

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

In 1849, Thiers, as member of the Commission on Instruction in Elementary Schools, said: "I believe in making the influence of the clergy general, because I count upon it to spread that healthy philosophy which teaches man that he is here to suffer, and not that other philosophy which in direct opposition says to him: enjoy!"

When bourgeoisdom fought against the nobility which was supported by the clergy, it planted the banner of free investigation and atheism. Scarcely had it attained its aim before it changed its tone and attitude; and to-day we see it endeavoring to uphold its economic and political supremacy by religion. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it merrily attacked the remnant of heathenism and glorified the flesh and its passions, this "horror" in the eyes of Christian morality.

To-day, on the other hand, when it is almost suffocated by wealth and pleasures of all kind, it does not care to know anything of the teachings of its thinkers, of Rabelais and Diderot, Lessing and Goethe, but preaches the doctrines of abstinence to the wage workers. Capitalist morality, a pitiable copy of Christian morality, curses the flesh of the worker by a solemn ban; its ideal consists in reducing the needs of the producer (i. e. of the

real producer) to the lowest minimum, to smother his pleasures and his passions, and to condemn him to play the part of a machine out of which work is exploited *ad libitum*, without rest and without thanks.

To the revolutionary Socialists, therefore, is assigned the task of again taking up the fight which the philosophers and the satirists of bourgeoisdom once fought. The revolutionary Socialists have to mount to the assault against the morality and social teachings of capitalism and eradicate prejudice from the brains of the class which is summoned to action; prejudice, the seeds of which have been sown by the ruling class. It is for the revolutionary Socialists, in opposition to all hypocritical moralists, to proclaim that the earth will cease to be a valley of tears for the workers, that in the Co-operative Commonwealth which we shall build up, human passions will have free play, since all, as Descartes has already said, are by nature good, "we have merely to avoid their false and excessive use." This will be accomplished by the free counterplay of the passions and the harmonious development of the human organism, for, says Dr. Bedloe: "Only when a race has attained the maximum of its physical development, does it also attain the highest degree of moral strength and energy."¹ This was also the opinion of the great naturalist, Charles Darwin.²

¹ Memoirs of Anthropopolitical Society.

² Descent of Man.

THE RIGHT TO BE LAZY.

(A refutation of "THE RIGHT TO WORK" of 1848.)

CHAPTER I.

A PERNICIOUS DOGMA.

A strange mania governs the working class of all countries in which capitalist civilization rules, a mania that results in the individual and collective misery that prevails in modern society. This is the love of work, the furious mania for work, extending to the exhaustion of the individual and his descendants. The parsons, the political economists, and the moralists, instead of contending against this mental aberration, have canonized work. Blind and limited human beings, they have wished to be wiser than their God; weak and unworthy creatures, they have sought to honor what their God has damned.

I who make no boast of being either Christian, economist or moralist, I appeal from their declaration to that of their God; from the precepts of their religious, economic or free thinker's morality to the horrible consequences of work in capitalist society.

In capitalist society, work is the cause of mental deterioration and physical deformity. Compare the full-blooded steeds in the stables of a Rothschild or a Vanderbilt, served by a whole flock of stable boys, with the heavy beasts of Normandy or Pomerania that must plow

the land, pull the fertilizing wagons, and drag in the harvest. Contemplate the wild savage, before missionaries of commerce and the traveling salesman for articles of faith have yet corrupted him with "Christianity," syphilis, and the dogma of work, and then compare our strained machine slaves with him.¹

If we wish to find a trace of the primitive beauty of man in our civilized Europe, it is necessary to go to the nations in which politico-economic prejudice has not yet eradicated the hatred of work. Spain, which, to be sure is now degenerating, may yet be proud of possessing fewer factories than we have prisons and barracks; and the eye of the artist tarries admiringly upon the daring,

¹ European scientists are often much amazed at the physical beauty and proud bearing of the members of the primitive races who are as yet unpolluted by the "poisoned beauty of civilization," to speak in the language of the poet.

Lord George Campbell writes of the aborigines of the Australian islands: No race in the world, is more striking at first sight. Their bronze or copper-colored, shining skin; their curly, golden hair; their beautiful and graceful figures—in a word their whole personality presents a new and brilliant specimen of the genus man; their physical appearance gives the impression of a race superior to ours."

With not a little admiration, did the old Romans, a Cæsar and Tacitus, regard the Germans of the communist tribes who penetrated into the Roman Empire. Like Tacitus, Salvianus, "Teacher of the Bishops," held the barbarians up as an example to the Christian and to the civilized world of the fifth century. "We are unchaste in the midst of barbarians who are more virtuous than we are. Still more; the barbarians take offence at our lewdness. The Goths suffered no profligate of their own tribe to remain among them; only the Romans among them have the right to be unclean, thanks to the sad privilege of their name and their

chestnut brown Andalusians, elastic as steel; and our heart beats stronger when we hear the beggar majestically draped in his ragged "Capa," address a duke of Ossuna as "Amigo" (friend). To the Spaniard, in whom the primitive animal has not yet been killed, work is the worst slavery. The Greeks also, during the period of their greatest bloom, had but disdain for work; the slave alone was permitted to labor, the free man knew but physical exercise and play of the intellect. That was the time of an Aristotle, a Phidias, an Aristophanes; the time when a handful of braves destroyed the hordes of Asia at Marathon which Alexander soon conquered.

The ancient philosophers taught contempt of work, this derogation of the free man; the poets sang of laziness,

nationality; the oppressed go to the barbarians to seek human kindness and protection." (De Gubernatione Dei.)

The old civilization and young Christianity corrupted the barbarians of the old world exactly as Christianity in its senile debility and the modern capitalist civilization corrupt the savages of the new world. The well-known Catholic writer, Mons. F. Le Play, whose talent of observation must be acknowledged even if his sociological conclusions filled with philanthropical and Christian sophistry be thrown aside, says in his book "The European Workman" (1855): "The propensity of the Baschkins to laziness (the Baschkins are half-nomadic shepherds in the Ural), together with the leisure consequent upon a nomadic life and the habit of meditation which the former call forth in the more gifted individuals, often results with these people in a refinement of manners, a sharpening of intelligence and judgement, such as is seldom found in the social plane in a higher civilization..... Nothing is more disagreeable to them than agriculture; they prefer to do anything else than to make up their mind to the calling of husbandman." In fact, agriculture is the first appearance of servile work among mankind.

this gift of the Gods; "Melibaeus, a God, gave us this idleness," sings Virgil. In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ teaches: "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin, yet I say unto ye that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Mathew VI, 28-29. Jehova, the Old Testament God of the Jews, sets his worshippers the most sublime example: after six days' work, he rests for all eternity.

Which, on the other hand, are the races to whom work is an organic necessity? The Auvergnanes of France; the Scotch, the Auvergnanes of the British Isles; the Gallegos, the Auvergnanes of Spain; the Upper Silesians, the Auvergnanes of Germany; the Chinese, the Auvergnanes of Asia. Which in our society, are the classes that love work for the sake of work? The small farmers and the small tradesmen, who, the former, bent over their fields, the latter, busied in their shops, resemble the mole grubbing about in his hole, never raising themselves to take a leisurely look at nature.

And the proletariat, the great producing class of all civilized nations, the class which by its emancipation will release mankind from servile work, and will create a free being out of the human animal; the proletariat, too, mistaking its historical calling, has allowed itself to be seduced by the dogma of work. Its chastisement is hard and terrible. All individual and society misery takes its origin in the passion of the proletariat for work.