY OF NEW YORK.

Socialist Vote for Governor (Ben. Hanford) in 1898, and for Mayor (L. Sanial) in 1897, by Boroughs and Their Respective Political Divisions (Assembly Districts and Wards).

BOROUGHS OF MANHATTAN AND BRONX.

Ass'y Dist.	1898 Gov.	1897 Mayor	Ass'y Dist.	1898 Gov.	1897 Mayor	Ass'y Dist.	1898 Gov.	1897 Mayor	Ass'y Dist.	1898 Gov.	1897 Mayor
1.....	36	30	11.....	121	127	21.....	143	112	31.....	104	79
2.....	104	96	12.....	691	871	22.....	155	160	32.....	438	407
3.....	76	53	13.....	172	183	23.....	183	159	33.....	204	174
4.....	548	528	14.....	579	532	24.....	258	307	34.....	411	319
5.....	77	59	15.....	168	139	25.....	43	32	35.....	581	521
6.....	202	194	16.....	1,214	1,101	26.....	498	568	Annexed:—		
7.....	73	53	17.....	132	146	27.....	25	38	1.....	14	11
8.....	383	446	18.....	234	215	28.....	534	576	2.....	36	28
9.....	119	102	19.....	107	80	29.....	45	45			
10.....	652	683	20.....	178	126	30.....	555	496	Total.	10,093	9,796

BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN.

Wards	1898 Gov.	1897 Mayor	Wards	1898 Gov.	1897 Mayor	Wards	1898 Gov.	1897 Mayor
1.....	24	16	12.....	77	56	23...	43	23
2.....	18	8	13.....	65	47	24...	43	33
3.....	42	33	14.....	73	65	25...	90	68
4.....	45	16	15.....	116	94	26...	353	338
5.....	24	14	16.....	403	460	27...	459	444
6.....	55	60	17.....	320	235	28...	656	564
7.....	47	20	18.....	122	146	29...	25	27
8.....	162	92	19.....	161	159	30...	33	24
9.....	53	28	20.....	23	21	31...	7	3
10.....	59	52	21.....	311	275	32...	8	8
11.....	36	22	22.....	190	142	Total	4,145	3,593

BOROUGH OF QUEENS

Borough	1898 Gov.	1897 Mayor
Total..	953	921

BOR. OF RICHMOND

Total..	216	157

RECAPITULATION.

Manh't'n & Bronx	10,093	9,796
Brooklyn	4,145	3,593
Queens .	953	921
Richmond ..	216	157
Gr. total..	15,407	14,467

Socialist Vote for Congress, in 1898, in the Congressional Districts Situated Wholly or Partly in the City of (Greater) New York.

Congress District.	Location.	Candidates.	Votes.	Congress District.	Location.	Candidates.	Votes.
I.....	Queens (also Suffolk and Nassau Counties)..	C. W. McCullough	84	IX.....	New York ..	L. Sanial.....	2,396
II.....	Brooklyn ..	P. Larsen.....	240	X.....	New York ..	T. Ceely.....	457
III....	Brooklyn ..	J. Gauss.....	386	XI.....	New York ..	H. Balkam.....	2,310
IV.....	Brooklyn ..	J. B. Cooper.....	522	XII...	New York ..	D. Hosman.....	509
V.....	Brooklyn ..	G. Rosenblatt....	1,156	XIII..	New York ..	J. J. Flick.....	642
VI.....	Brooklyn ..	W. Spoerer.....	1,030	XIV..	New York ..	E. Neppel.....	1,307
VII....	New York .. (part of) and Richmond	J. Loos.....	308	XV...	New York ..	W. Ehret.....	1,922
VIII...	New York..	J. Nagel.....	160	XVI...	New York and Westchester Co.	J. J. Kinnealy....	1,620
						Total	15,049

NOTE:—By a mistake of the Secretary of State, the name of the candidate, McCullough (First Congressional District) was not placed on the ballots of Queens Borough, and the 84 ballots counted for him were cast in Suffolk and Nassau counties. This makes the grand total congressional vote about 900 smaller than it would otherwise have been, as the votes cast for Hanford in Queens Borough alone numbered 953.

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(From "The Westminster Review," London, Jan., 1899.)

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(From Georges Renard's Book Review in "La Lanterne," Paris, 1899.)

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