

1915, between Mr. Norman Hapgood of New York (Affirmative) and Mr. Rome G. Brown of Minneapolis (Negative)." But interest falls when we read the final title: "Negative Argument by Mr. Brown." We are glad enough to get any good negative argument on any of the "social justice" moves of the present day. It braces up the cause by making it face the test of criticism. But a debate is a debate. If we are going to hear any of it, we ought to hear it all. To hear one side only is not merely unfair but utterly unintelligent. We have not the remotest idea who sent us "Negative Argument by Mr. Brown," but we have not the remotest intention of reading it until the same unknown sends us "Affirmative Argument by Mr. Hapgood." These United States have passed by the time when they were interested in hearing but one side of any question.



European Murders Won't Overshadow Domestic Issues.

The Times-Star (Cincinnati), Feb. 27.—There has been some talk of a combination of German-Americans for political action against any candidate whose attitude does not seem to the members of the combination sufficiently friendly to Germany's cause in the European war. It is said that President Wilson is to be opposed on account of his recent diplomatic activities. Within the past few days the claim has been made that the defeat of Carter Harrison in the Chicago primaries was due to opposition growing out of the problems of the European war. This talk of massed political action by German-Americans is more or less vague. . . . It probably could not enlist the support of more than a comparatively small minority of the Americans of German blood in the United States; and if put into effect it would inevitably bring results the exact opposite of those expected by its promoters. It is very certain that a large majority of the voters of this country would object to voting on election day on any other basis than that of their duties and views as Americans. Of course, it is possible that a few people who have been very deeply stirred by the events of the past six months in Europe might take kindly to the idea of running American politics on a European war basis. But as soon as it became clear that a considerable number of voters meant to act in this way, support would come to the attacked official from other sources and in the end he would be, not the loser, but the gainer by the agitation.

RELATED THINGS

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TODAY IS MINE, I AM TODAY.

For The Public.

Thinking much, desiring much to know, I reach out with my strength and try to stop the stream of Time—that ancient river—

For the blue mountains say to me, Only Today is for you, and the stars in the night tell me that I am only for the Present.

But whether sleeping under the June sky, or walking on the October mountains I say to myself—Yesterday was my Father!

And so rejoicing, I do good work thinking that Tomorrow is my child—the son of my body, and the flower of my mind.

So it shall be in the Earth, for it is written in the Book of Life.

EDMOND FONTAINE.



CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND THE LAND QUESTION.

A lay sermon for the readers of The Public.

A science as distinguished from an art, is a statement of the sequences and uniformities which we generalize as laws of nature. A science properly so called simply generalizes from groups of observed facts and formulates them as laws or first principles. An art on the other hand is a statement of human achievements, actual or possible, based upon one of the sciences. Thus astronomy is a pure science, being a statement of the laws by which the heavenly bodies seem to move; meteorology is a science being a statement of the laws which determine climatic conditions; and navigation is an art based upon these two sciences. Mechanics is a science which treats of the laws governing bodies in motion and at rest, and engineering is the human art based upon it. Similarly we may define political economy as a statement of the natural laws by which wealth is produced and tends to distribute itself; and politics as the human art of government based upon this science.

Much confusion of thought seems to have been caused by the failure to preserve a clear distinction between the areas covered respectively by the sciences, and the arts which are founded upon them, and the confusion has been greatest in the case of the science of political economy and the art of government. The orthodox economists, while professing to define the natural laws governing the production and distribution of wealth, started their observations at a point where natural law had already been interfered with. That is to say, they took a condition of things under which government had already conferred upon certain men the right to monopolize nature's bounty, to fence in the earth and dictate terms for its use; and assumed that to be natural. Starting from this basis of government-conferred monopoly (wrongly assumed to be a natural condition) the economists inevitably reached those melancholy conclusions which raised the righteous soul of Carlyle to a white heat of indignation against the whole tribe of logic-choppers and theory-grinders. "The tendency of wages to a minimum" was a necessary corollary to the assumption that certain members of the community were to be privi-

leged to control the access to nature's workshop and to levy toll upon the labor of those permitted to toil. That human labor should have to be regarded as a commodity, the price of which would determine itself in inverse ratio to the supply, was but another way of saying that laborers, being debarred the opportunity of employing themselves at nature's invitation, were compelled to offer their labor to the holders of the opportunities at the best price obtainable.

The definition of the terms of the so-called science of political economy has suffered serious confusion from the fundamental error referred to. As a general postulate, land and labor are rightly assumed to be the two primary factors in production, and the total product is called wealth, a portion of which being reserved for further production, is named capital. So far all is clear, but when we seek for intelligible definitions of those subject terms from the economic authorities the utmost confusion confronts us. Land, which in a scientific analysis ought to include everything not included in the other or human factor, is contracted in its scope to mean agricultural land only. Labor, which ought to include the totality of human activity of hand intellect and emotion, is narrowed to denote manual labor alone; and a variety of other terms are searched for by which to describe the higher manifestations of human energy, ability, skill and so on.

The definitions of the term "wealth" have been the most indefinite of all, and it is perhaps here that the greatest confusion has arisen. Some writers have included in the term "wealth" mines and natural resources which obviously belong to the first or passive factor in production, land. Some have made wealth to include slaves, who would require by that inclusion to be ruled out of the second factor, labor. Others have attempted to class as wealth special aptitudes or personal gifts, technical skill or inventive powers, evidently without noticing that logical consistency should have compelled them to include life itself in the category of wealth, and to say that a man is possessed of wealth in virtue of being alive instead of being dead.

It would be an ungrateful task to attempt to expose all the confusions and impossible positions into which economists have lodged themselves in their attempts to make the conclusions of their science square with, and justify, the actual facts of human society. The disrespect into which the science has fallen is almost pathetic, and the truth seems to be that political economy has entirely failed in its mission because of that initial error which has been referred to. Setting itself up as a science, it ought to have contented itself with expounding the few first principles or laws according to which men seek to satisfy their desires with the minimum expenditure of effort; it ought

to have dealt with natural laws only, as is the proper function of science; leaving it to the practical man, the man skilled in the art of government, to make the necessary allowance for all disturbances of natural law such as those caused by monopoly. This is the line followed by all true sciences. The theory of science of mechanics for example, ignores the fact of friction and leaves the difficulty of lubrication to be dealt with by the art of the engineer. It assumes forces acting under ideal conditions and takes no account of the resistance of atmosphere or the refractory nature of various metals.

Now, if the science of society had started its observations from a basis of natural law only, it is surely evident that it would have reached very different conclusions from those dismal ones with which we have become so familiar. And if those conclusions had not squared with existing facts it would then have been the business of the practical politician, the man skilled in the art of government, to find the cause of difference and provide the remedy.

This brings us within sight of the problem which to Christians ought to be the most vital and searching of questions. Is it, or is it not, in the very nature of things that increasing wealth and prosperity should be accompanied by struggle, poverty, unemployment, and destitution? Do the laws of God or nature work out to the dire results that face us in every city, in every country, under every political constitution whether republican, monarchical, free-trade or protectionist? Is it the will of the Lord of Hosts that the people should labor as in the fire or weary themselves for very vanity? On the answer we can find to this question will it depend whether we can continue to believe in the fatherhood of God or the brotherhood of man. The orthodox economist offers a reply in a kind of qualified affirmative, but the man of robust faith repudiates the economist's conclusions as a calumny upon the laws of God and proceeds to investigate the matter for himself.

We believe that a true science of society will vindicate the laws of nature as working out, when undisturbed by artificial law, towards absolute justice and equity. It will show us primitive man stimulated by hunger, applying his labor to land and reaping the product or wages of his labor, according to natural law. It will show us how, having by his exertions satisfied his first animal necessities of food and shelter, he undergoes a change or development of character. He develops new wants which in their turn require new exertions to satisfy them, and so he rises to successively higher planes with more complex needs, and greater capacity for meeting their demands; all in accordance with natural law. We shall see that with every new effort to satisfy his wants his productive power would increase, and

his natural wages would be raised. As Adam's muscles became stronger in delving, and Eve's fingers more nimble in spinning, the product of their labor would increase. Under natural law the tendency of nature's wages would always be towards a maximum. When the first capitalist-inventor presented his labor-saving delving machine and his patent spinning jenny, our Adam and Eve would require to be tempted away from the primitive spade and distaff by the offer of higher wages than self-employment would yield. Thus would set in the tendency of wages to a maximum. And all this would happen according to natural law, and is a simple deduction from the first postulate of a true political economy, *i. e.*, that men always seek to satisfy their desires with the least expenditure of effort.

With such a real science to guide us, should we not long ago have discovered that the cause of social distress and the downward tendency of wages, is to be found in monopoly of nature's bounty? Should we not have discovered that it is because some men have been permitted to fence in the earth and call it their own that others have to beg of their lordly fellow-worms for leave to toil? Would it not have become plain that this is the reason why landless men and manless land stand everywhere facing each other, why cold and starving human creatures and stores of food and clothing confront each other in a contrast that would be full of a grim humor were it not the most tragic, the most ungodly, and the most revolting spectacle that has ever been witnessed on our planet?

ALEX. MACKENDRICK.



THE FOLLY OF THE WISE ONES.

For The Public.

But ask now the beasts and they shall teach thee.
—Job 12:7.

In an African thicket covered two jackals, sheltered from immediate danger, they crouched still lower with blinking eyes as the rattle of musquetry and the boom of cannon came to them over the distant landscape.

"Mother," said the young one, "what are those frightful noises?"

"My child," replied the old one muzzled with gray, and burdened with the experience of years of self-defense, "those are the ravings of the super animals."

"And what are they doing?"

"They are destroying each other for they are sick with the spasm of war."

"And why do they do these things?"

"We animals do not know," replied the aged one. "They build but to destroy. They sing strange songs of peace and slay like the lion.

Their work is the achievement of superfluous labor."

While they yet spake, the battle ceased.

'Twilight came on apace, and rapidly sank into the blackness of night.

Profound silence hovered over the field of battle.

"Come, my child," said the aged one, "let us gather the bones of their dead. Let us feast while their tired bodies sleep."

FREDERICK E. MAYER.



WAR'S DELUDED VICTIMS.

W. N. Ewer, in London Nation.

First Soul—

I was a peasant of the Polish plain;
I left my plow because the message ran:
Russia, in danger, needed every man
To save her from the Teuton; and was slain
I gave my life for freedom—this I know:
For those who bade me fight had told me so.

Second Soul—

I was a Tyrolese, a mountaineer;
I gladly left my mountain home to fight
Against the brutal, treacherous Muscovite;
And died in Poland on a Cossack spear.
I gave my life for freedom—this I know:
For those who bade me fight had told me so.

Third Soul—

I worked in Lyons at my weaver's loom,
When suddenly the Prussian despot hurled
His felon blow at France and at the world;
Then I went forth to Belgium and my doom.
I gave my life for freedom—this I know:
For those who bade me fight had told me so.

Fourth Soul—

I owned a vineyard by the wooded Main,
Until the Fatherland, begirt by foes
Lusting her downfall, called me, and I rose
Swift to the call—and died in fair Lorraine.
I gave my life for freedom—this I know:
For those who bade me fight had told me so.

Fifth Soul—

I worked in a great shipyard by the Clyde,
There came a sudden word of wars declared,
Of Belgium, peaceful, helpless, unprepared,
Asking our aid; I joined the ranks, and died.
I gave my life for freedom—this I know:
For those who bade me fight had told me so.



The whole system of a people crowing over its military triumphs had far better be dispensed with, both on account of the ill-blood that it helps to keep fermenting among the nations, and because it operates as an accumulative inducement to future generations to aim at a kind of glory, the gain of which has generally proved more ruinous than its loss.—Hawthorne (in "Our Old Home").