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EDITORIAL

## GOLDWIN SMITH AS TOLSTOI.

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**A**DVANCE reviews are appearing of a new book by Goldwin Smith to be entitled *Progress or Revolution*. The most extensive of these advance reviews, so far, is published by the *New York Sun*. Seeing the close relations that have long existed between the *Sun* and Goldwin Smith, the conclusion is safe that the *Sun* review does not misrepresent the author.

The purpose of the work is to show Socialists the error of their ways. It reads them a general lecture on things they should know, and that, the tenor of the work indicates, they are ignorant of. The lecture is pivoted upon the following economic passage:

“After all there is more co-operation already than we commonly suppose. Let the communist take any manufactured article and trace out, as far as thought will go, the industries which in various ways and in different parts of the world have contributed to its production, including the making of machinery, shipbuilding and all the employments and branches of trade ancillary to these.”

Even the most sympathetic admirers of Tolstoi feel forced to admit that a leading feature of the distinguished Russian pioneer revolutionist is the cool assurance with which he utters his crude sociologic views as though they were startling discoveries just made by him.

A man of active and powerful mind Tolstoi grapples fearlessly with the issues that confront his generation. Being, however, unread on the literature of the subject, he does not “start abreast of his time.” It has been well said that the intellect which owes most to others is the greatest. Powerful though an intellect be it can not combine in itself the power of all the others that preceded it. The most powerful intellect, grappling in our days with any science, unaided by the

contributions of previous laborers on the same field, will produce crudities only. These crudities advanced as “new discoveries” can not choose but have the flavor of naiveté! It is so with Tolstoi’s wisdom. If there is any glory in the fact, America has her Tolstoi; if there is any honor in the post, Goldwin Smith is that Tolstoi. The passage above quoted from Goldwin Smith’s coming book illustrates the point by proving it.

It is one of the fundamental principles of Socialism that co-operative labor exists now. Extensively does Socialist literature prove the fact; emphatically does Socialism dwell thereupon. The fact of the present existence of co-operative labor is the link that connects political economy with sociology. It is the point at which the two branches merge, and whence the Socialist Republic is deducted as a sociologic conclusion that can not be escaped from. Socialism takes, for instance, a modern shoe-factory and contrasts that with the shoe-shop of the one-time self-employing shoemaker. The latter worked under the individualistic system. From the time the hide entered his place as “raw material,” he was the sole architect of the coming shoe. He dressed, stretched, cut, trimmed and turned the leather until the shoe gradually took shape, till it was finally turned out as a finished product, ready for use. That shoemaker could say: “I made that shoe.” Not so to-day. In the modern shoe factory, not less than 29 sets of men are at work on the different parts of a shoe. There are the cutters, the lasters, the trimmers, the finishers, etc., etc. When a finished shoe turns up in that shop no one of the scores of men engaged in the shoemaking can say: “I made that shoe.” That shoe is the joint product of ALL; they, all of them, co-operated in its production. The development of machinery, implied in this system of production, brings along with it a minute and extensive system of subdivision of labor, which shades off from each industry into all others, and from all others into each. A time is finally reached when this subdivision of labor ramifies itself throughout the country, even leaps its borders, and establishes a vast system of CO-OPERATIVE LABOR. The Socialist does not need Tolstoi Goldwin Smith to call his attention to the fact that “already there is co-operation.” He is well aware of the fact; he is so intimately acquainted therewith that he does not handle it with the skill-less, wondering eyes of an Indian who has found a watch. The Socialist perceives the sociologic conclusion that that economic fact points to. It is this:

“The system of OWNERSHIP must square with the system of PRODUCTION. When production is INDIVIDUALISTIC the system of ownership, under which the implements of production are held, must be INDIVIDUALISTIC; when production is CO-OPERATIVE, or COLLECTIVE, the system of the ownership of the implements of production must be EQUALLY COLLECTIVE. Where ownership and production do not square, social unrest results. The social unrest is bound to become acuter in the measure that the incongruousness between the system of production and the system of ownership becomes more sharply marked. In capitalist society the system of production is at fisticuffs with the system of ownership. Thence the trend of evolution, which always is for social harmony, is towards the COLLECTIVE OWNERSHIP OF THE NECESSARIES OF PRODUCTION, that is, THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC.”

Were Goldwin Smith not an economic-sociologic Tolstoi he would have learned all that from the Socialists. He would then know that what the Socialist is laboring for is, not co-operative labor—THAT WE HAVE ALREADY; what the Socialist is laboring for is COLLECTIVE OWNERSHIP of the necessaries of production. In Russia, a Tolstoi may answer a useful purpose. In America the type can only darken counsel.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

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