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The Comedy Has Begun

Every shade or tendency of bourgeois reformism, radicalism or progressivism contains within itself irreconcilable contradictions, contradictions of theory and practice, of thought and will, of phrase and substance, of promise and performance. These contradictions do not originate in the inherent viciousness of man, nor are they due to the especial viciousness of the politicians, but they are inherent in the very conditions of existence of those strata of the population which furnish the fertile bed for all bourgeois reform movements—the strata conveniently summed up under the "great middle class." Occupying a position between the capitalist and working classes and partaking of the characteristics of both, the middle class as a whole continually oscillates between the two extremes of modern society, inclining now towards the one and now towards the other. Moreover, since the middle class is composed of a considerable number of layers and groups whose respective positions in the social hierarchy are as different as their interests are divergent we find that on the whole the capitalist tendency predominates in some, while in others the proletarian tendency is the stronger. Just now there can be no doubt that the proletarian current of thought is running rather high, as instanced in the labor reform proposals of the Progressive party, in the various projects of labor legislation pending in numerous state legislatures, and in the various investigations into the conditions of life and work of the wage-workers.

Now and then, by a happy accident as it were, these contradictions of bourgeois reformism become concentrated in one personality, as in the case of the latter-day Roosevelt. A fervent

advocate of what he and his followers call "social justice," he also expresses his admiration for Grover Cleveland, among other reasons because of Cleveland's "service to the cause of order," said service having consisted in sending a federal army into Chicago to break up the Pullman strike. An alleged champion of the downtrodden and oppressed, he is also a champion of the trusts, without forgetting to champion also the cause of various sections of the middle class. An advocate of internal reforms and improvements that require an immense outlay, he also advocates an aggressive foreign policy and a big army and navy, which would consume the very sums of money required for carrying out the various projects of reform at home. Roosevelt is the most perfect type of bourgeois reformer and therefore combines in his personality the largest possible number of contradictions. In his eventful public career of some thirty years he has passed through the same stages of evolution as the country at large, and so we find him trying to voice at one and the same time the demands of the trusts, the middle class, and the working class. With what result it is unnecessary to predict, for history is making rapidly in these days of electricity.

President Wilson is in no sense so typical a representative of bourgeois reformism, nor is Bryan, his Secretary of State. The former, because his public life is of very recent date and his conversion to progressivism even more recent; he is not so self-contradictory for the reason that he has had less experience, has not come in contact with so many conflicting demands and interests, has a more imperfect comprehension of the wishes and needs of the various social classes and groups, contains less within himself and reflects less. The latter, because he has never gone through any process of mental evolution since the first day that he took a conspicuous place in the public eye. Like Minerva out of the head of Jove, his Middle Western middle class conception of life and society sprang complete out of his head in 1896, and not all the mighty changes that have since taken place in American society have availed to modify his views in any essential respect. His mind is as little torn between conflicting emotions and ideas as is that of a geological fossil.

But now that Wilson and Bryan are in power, what do we observe? Coming into office after sixteen years of continuous Republican rule and after more than a generation of capitalistic aggrandizement which went on uninterrupted under Democratic as well as Republican Administrations, the natural intention of both the old and the new leader of the Democratic party must be presumed to be to institute the reforms they have most at heart with the least possible delay, to keep their attention, as well as that of the country, steadily fixed upon this great task, and to avoid all foreign complications and entanglements that would prevent them from accomplishing this task. But to our amazement we find that the very first official utterance of the President since his inauguration is a pronouncement of foreign policy, a pronouncement that the entire press, officially inspired from Washington, has interpreted as a warning to Latin America. It is not our purpose to question the motives of this warning. Let us assume that the motives are of the purest, and that the sole object of the warning is to prevent an era of commotion and revolts in the countries bordering on the Caribbean. Nor is it our present purpose to analyze the propositions contained in this warning and to point out the preposterous absurdity of the President's notion that order and peace and lawful republican government can be established and maintained in countries in which the vast majority of the population consists of native Indians held in a state not greatly differing from slavery by a few thousands of indolent white masters, who moreover, are susceptible to all the corrupting influences of European and American capitalists engaged in a scramble for more valuable concessions. For our present purpose it is sufficient to note that the very first official utterance of the new President related to a foreign affair that is in no way connected with the avowed and leading purpose of his Administration, and that this utterance has been applauded to the echo by the entire capitalistic press. And rightly so, for while every act of internal policy is bound to advantage one capitalistic group at the expense of its rivals, the maintenance of "law and order" in the American "sphere of influence" redounds to the advantage of all capitalists without distinction—"the whole system of business."

And as the President, so also his Secretary of State. Ever since the Presidential campaign of 1900, Bryan has been, in theory at least, a consistent anti-imperialist, although he had previously been instrumental in inducing the Democratic Senators to vote for the treaty of peace with Spain that gave us our colonies in the East as well as in the West Indies. Bryan has been constant in his devotion to the cause of universal peace and arbitration, and his lecture on the "Prince of Peace" has made him popular with many thousands. But what is the first official act of Bryan as Secretary of State? Why, nothing less than a peremptory order to the President and Congress of Cuba to

annul an amnesty law that has just been passed by the latter and signed by the former. To be sure, our entire capitalist press is united in decrying this law as aiming to free all the grafters of the present Cuban Administration from responsibility for all their betrayals of the public interest. But have we no grafters of our own to bring to book, so that in our eagerness to inaugurate a reign of righteousness we are obliged to do missionary work in Cuba? To be sure, there is the Platt Amendment, which permits us to interfere in Cuban affairs whenever in our opinion the Cubans go wrong. But the Platt Amendment is a conspicuous piece of high-handed imperialism, and one might have thought that an anti-imperialist Secretary of State would not give it that wide application which it had under his Republican predecessors. Here again, however, we are at once reminded that Cuba is a common possession of the entire capitalist class of America, and the first business of a "progressive" Democratic Administration is to safeguard the interests of—"the whole system of business." Thus Bryan, for ever so many years the nightmare of Wall Street, receives the hearty praise of all the organs of Wall Street.

The comedy of errors in which the bourgeois progressives now in power at Washington are such proficient actors has already developed a subordinate episode of surpassing comicality. In their attitude towards Mexico our capitalists are by no means a unit. We have our war party as well as our peace party. There are American Maderists as well as American Diazists. Now, it so happens that the American Ambassador in Mexico, Henry Lane Wilson, is a Diazist. In fact, the suspicion we expressed in these pages four weeks ago, that Ambassador Wilson was an active factor in the palace revolution that put an end to Madero, has now become the common talk of Washington. What then should be the proper attitude of the "progressive" Administration toward this minion of the Taft regime? Well, one fine day Ambassador Wilson publishes to the world a telegram from Secretary Bryan, expressing entire approval of his official conduct in Mexico City. The next day a statement is issued that Secretary Bryan never meant to send such a telegram. Then further explanations are made, setting forth the peculiar technique of the State Department to account for the "error" of the Secretary of the State. The matter in itself may be unimportant, but it throws a light on the struggles of the governing cliques in Washington and the underground methods to which they resort.

Little by little, in the leisurely course of the next four years we shall witness all the acts and episodes of the Progressive Democratic comedy enacted at Washington. The workers of America will have to be more or less patient spectators of this comedy, and they will draw from it such profit and inspiration as will undoubtedly help them in their historic struggle. Just now, however, we desire to call to their attention one little omission in this comedy, and omissions are as important as commissions. One of the last acts of President Taft was to veto the labor "rider" on the Sundry Civil bill, which was passed by a Democratic Congress, and to which we referred in these pages a week ago The bill must be passed again, but will the "rider" forbidding prosecutions of labor unions under the Sherman law be attached to it again? By no means. The "rider" was only a piece of Democratic politics, meant to put a Republican President in an uncomfortable position. But now that a Democratic President is in the White House, we cannot afford to resort to such tomfoolery. Therefore, the President declares that he is opposed to all "riders," and the matter is ended. "Great is the virtue of a general principle," says the *Evening Post.* But what do Gompers and the other leaders of the American Federation of Labor say?

H. S.

The Problem of Nationalities in the Austrian Social Democracy

By Gustav Eckstein (Berlin).

Every year great masses of workers from all parts of Europe stream into the United States to offer their labor-power upon this country's market. This stream of immigration is the cause of a large number of most difficult problems for the labor unions and the Socialist party. The new-comers have been accustomed at home to the most varied methods of labor and to the most diverse living conditions which are usually considerably lower than those of the American worker; even communication with them frequently presents serious difficulties, for they usually speak only their native tongue. And frequently they come from civilizations so entirely different from the American that even

in their mother tongue real understanding between them and the American worker is very difficult.

Thus from the start there is erected a dividing wall between the immigrants and the natives, which can only be removed by much labor and patience and after the strangers have gradually familiarized themselves with American conditions. On the other hand, the common nationality forms a bond of union among the immigrants, which is confined not only to members of the working class, but usually extends also to the small merchants and artisans who speak the same language and often suffer under the same national disadvantages. Thus the wall separating the proletariat of the immigrant nationalities from the native proletariat is made higher and stronger.

In recent years the American Socialist movement has made great progress and it now embraces members of the most diverse tongues, who in part are organized in special sections. The wider the organization extends, and especially the more the Socialists are forced, by their representation in city governments, State legislatures and Congress, to take up the concrete questions of government, just so much the more will questions of national interest be forced to the front in the party and will present to it a number of difficult problems.

Therefore it will certainly be of interest to the American comrades to learn, in a broad way at least, how these conditions have shaped themselves in Austria, where, more than in any other country, the Social Democracy has been forced to concern itself, in theory and in practice, with the problems of nationality.* But in order to understand the bearing of these problems and their solution, we must turn back to the very beginning of the history of the Austrian Social Democracy.

* * *

The intellectual life of Austria has always been very closely connected with that of Germany. Even as late as 1866 the Austrian countries formed a part of the German Empire, and from old the Germans have been the leading nation in Austria. The countries to which the Hapsburgs owe their power are German, and even in the Slavonic countries the ruling class was almost entirely German.**

* It should be especially noted that here and in the following pages, by Austria is meant only the Austrian half of the Empire. In Hungary political and social conditions have in many ways developed differently than in Austria.

** See THE NEW REVIEW of January 11, 1913.

When, therefore, in the sixties of the last century, the democratic and social movements, prostrate since the failure of the revolution of 1848 took on new life, and when in Germany Lassalle's agitation and the International summoned the workers to struggle against their oppressors, this movement found an echo in Austria, at first among the German proletariat.

Not only was this section of the proletariat more easily accessible to agitation carried on from Germany and Switzerland, but the German-speaking districts were also the most highly developed industrially. In them, first of all, had come into being a proletariat of the great industry, which now showed itself receptive to Socialist agitation.

But the German workers could not restrict the labor union and political organization to their own ranks. Not only did the international character of Socialism require them to agitate among the proletariat of other nations also, but above all they were forced thereto by bitter necessity if they did not wish to be hampered in all their struggles by the backward workers of the other nations in Austria. Under these conditions it was only natural that for a long time the German comrades retained the leadership of the entire party, although the Czech, Polish and Southern Slav Socialists had built up organizations of their own. This state of affairs was also reflected in the constitution of the party. The highest body of the party was naturally the Congress, which was attended not only by the German, but also by the Slav comrades. It controlled not only the affairs of the entire party but also those of the German organizations, while the special affairs of the Czechs, Poles and South Slavs were regulated by their own national party delegation. In the same way the executive of the entire party had to regulate not only the affairs of the entire party, but also those of the German organizations.

But when the Slav organizations became stronger, this state of affairs became untenable. Two courses were possible. Either the entire party might be welded into a unitary and centralized organization in which national distinctions would be taken account of merely as lingual differences, or else the party must become disintegrated into national sections which would be held together only by certain common institutions. The labor unions took the first course. They had always had a unitary organization, in which, to be sure, the lingual necessities of the individual members were as far as possible taken into consideration in the agitation, printed matter, etc. But this course was hardly

possible for the party; for to an ever increasing degree national questions dominated all the internal politics of Austria, and even the workers did not remain entirely uninfluenced by these struggles. As stated previously,* the Slav nations in Austria had been oppressed for a long time. No wonder, therefore, that the workers also participated in the struggle for the emancipation of these nations, and that there was thus formed a community of interests between them and the bourgeoisie, especially the petty bourgeoisie. But to this was added the fact that the economic development of the Czechs, and to a still greater degree of the other Slav nationalities, lagged behind that of the Germans, so that the whole mode of thought of the workers of these nations was more like that of the petty bourgeoisie than was the case among the German workers.

Hence when in 1897 the question of organization came up for decision, close unity, such as existed in the labor union movement, was not effected in the party. The second course was adopted. The various nationalities became autonomous within the party, or rather their autonomy, which until that time had existed in fact, was expressly recognized and even extended to the German organization. But this official recognition of the lines of separation also emphasized them considerably. The Austrian Social Democracy was no longer a unified party with national sections of Czechs, Poles and South Slavs, but it was a federation of Social Democratic parties of the individual nations. As its common organ, this federation had only a general Congress, which met every second year, while in the alternate years took place the conventions of the several nationalities and of the general executive composed of delegates from all the national parties.

But meanwhile political conditions in Austria had also changed. In 1896 the workers were granted a very limited and defective suffrage, which nevertheless made possible the entry of the first Socialists into the Parliament of the empire. After long and hard struggles, universal, equal and direct male suffrage for the Reichsrat elections was won, and then the Socialist delegation became the strongest in the Reichsrat.

But these struggles were not without their influence upon the

* In regard to these unusually important and difficult questions, indications only can be given here. The attention of those interested in studying them more in detail is called to the important work of our Austrian comrade, Otto Bauer, "The Problem of Nationalities and the Social Democracy," (Vienna, 1907), and also to the numerous articles in which these questions have been discussed, in *Der Kampf,* the scientific monthly of the Austrian Social Democracy, and in *Die Neue Zeit.*

internal structure of the party. All the internal politics of Austria came to be dominated more and more by the conflict of nationalities, and the Social Democrats were obliged to take some position in regard to it. It is to the credit of the Austrian Social Democracy that upon this question, before which all the bourgeois parties stood helpless and embarrassed, it drew up its own well-founded program, which was supported by the members of all the nationalities within its ranks. It was the program of national autonomy in the State. That is to say, the various nationalities were themselves to administer their national affairs, especially the schools, in the same way as religious communities control their ecclesiastical affairs.

We need not here set forth in detail or discuss the nationality program which the Austrian Social Democracy drew up for the State; the only question here is what was its reaction upon the party itself. We saw that in 1897 the principle of national autonomy was established, or rather confirmed, in the party. What was then a makeshift, because a more rigid organization of the party was impossible, seemed later, because of the demand for national autonomy in the State, not only justifiable but also supremely desirable and necessary. The organization of the party, in which all the national organizations worked in harmonious co-operation, was held up as a model for the organization of the State, and vice versa the demand made upon the State for autonomy of the nations was regarded as an argument for and justification of the national divisions within the party. Less and less account was taken of the fact that there are fundamental differences between the compulsory organization of the State, which aims, or at least pretends to aim, to do justice as far as possible to all the necessities of its members, and the voluntary organization of the party which aims to combine all its forces for a definite object. Hence, the separation of the nationalities within the party was carried further and further by the agitation for national autonomy in the State. To this was added the fact that the suffrage law of 1896, opposed with great stubbornness by the Social Democracy, not only favored the possessing classes at the expense of the disinherited, but also favored the Germans at the expense of the Slavs, especially the Czechs and South Slavs. Thus there arose in these nations a certain alliance between the workers and the radical bourgeoisie and peasantry. Thus also it came about that the Czech Social Democracy approached nearer and nearer to the views of the radical petty bourgeoisie, from whom it obtained support in

the elections after the final conquest of equal suffrage. If these voters were not to be lost, account had to be taken of their needs and wishes, especially where these did not conflict with the interests of the workers, that is, chiefly in national questions.

Thus the national sections of the Social Democracy became ever more widely separated, and since 1905 it has been impossible to hold a united Congress, because this would have led to an open rupture, which it was desired to avoid. But even the parliamentary delegation did not retain its unity. It divided into national sections, which, it is true, almost always acted in unison; nevertheless there were repeated misunderstandings, which were even reflected in the voting.

In spite of all that, it would probably not have come to an open rupture had not national separatism also seized hold of the labor union movement. But there its destructive and fatal effects were necessarily evident so clearly and so soon that the open struggle was inevitable. In 1905 the Czechs began to demand that the labor unions also should be organized upon the principle of national autonomy, that is to say, that they should be disintegrated into national branch unions, and they also began to put this principle into practice, not only in Bohemia itself, but throughout Austria, particularly in Vienna, where the number of Czech workers is considerable, especially in certain trades.

But for the labor unions this was a question of life and death It is only necessary to reflect for a moment to understand what it means in such a polyglot country—where in one shop members of three or four nationalities work alongside of each other—for the workers to conduct their struggles on national lines, while the employers forget all national differences and combine internationally. It was necessary for the central bodies of the labor unions to take up the fight, which soon was conducted with the most intense bitterness on both sides and which in time alienated from each other the Czech and the German Socialists.

But not all the Czech comrades approved of this nationalist policy, and still less of the violent disruption of the labor unions. A number of Czech unionists and Socialists protested against this policy, whereupon (in October, 1910) they were expelled from the "Czecho-Slav Social Democracy," the official name of the Czech party. The discontented rallied their forces and, in opposition to the existing "separatist" organization, founded the "centralistic" Czech Social Democracy, which entered the field in defense not only of the international character of the unions, but also of a closer affiliation of the national organizations of the Social Democracy throughout Austria.

Thus the break assumed an open and public character, and the struggle between separatism and centralism became general. It is true that the German comrades sought to convince the Czech separatists that their position would be disapproved of by the entire International, and for that purpose submitted the disputed question to the International Congress of Copenhagen (August 28 to September 3, 1910). But even the almost unanimous decision of this Congress failed to dissuade the Czech separatists from their mistaken course. Immediately afterward took place the above-mentionel expulsion of the centralistically inclined comrades, and since that time the separatists have swung further and further toward the "right," into the nationalistic bourgeois camp, especially since the German section of the Austrian Social Democracy, at its convention at Innsbruck (October 29 to November 2, 1911), recognized the centralistic "Czech Social Democracy."

The "Czecho-Slav Social Democracy" (separatist) is to-day considerably stronger than the "Czech Social Democracy" (centralist), which has only recently entered the arena and which has only just begun, by means of its own press, to exert an influence upon the Czech workers, who hitherto were informed of party events only by the separatistic faction and had been especially prejudiced against the centralists.

But the disorganizing influence of the separatists upon the labor unions must have an increasing tendency to alienate the proletariat from them, for the violent, economic struggles between employers and workers are constantly showing the latter the indispensable necessity for the closest co-operation, the foolishness of division along national lines. Hence, the separatist party will probably become more and more a radical party of the Czech petty bourgeoisie, while the workers will rally around the centralists. To be sure, enormous losses and sacrifices are entailed by the internal struggles. But if they should lead to the closer consolidation of the Austrian Social Democracy, if they finally eliminate national antagonisms within its ranks, no sacrifice will have been too great to have accomplished this purpose.

Woodrow Wilson and Business

By William English Walling.

Just as Wilson's actual position and political philosophy is at present far more suggestive of the class struggle than Roosevelt's, so Roosevelt's economic program is at present much farther advanced on the road to collectivism. Roosevelt not only wants monopoly prices and wages to be fixed by the government, but wishes to give the workers some direct interest in industry through government means: "Ultimately we desire to use the government to aid, as far as can safely be done, the industrial tool users to become in part tool owners, just as our farmers now are." Roosevelt's declaration for government ownership of railroads and the taxation of the unearned increment of land in Alaska *as experiments* are well known. Equally important and less discussed are the plank of the Progressive platform demanding graduated inheritance taxes as a "means of equalizing obligations to government" and Roosevelt's support of income and inheritance taxes "to control the distribution of wealth."

But we must remember that the main point in this collectivistic program, an industrial commission for the control of large corporations, is favored by one of Wilson's leading supporters, Louis Brandeis, and that Wilson has made many statements which suggest that he is perfectly ready to regulate Big Business, provided monopoly is not legalized or recognized—a policy suggested also by the present Commissioner of Corporations. Wilson says he is willing that the big corporations "should beat any competitor by fair means." He claims also that "by setting the little men of America free you are not damaging the giants," and that he merely wishes to restore competition in so far as it is natural. This he made clear in his first keynote speech after his nomination (that of August 7th): "I am not one of those who think that competition can be established by law against the drift of a word-wide economic tendency; neither am I one of those who believe that business done upon a great scale by a single organization—call it corporation, or what you will—is necessarily dangerous to the liberties, even the economic liberties, of a great people like our own, full of intelligence and of indomitable energy. I am not afraid of anything that is normal . . . . Power in the hands of great business men does not make me apprehen-

sive, unless it springs out of advantages which they have not created for themselves . . . . While competition cannot be created by statutory enactment, it can in large measure be revived by changing the laws and forbidding the practices that killed it, and by enacting laws that will give it heart and occasion again. We can arrest and prevent monopoly . . . . Laws must be devised which will prevent this, if laws can be worked out by fair and free counsel that will accomplish that result without destroying or seriously embarrassing any sound or legitimate business undertaking or necessary and wholesome arrangement." Wilson, it will be seen, only favors anti-trust laws provided that no "legitimate" undertaking be damaged. He says distinctly that he is opposed to monopoly but not to Big Business, and that he only believes that competition can be partially restored.

In order to understand his exact position, then, we must see just to what *degree* he expects to restore competition, whether he expects to diminish the proportion of the nation's business done by the big corporations, or only to lower prices to the competitive level. In his speech of February 20th, explaining the new anti-trust law of New Jersey called "The Seven Sisters," he pointed out that these laws only prevented *agreements* which "directly or indirectly preclude free and unrestricted competition" or "the acquisition of stocks and bonds of other corporations," but that the law still permitted "any corporation" to purchase any property, real and personal, necessary for its business." That is, Wilson opposes "trusts" like the Standard Oil Company, but not corporations like the Steel Corporation, unless they follow policies he disapproves. He opposes holding companies like that of the Southern Pacific, but he has no remedy against interlocking directorates, which is the newer and far more important device.

Indeed, he states definitely that Big Business as distinct from monopoly *cannot* be controlled, because if this is attempted Big Business "must capture the government in order not to be restrained too much by it." In other words, he absolutely surrenders government to Big Business for fear that in a struggle between the two *at the present time* conditions would be worse than they are. And it is for the same reason, no doubt, that he says, "I do not want any man in America to fix prices and to fix wages; I want them to fix themselves." But as Wilson is vigorously attacking "the masters of the government of the United States" he is perfectly aware that these consist even more of big corporations than they do of 'trusts, holding companies, or concerns which are based exclusively or even chiefly on agreements to re-

strict competition." So that the fight which he has started, since it is already a real fight, as I have shown, and not a mock one as in the case of Roosevelt, is bound to go on from "monopolies" to Big Business. The industrial commission favored by Brandeis (and Roosevelt) will be appointed, and already under the guise of "regulating competition" certain principles have been laid down which are to apply to prices, namely, that retailers shall not be controlled and that prices shall be the same in different localities, allowing only for the cost of transportation. Wilson's "Seven Sisters" mean a real fight not only against monopolies, but against *all* Big Business, because there is some element of monopoly in them all, and Wilson, like La Follette, is perfectly aware of just what this fight means.

When Wilson declares that he will not be chiefly guided in his policies by the big magnates, we may, I think, believe him. His "regulation of competition" really contains an *effective policy* for an industrial commission to begin its work with, which is a far better method than appointing the commission first and leaving the price policy altogether for a later and entirely unsettled treatment. He believes that this policy will immensely decrease the value and earning capacity of the trusts, that is, it is to be a fight for blood. La Follette claims that the trusts will lose several billion dollars. In so far as the big corporations represent efficiency and economy, they will remain, even after this loss, but in so far as they represent special financial control of the market, this is to be abolished, and their earnings are to be correspondingly diminished. Moreover, Wilson accuses the Steel Trust not only of monopoly but of having an imperfect organization, of having too much debt, and of having bought up inefficient plants. The only lasting effect, then, of Wilson's policy will be, not to abolish the big corporations, but to force them *to become more efficient* and more formidable. But in the meanwhile we have an invaluable precedent for Socialists in the practical confiscation of vested interests amounting to billions of dollars, a complete reversal of the Roosevelt policy, as declared in his message of January 31, 1908: "When once inflated capitalization has gone upon the market and has become fixed in value its existence must be recognized . . . . The usual result of such inflation is therefore to impose upon the public an unnecessary but everlasting tax."

We can rest assured, then, that "the regulation of monopoly" will be all the more necessary from the small capitalist standpoint after "the regulation of competition" will have reached the

natural limit I have mentioned. Not only will Wilson be forced to follow along the lines suggested, but government ownership itself is likely to be advocated, or else some thorough-going policy of capitalistic government control, which amounts to the same thing as ownership by a capitalistic government. Already Bryan has favored government ownership of railroads from time to time, and now Governor Foss and the Hearst newspapers and Brandeis and other prominent Democrats are also favoring it. Moreover, the physical valuation of railroads which is now going on, if it is used as the basis for fixing railway rates and wages, will reduce the earning power of the railroads along the same lines as Wilson proposes to follow against the trusts, and may even bring the railroads to favor nationalization before their values fall any further. Of course, the price to be paid for the roads would be such as to prevent any further reduction of rates, etc., for many years, and above all the policy of the government owned roads after they are nationalized may be very little better from the labor point of view than it is to-day. It is not the city population that will be favored in rates, not the ultimate consumer, but the small producer. Wages will be very little above the current rates unless there is danger of a railroad strike; in that case wages may be made higher, but at the same time all the coercive powers of government will be used even by the most "radical" administration to curtail the right of strike and to keep wages down. Foss, Brandeis and Hearst are well known to the working people as favoring either compulsory arbitration, compulsory incorporation, or similar measures. Moreover, the profits that now come directly to individual capitalists will then go to the capitalist class as a whole through a government that will represent "the whole system of business." The small producers have many needs: better roads, reforestation, irrigation, reclamation, canals, etc., etc. Moreover, they are paying more direct taxes than they care to pay and the profits of the railroads could be used to lessen these or to prevent their increase. The policy of the German Socialist party demands, on the contrary, that the profits of government enterprises shall go either to decrease indirect taxes or for the purposes of social reform. And ultimately even these latter government ownership policies may be accepted by collectivist capitalism in such a way as to no whit decrease the profits of capital or menace its dominating position.

And, finally, under nationalization the control of the civil service in corporations, the purchase of supplies, the letting out of contracts, the purchase of land and the benefit of the rise of

the unearned increment in the neighborhood of the railroads, would fall into the power of the controlling governmental board, just as it is now in the power of the directors of the private corporations. Even the issuing of bonds for government enterprises might prove almost as profitable to the private bankers as it does to-day, as we can see in several European countries.

With the coming of Democratic Progressivism into power we have, then, a very considerable strengthening of the State Capitalist tendencies. Already Wilson has taken a firm stand in New Jersey, not only against the monopolies, but against the monopoly element in all Big Business. As he proposes to use the tariff against the trusts in order to lower prices, he will again strike not only Big Business, but all the small businesses that have taken shelter behind it. The fact that he may not at first go very far in the direction of a lower tariff makes no difference. He will be driven along this line, not only because the smallest capitalists, as middlemen and consumers, expect it, but because many of the larger ones want cheaper materials for unfinished product, opportunities for new foreign markets through a reciprocal lowering of the tariff and a lower cost of living in order that they may decrease wages or at least hold them where they are,—to say nothing of the shipping and importing interests who want to see the increase of international trade. Though Wilson assumes at the present time only an anti-trust attitude, he will soon be forced by the trust, the tariff, and the money situations, to assume a more or less hostile position to the very would-be competitors of the trusts (not multi-millionaires, but mere millionaires), who are his chief supporters in his present anti-monopoly policy.

It will not do to call these individuals and corporations small capitalists, since to-day they usually represent millions of dollars at least. They are the middle group among the capitalists. The Democratic Progressives, like the Republican Progressives, will be forced more and more to rely, not upon the middle group of capitalists who still hope to compete with the trusts, but upon the small capitalists whose interests will be still more effectively served by the regulation of monopoly by an industrial commission than by "the regulation of competition." And these small capitalists, farmers, retailers, etc., when in complete control, will make a far more radically anti-plutocratic progressive movement in both Republican and Democratic groups than we see to-day. In alliance with another conservative progressive class, for example, the Railroad Brotherhoods, together with those of the professional class and salaried employes, who are still for the most part governed by small capitalist ambitions, they constitute an overwhelming majority of the voting population—and perhaps a bare majority even of the inhabitants of the country, if we include skilled labor in that group among the progressives.

With this political support and anti-plutocratic policy the movement either towards an efficient government control or government ownership of the trusts will be irresistible, and along with it will go all the other radical reform policies now under discussion—especially vast governmental expenditures for the improvement of the productive efficiency of the greatest of all resources, the working class. The large capitalists will at first resist this program. But just as a few of them have already been converted to the wisdom even of the most radical part of Wilson's and Roosevelt's programs, so many of them will ultimately see the wisdom of consolidating the whole of the capitalist class politically, including the small capitalists, and of guaranteeing to the latter that all the resources of government shall be used as far as possible to see that large capital shall receive returns only in proportion to the amount and not in proportion to the concentration of its wealth.

Whether the capitalist class will be completely consolidated before Socialism accumulates the power to overthrow it, is an open question, but the tendency towards such a complete consolidation gives us the key to the probable development of capitalism from the present time until it reaches its culmination. And this tendency towards consolidation not only makes possible but positively requires that State Socialist policy toward which both Roosevelt and Wilson have been moving with such remarkable rapidity within the brief period of a single year.

Social-Economic Classes in the United States

By Isaac Halevy.

III (Concluded)

The results of the preceding statistical analysis of the relative numerical strength of the industrial wage-working proletariat, compared with other classes of the self-supporting population, can be summed up as follows:

1. The industrial wage-working proletariat forms but a minority of the self-supporting population of the United States.
2. For a generation to come it is likely to remain such a minority.
3. Only in a minority of the states does it form a majority.
4. For some time to come it will form a minority in the majority of the states.
5. It forms a majority of the urban population.
6. Yet, even in some of those states or parts of states where it forms a majority of the whole population, it may be reduced to a minority of the voting population by the presence of a large proportion of unnaturalized aliens, or by the disfranchisement of the Negro.
7. As far as can be foreseen, there is no prospect for the industrial wage-working class to become a majority in two-thirds of the states required for amending the Constitution of the United States.

We assume in this discussion that the political strength of the industrial wage-working class is proportional to its voting strength. This is true, however, only with regard to propositions submitted to a referendum of the voters. In all other matters it would be true under a system of proportional representation. Under the prevailing English and American system of plurality elections, or under the systems of majority rule adopted in some countries of continental Europe, the representation of a minority party always falls far short of its proportionate share measured by its vote. A striking illustration of this fact was furnished by the last election, when the Progressive party with more than 4,000,000 votes, representing nearly thirty per cent. of the electorate, carried but sixteen congressional districts in a four-cornered contest, and the Republican party, with nearly as many popular votes, won only eight votes in the electoral college. These figures are suggestive as a forecast of the political prospects of a party of the wage-working class grown to the proportions of the Progressive or Republican party of the present day.

Not until the evolution of capitalism in agriculture has eliminated the working farmer (who cultivates his land with his own labor) can the wage-working proletariat become a majority in two-thirds of the states.

There is no statistical foundation for a scientific forecast of the time when such a revolutionary change in American agriculture will have been accomplished,—assuming for the sake of the argument that it is inevitable. The recent development of agricultural co-operation in some European countries exhibits a deviating tendency—be it only temporary—of evolution toward collectivism.

The policy of the organized Socialist movement must take account of these facts, if "Socialism in practice" is to be based upon the theory of the class struggle. Of course, the Christian Socialist who derives his Socialism from the Sermon on the Mount, or the idealistic Socialist who regards Socialism as the realization of the principles of social justice, may ignore the relative proportions of social classes. He may even deny the very existence of classes and appeal on broad humanitarian grounds to all good citizens in every walk of life.

What is the lesson of statistics to the materialistic Socialist?

I. If the Socialist party is to be an uncompromising class party of the wage-working proletariat, it will for a generation to come (and probably longer) remain a minority party, powerless to attain any of its ultimate aims or immediate demands by its own representation against the united opposition of all other social classes (or groups, if you prefer).

To be sure, the economic interests of other classes are divided, and this diversity of interests is reflected in political party divisions. But it is generally accepted by American Socialists that the political victory of a Socialist plurality which is uncompromising in the division of offices, will force all other parties to fuse against the common enemy. An anti-fusion Socialist party can therefore build only upon a majority of the voters.

Should it eventually gain control of a few state legislatures, its Socialist legislation can be nullified by non-Socialist federal judges appointed by a non-Socialist President with the advice and consent of a non-Socialist Senate.

"Political action" under such conditions is in effect nothing but a method of political sabotage, which may intimidate the political masters into conceding such reforms as they may deem expedient, in order to hold the non-Socialist voters together. In other words, the planks of the Socialist platform can be en-

acted into laws only in so far as they appeal to non-Socialists. "Independent political action" thus resolves itself into a latent form of co-operation with non-Socialist parties.

The purely educational value of election campaigns need not be considered here; the time is long past in the history of Socialist parties when the election of Socialist representatives to parliament was valued merely for the opportunity offered them to address the people over the heads of their colleagues.

II. Those Socialists who believe in a "social revolution" (in the catastrophic or millenarian sense of the term) and realize the impossibility to accomplish it within the life-time of the present generation by political action along strictly proletarian class lines, inevitably turn their attention to other methods by which a minority might gain its ends. This accounts for the recent spread of Revolutionary Syndicalism among members of the Socialist party in the United States. A general strike of all transportation workers and coal miners must paralyze all industrial activity. It is expected by the advocates of the general strike that it can force the capitalist minority to surrender the control of industry to the wage-working minority. Whether these expectations are justified or not, must for the present remain a matter of speculation. It is obvious, however, that if the aims of Socialism are to be accomplished by the action of the wage-working class alone, unaided by other social groups, Revolutionary Syndicalism holds out to its followers the promise of success within a reasonable time, whereas the orthodox program of political action renders the political outlook for the immediate future utterly hopeless.

III. There are still other Socialists who also cling to the old faith in a "social revolution," but it must be an orderly revolution, "in which all scholarly, refined, and conservative persons might unhesitatingly take part" (to borrow a definition from the Twentieth Century Tory historian of the American Revolution, Mr. Sydney George Fisher). The "social revolution" must be a "revolution" at the ballot-box. A successful "revolution" of this kind requires a majority of the voters. Realizing that the industrial wage-working class alone must for a long time remain in the minority, these Socialists seek the support of other social classes, including property-owners. The spokesman of the opportunist element at the last national convention, Mr. A. M. Simons,* stated unequivocally that in his opinion, the Socialist party can succeed only when it gains the support of the farmers.

* Not being affiliated with any Socialist party, the writer has no title to the use of the party label "comrade" and must perforce content himself with ordinary forms of courtesy current among the laity.

In order to win over to its side the non-proletarian and transitional classes of the American people, the Socialist party will have to adapt its platform and principles to the views and interests of these classes. An exhibition of its adaptability was given at the Indianapolis convention. With an ingenuity which would do credit to the United States Supreme Court, the platform applied the "rule of reason" to the time-honored Socialist definition of the "working class."

In this manner the Socialist party will remain uncompromising in the partition of elective offices, at the cost of compromising its principles. This has been the usual course pursued by all political parties in the United States.

IV. There is another kind of political compromise, occasionally practiced in one form or another by the Socialist parties of continental Europe, though piously condemned by them in theory: it is fusion on candidates at elections, such as the deal between the Socialist and the Liberal party at the recent election for the Belgian parliament.

Each party retains its political identity; no party is required to trim its principles in obedience to political expediency. The effect of this form of "political trading" is only that two or more minority parties by combining become a majority and apportion among themselves the places on the ticket. In Switzerland they call it "voluntary proportional representation." It is understood in advance that each successful candidate will represent his own party only and will be accountable to it alone.

In the United States this form of political compromise is tabooed by the opportunists and by the orthodox Socialists alike. It is clear, however, that, were it allowed, the Socialist party could dispense with trimming the principles of International Socialism to suit the farmers, the anti-Chinese and anti-Japanese fanatics of the Pacific Coast, the Negro-haters of the South, and the reactionaries of the A. F. of L., while at the same time it would be assured of its due share of representation in Congress, in the state legislatures, and in the municipal administration. Moreover, such fusion arrangements with the political parties of the transitional social groups would offer a direct method of influencing legislation, which would exert much greater pressure upon those parties than the menace of the growing Socialist vote.

The Battling Miners of West Virginia

By Edward H. Kintzer.

Nothing can now prevent the battling miners of West Virginia from winning the great strike, except over-confidence of the organized workers of the United States. Lack of confidence need not be taken into consideration. The strikers have a great fund of confidence. They are now as confident of winning as they were the day they began the strike—last May, when the pleasant summer sun unfolded the beauties of the hills of the richest state (in minerals) in the Union—and their hopes are now again ascending to great heights of expectancy, after a hard winter in tents on the cruel hills, driven by wind and snow.

The tables are turned. Now the coal barons are shivering in their palaces—shaking in fear of the awakening working class. They tremble at the impressive manifestation of the economic power of organized labor's hosts; they are quivering in fear of the publicity that is being given this bloody strike, in spite of their efforts to prevent information from filtering through the military lines. They are becoming fearful of public opinion.

On several occasions the Supreme Court of Appeals has been called upon by its masters—the coal barons—to assassinate the state and federal constitutions. Article III, Sec. 12, of the state constitution expressly provides, in part: "*The military shall be subordinate to the civil power; and no citizen, unless engaged in the military service of the state, shall be tried or punished by any military court, for any offense that is cognizable by the civil courts of the state.*" Despite this the highest court in the state bowed to the yoke of capitalism by condoning the work of the military court. They sustained the military court's sentence of strikers Nance and May for an alleged act they were charged with having committed nine days prior to the creation of the military court, before martial law had been declared. These comrades were sentenced to four years imprisonment. Had they been tried by civil authority they might have received the maximum penalty of one year imprisonment.

"Mother" Jones, C. H. Boswell, Charles Batley and Paul Paulsen, leaders in the strike, were arrested outside of the military zone, charged with "inciting to riot" and "being accessories

before the fact" of the murder of a coal company clerk during a battle between the mine guards and the miners, early in February. Let us pause long enough to inject the question: Who are accessories before the fact of the killing of fourteen miners by machine gun fire? Who are the accessories before the fact of the shooting to death of one striker in his tent while in the act of carrying his child from her sleeping cot into a dug-out in the tent, to prevent her being killed in the hail of bullets?

Our brave comrades have been confined in the military prison for several weeks, while Comrade Harold W. Houston, attorney for the strikers, has been fighting in the courts for the constitutional right of trial by a jury, which has been denied; and at the time of this writing the military court has begun the trial of the accused. The state of feeling and the contempt in which this court is held by the strikers and leaders is exemplified in the defiant notice in the Socialist press, issued by Attorney Houston, which reads as follows:

"*Should you be summoned before the military commission as a witness, refuse to answer questions. It has no authority to try so-called offenders against the law or to compel witnesses to testify before it. Be true to your class and your comrades by refusing to recognize the legality of the commission. Your cases will be looked after in the civil courts.*"

All through the rapidly shifting scenes of the drama in America's most bitterly fought coal strike, there is a note of defiance, confidence and Socialist consciousness, that puts West Virginia's miners to the forefront of the Revolution. They are certain of success, sure of their ground, and have their faces toward the rising sun of victory.

But it is outside of the theatre of action, off the boards of this drama, where the battle must be fought. The weapons we must use are publicity, protest and agitation.

Let not the cold winter nights of our comrades, fellow-workers, and their wives and children in the tents on the hillsides of West Virginia, with all its attending misery, have been suffered in vain! Let not the heroes of West Virginia, revolutionists in a social cause, have their spirits crushed in defeat! They are fighting the battle of our class. Let us cheer them; let us sustain them; and let us inscribe high upon our banners a dedication to the cause of these battling miners, dead and alive.

Clarksburg, W. Va.

The Lawrence Strike and the Literacy Test

By JAMES MONTGOMERY.

By Taft's veto of Senate Bill 3175, and the failure of the House to pass the bill "the objections of the President to the contrary notwithstanding," consideration of the literacy test for the restriction of immigration is left to an administration solidly Democratic. The advocates of the literacy test are numerically strong in the new Congress. Coincidently, therefore, with the convening of the regular session the Burnett Bill will very likely be re-introduced.

The same reasons for restriction will be brought forward during the Sixty-third Congress that were advanced during the Sixty-second. Broadly speaking, the restrictionists based their arguments on the following allegations:

1. There is an oversupply of unskilled (common) laborers in the industrial centers of the United States. An overwhelming percentage of them come from southern and southeastern Europe. They are largely illiterate. Therefore, the literacy test will relieve the congestion.

2. Undesirable aliens should not be admitted. Aliens unable to understand the spirit and appreciate the advantage of American institutions and incapable of acquiring American habits of thought and assimilating the American spirit of government, are undesirable. Immigrants from southern and southeastern Europe, owing to their heredity, environment, and mentality, are unable or unwilling to understand or appreciate the spirit and advantages of American institutions, and for the same reasons are incapable of acquiring American habits of thought and of properly estimating the spirit of our government. They are also largely illiterate. Therefore, the literacy test will keep them out.

Theodore Roosevelt coined the term "undesirable." Since then it has been used by politicians and pseudo-statesmen to indicate those who have but little admiration for the present social order. The expression automatically attached itself to the consideration of the immigration bill. During the initial discussions the "undesirables" included a heterogeneous mass of aliens, from illiterates to white slavers. But after the Lawrence

strike the expression acquired a definite meaning in the terminology of the immigration question.

Senator Simmons offered the literacy test amendment to the original Senate bill. The uprising at Lawrence was then the subject of current comment. In advocating the amendment, Simmons dealt principally with the congestion of unskilled labor in the industrial centers, taking the position of the American Federation of Labor. He alluded, nevertheless, to an "imminent danger to our institutions which challenges the attention of all thoughtful men." According to him, this "political and social aspect" to the question should receive the most careful consideration, although for the present, the time and patience of the Senate precluded it. So what was specifically meant by this "danger to our institutions" through the invading hordes of aliens still remained nebulous. The Lawrence strike crystallized the matter and gave a definite meaning to the "undesirable" alien.

That strike sent a tremor through the capitalist class. It also set the nerves of their political puppets at Washington aquivering. Sudden, swift, defiant, it shattered every precedent on the field of industrial warfare. It fought the class war with modern batteries, and deployed the proletarian army according to new tactics. This unorganized host, a polyglot mass speaking eighteen languages, with racial, religious and political prejudices, stood shoulder to shoulder, resisting the enginery of capitalism. Attacked in the flank by the classic craft union of the textile industry, assailed by the religious hierarchy that is the international foe of international Socialism, overwhelmed by the police power of the municipality, restricted by the judiciary, confronted with the State militia—through it all, aggressive and undaunted, the unskilled textile workers, nearly fifty per-cent. of whom are illiterate, not only won their battle against a reduction of wages, but secured substantial increases over the rate prevailing at the inception of the strike.

The industrial autocracy of the capitalist is the institution of institutions in the United States. A man who cannot "appreciate the spirit" of this institution is lacking in the mentality that goes to make up an American citizen. On this industrial autocracy the capitalist system depends. As to wages, hours of labor, and other conditions of employment, the capitalist is the monarch, and the privileges and powers of his monarchy must be defended. Any trimming of this autocratic power, any defiance of his supremacy in the industries, is fraught with

danger to the institution itself. Hence the refusal to recognize the union, and all that would follow from such recognition. With individual grievances the capitalist will deal, but not with mass demands.

The fear that this strike caused among their masters was reflected by the literary exponents of the industrial autocrats. Relative to the organization that conducted the strike, a writer in the staid *Atlantic Monthly* said: "It makes no concealment of its nature and object. Its aim is the overthrow of the existing social order, the taking possession by labor of all the means of production, and the driving out of the capitalist class." According to this writer there was no evasion, no subterfuge, no dissembling as to the end to be attained or the methods of obtaining it. This intellectual expression of the industrial danger was similarly interpreted editorially by the New York *Sun:*

> Our current immigration raises the most serious problems for governmental solution. The sudden irruption of the gaunt figure of syndicalism in our labor troubles is the most ominous sign of our times. We have had strikes aplenty in the past. But the first considerable development of an actually revolutionary spirit comes to-day at Lawrence among the un-American immigrants from southern Europe. These immigrants are one-half illiterate. The time has come when some restrictive plan must be devised and applied. The question has passed beyond the range of purely economic discussion and entered a field wherein all Americans must unite to grapple with a serious threat against the solidarity of the nation.

These two excerpts reflect the general tone of the bourgeois press at the time of the Lawrence strike. There had been strikes and strikes. But now here arose a thing that was "gaunt" and "revolutionary."

A few weeks later the Senate had under consideration the Simmons amendment providing for the literacy test. Senator Root had contributed but little to the discussion. He will sit in his seat day after day, a half-scornful smile playing over his face, while the billows of oratory roll back and forth across the Senate Chamber. Then he will rise to "submit a few remarks on the pending question." In an impromptu speech, Root speaks with hesitancy and hitches along from sentence to sentence; but he has the faculty of filtering the mass of rhetorical verbiage that engulfs the Senate, and can present in tabloid form the crux of the subject. He favored the literacy test. True, it would not keep out the criminals and anarchists; it was not intended so to do. True, it would exclude many individuals who might be a benefit to the country. That was immaterial. "The thing to be considered is, Will such a test be beneficial to the

people of the United States?". It was admitted that the coming of the unskilled aliens tended to break down the American standard of wages. However great that menace might be, it was of small interest when compared with "one other consideration of serious importance." He then referred to the coal strike during the Roosevelt era, when the miners in Pennsylvania stopped the supply of anthracite. "The stoppage of that coal supply to keep going the manufactories was brought about by a *vote* of the coal miners of Pennsylvania." He then mentioned the strike in England. There two million workingmen were thrown out of employment and the industries of England were paralyzed by a "vote" of the laborers in the coal mines.

As to strikes, Senator Root said he did not intend to touch even remotely on their being right or wrong. Then he imperiously shook the index finger of his right hand and said: "It may even be a *close and doubtful question* as to whether the men who mine the coal or the men who work in any of the other great basic industries upon which our great structure of production and commerce is built up *should vote to stop.*" But that grave question was not at present under discussion. Then, with the facts of the Pennsylvania and English coal strikes marshaled, and the incidents of the Lawrence strike fresh in his mind, Senator Root in an illuminating sentence focused attention on the menace of the mass strike: "We do not have to wait now, sir, for men to be naturalized and accorded the suffrage before they can exercise a potent influence upon the most vital concerns of the whole people."

The "potent influence" was the revolutionary spirit of solidarity that wrested those concessions from the textile barons of New England, and forced them to treat with their employes as a mass. This invasion of the time-honored rights of the industrial oligarchs by the revolutionary aberrations of a collection of ignorant aliens must be checked, and Senator Root advocated the literacy test as the best means to check it. The Senator imagined that denying admission to those unable to read would smother the spirit of insurrection and render breaches of the industrial peace less frequent. More than that. If there were to be a vote taken on the question of striking, he wanted the voters to be "intelligent" citizens. "It is of vital importance to the people of the United States," he continued, "that the men who are to consider this question of striking, the men who are to vote whether they will go on to furnish or will cease to furnish the supplies necessary to the continuance of our industries

at large, surely it is of vital importance that the men who are to cast that vote shall be men instructed, men who are able to read, men who are able to get into touch with the sentiments of American life, with the principles of American institutions."

The statistical summary of the Report of the Immigration Commission states that fifty per cent. of the men in the basic industries (iron and steel, coal, textiles) are unskilled laborers from southern and southeastern Europe, largely illiterate. At this point Senator Root held the volume in his left hand, significantly read the passage, and with an emotional quiver in his voice exclaimed:

> And to-morrow, sir, the question whether the workers in our mills shall continue to have employment, the question whether our furnace fires shall continue alive, whether the ordinary necessities of life shall be cut off, is liable to be determined by a vote of the miners, more than 50 per cent of whom may be unable to read and write. In conclusion I say that unless we put some check on this immigration, we are feeding into the body of men who are engaged in these basic industries, *the continuance of which is necessary for all other industries,* a continual stream of men whose minds are closed to the principles and sentiments of American institutions and our American civilization.

For this reason, Senator Root gave his support to the literacy test.

Of course, Elihu Root considers "our" institutions much as the slave-holding oligarchy considered the institutions of ante-bellum days. Every institution of Dixie depended on chattel slavery. Any sapping of its prerogatives was a sapping of "our" institutions. Every institution in the United States of to-day depends on industrial slavery. Any sapping of its prerogatives is a sapping of "our" institutions. Here a strange anomaly presents itself. The slave masters were fearful of the spread of literacy among the slaves. With the ability to read would come the capacity to assimilate the revolutionary literature of the abolitionists, and the consequent spread of the insurrectionary spirit of revolt. Therefore many legislatures of the Southern States made it a penal offense to teach a slave to read. The capitalist autocrats of the twentieth century, of whom Senator Root is the parliamentary spokesman, would perpetuate industrial slavery, not, as did the slave masters of a generation ago, by making illiteracy compulsory, but by making literacy compulsory. To perpetuate chattel slavery, the slave barons refused to permit their slaves to be taught to read. To perpetuate industrial slavery the capitalist barons insist on having their slaves taught to read. With the attainment of literacy they will be able to appreciate the beauties of the wage-

labor system, and will rebel less vigorously against being bought and sold as commodities in the markets of the world.

Scenting imminent danger from the million Socialist votes on the political field, already feeling the keen edge of the mass strike of the unskilled workers on the economic field, capitalist statesmen are between the upper and nether millstones of social revolution.

The coal industry, the iron and steel industry, the textile industry—these are the "basic" industries. Understanding the fundamentals of Socialism, animated with the spirit of revolutionary solidarity, equipped with the tactics of the industrial union and the mass strike, supplemented with the ballot intelligently used, a million men and women in the *basic industries* would hold capitalist society in the hollow of their hands. Elihu Root is right. *"We do not have to wait now for men to be naturalized and accorded the suffrage before they can exercise a potent influence upon the most vital concerns of the whole people."*

The Lawrence strike showed that the revolutionary spirit is latent among the unskilled workers. The Lawrence strike showed that the unskilled workers know the irresistible power of solidarity. Is it an insuperable task to cement this revolutionary spirit and this economic solidarity with the annealing force of the Socialist Idea?

The Secret

By Louise W. Kneeland.

"A pearl! A pearl!" the critics cry,
As close they gather round it.
"A bit of truth, for which we sigh—
Wherever has he found it!"

They look in Nature, look in Art,
But no whit wiser growing,
At last they look into his heart—
What starts their tears to flowing?

"Damaged Goods"

By ANDRE TRIDON.

The gentlemen of the *Medical Review of Reviews* deserve much credit for enabling New York theatregoers to witness Brieux's play, "Damaged Goods." It is well that any play should be produced regardless of the subject it treats, so long as there is some one willing to present it and some one willing to attend the performance of it. It should be time enough to forbid a theatrical performance when the sentiment of the community at large seems to favor such a measure.

We are undoubtedly approaching a state of civilization in which we shall be ashamed to let incompetent municipal officers or members of the police force decide in advance what plays we may or may not see. That we have not quite reached that stage yet is evidenced by the restrictions which the producers of Damaged Goods have had to place on the sale of tickets and on the conditions of attendance.

While insistence on the fact that tickets for the entertainment are difficult to secure may only be a clever device for arousing the curiosity of those fond of exclusive affairs, repeated announcements that only a picked audience of reformers, sociologists and professional men (the very class whom that production cannot benefit) would be admitted within the sacred precincts proves that the organizers heard distant rumblings of Puritan indignation.

The production of Damaged Goods is therefore a most valuable experiment. The *Medical Review of Reviews* is taking the pulse of dying New Englandism. Sociologically or artistically, however, the production of Brieux's play will be barren of results.

Let us recall the subject of Damaged Goods:

A nondescript young man called George, is being informed by a physician who is designated simply as the "Doctor" that he has contracted syphilis; which is rather awkward, as George is engaged to marry shortly a young person called Henriette. The Doctor apprises George of the fearful consequences intercourse with Henriette would have for her and her offspring.

In the second act George, who postponed the date of his wedding for only six months, has become the father of a child

whose condition confirms the Doctor's gloomiest prophecies. The truth has to be spoken out when the Doctor, to protect the nurse from contagion, orders that the child be henceforth fed on the bottle even at the risk of its life. The happy home is broken up. George and Henriette are estranged.

In the third act Henriette's father asks the Doctor to help the young woman to secure a divorce by testifying to George's diseased condition. The Doctor refuses for a good many unanswerable reasons, and then invites the irate father to remain in his office while he receives several patients venereally infected. The various sufferers, a mournful procession, relate the history of their cases; the angry father subsides and assumes a broader view of the general peril.

As a play this is loose jointed, artificial and platitudinous The characters are mere lay figures, puppets whose strings are pulled by the author in full view of the audience, and whom we could prompt should the phonographic device in their sawdust-filled abdomen get out of order. We know those people never lived before the curtain went up and will give up their fidgety semblance of vitality when the final curtain is rung down. And somehow we don't care if they do. The whole thing is about as attractive as Marx's Capital would be if dramatized by our national bore, Henry James.

It is a pretty good exposé of the venereal problem, but it is neither scientific enough nor artistic enough to satisfy either a scientist or an esthete. It is an unholy cross between a tract and a morality play. Unfortunately a play is not merely the dialogued description of something unpleasant happening to a few nobodies, else the murder and accident column of any yellow would supply playwrights with inexhaustible material. A play is primarily the vizualization of the crucial stage in an interesting psychological development. The psychology of Brieux's characters is farcically simple. George, threatened with exposure, expresses naively his fear of it; Henriette is simply repelled by the thought of the illicit relation in which her husband was infected; grandmother grieves over the child's fate; Henriette's father would like to shoot George. . . . . You may trust that family always to say or do the most obvious thing that could be said or done under the circumstances.

They are not swayed by their inner life, but by the necessities of the thesis to be expounded. But this play serves a practical purpose. The Winged Victory or the Nine Symphonies serve no practical purpose whatever, but they are artistically

good. And now I would even cast grave doubts upon the usefulness of such a play as Damaged Goods.

Feelings expressed on the stage find no response in an audience, however cultured, unless the majority of the audience virtually agree with the feelings expressed. This is why the dramatic art is perhaps the least cosmopolitan of arts. Matrimonial complications arising in a polyandrous Tibetan household could hardly move us, except as their ludicrous side was presented to us. When a Japanese warrior slashes his abdomen and dies from peritonitis because his beloved Emperor passed away, our only feeling is one of surprise.

Attempts at modifying the public's state of mind by means of propaganda plays are doomed to failure. France's attitude to the venereal peril was not influenced by the production of Damaged Goods eleven years ago; it had been already so deeply influenced by other factors that the production of Damaged Goods was a possibility eleven years ago. Damaged Goods did not open anybody's eyes to the import of the venereal peril; but those whose eyes had been opened enjoyed witnessing the play. A play is the result of psychological factors; it is not a factor.

For many years several scientific bodies in this country have been trying hard to break up the conspiracy of silence which enables venereal diseases to decimate the race. Propagandists with a high professional standing have been enlightening a public made up of almost every class of the population. Almost every progressive group in the land from the Society for Moral Prophylaxis to Mrs. Belmont's Suffrage organization, has invited scientists to reveal to its members the terrible physical danger which "decency" had declared taboo as a topic for conversation. This is the only propaganda likely to bear fruit. A dramatist can hardly hope to convert a physician; an actor is not the proper person to sway a Puritan. The play with a purpose is generally a purposeless piece of inartistic twaddle, though there have been some noble exceptions.