

## TOPICS OF THE DAY

LABOUR AND CAPITAL: WOMEN AND VOTES: "DEMOCRACY":

SOCIAL EDUCATION: ARBITRARY ARBITRATION.

**A**ESOP'S primitive fable about the rebellion of the members of the body against the stomach needs revision in the light of modern knowledge and modern theories, especially those of Karl Marx and his disciples. Aesop represented the stomach as civil government, and the supporting organs of the body as "striking" against it because it appeared to absorb the produce of their exertions, and made—as they fancied—no return of service. In consequence of the strike the whole body languished and fell into decay until the striking members perceived that they were as much dependent on the stomach as it on them. Aesop was not in error in his day. Society at that time was not based mainly on production but on the military competence which government provided. The community's strength had to be duly sustained at all costs, or ruin would immediately supervene. The society produced little more than the necessaries of life, and unless protected in doing so it perished. But that was not far from three thousand years ago, and we have travelled a long way since then. The brain would now more fittingly stand for the government, the directing general intelligence; the eyes, ears, and tongue are its means of locomotion; the legs are its transportation system; the hands its labour equipment, the stomach its communal storehouse and supply-depot. With such amendments, in accordance with the changes which time has wrought, Aesop's fable is as true to-day as when it was written six hundred or more years before Christ. The Karl Marxians and Communists of the present time are not wiser than were Aesop's fabled bodily hands and legs of the past. Modern society is as much one, its units are as closely and inseparably interdependent as the members of the human body. It is as gross folly for Labour, whether in workshop, farm, forest, mine, or on the sea, to claim that it is the sole producer and that its component individuals should be permitted to dispose of their own products without regard to the whole social fabric, as it was for Aesop's figurative hands and legs to make similar claims and to go on strike against the stomach. If they were permitted to consume as fast as they pro-

duce, what would then be left for their own or for the general subsistence? So organized society demands now, as it has demanded from the beginning, that all its members shall work for the whole and not each for himself alone. Into the general storehouse the products of the society must be brought for such distribution that the common body may be duly nourished and kept in working and productive health in all its parts. In other words, Capital—that is, Produce—must be accumulated before it can be fairly or properly apportioned. “Working Capital” is the supply absolutely necessary for the maintenance of the social body, for the provision of food, raiment, and housing. Beyond that all depends on the industry, capability, and thrift of the “hands”. If they produce much and save some, the “stomach” digests their contributions and distributes them in healthy proportions throughout the body, so that it waxes fat and comfortable and grows,—that is to say, is prosperous and progressive. If they produce little and consume much, the stomach is starved, the unnourished body languishes and ultimately dies as it is slowly and painfully doing in Russia to-day. It cannot be too clearly understood by Labour that Capital is the stomach of the modern social body, on whose adequate supply and functioning its existence depends, and that every blow directed against Capital is a stroke at the very foundations of the community.

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**T**HIS paragraph, written before the elections, will contain no moralizings on results. It will concern itself exclusively and briefly with what has so far been revealed regarding the extension of the electoral franchise to women. The revelations have not been surprising. They have shown that few mature women really desired the franchise. The young women are taking advantage of it, as they would of any other novel form of entertainment. Ninety-nine per cent of them neither know nor care to know any more about public affairs than do the same number of youths of the opposite sex. They have been offered something for nothing, and they are not going to “lose the chance.” That sums up their state of mind. Most thoughtful women, with the exception of such as are constitutionally partisans, or have grown up in a partisan atmosphere, have shown reluctance or indifference to registration. They had to be entreated. They recognize the futility of the thing, and have not only no desire but a pronounced disinclination to vote. The “political women,” numbering perhaps one in a thousand, have of course come to the front, either from a conscientious desire to do what they consider their duty under the law, or anxious to vindicate

the propriety of their former demands. But the fact seems to be that comparatively few women are taking a sincere interest in the elections. And little wonder, for there was no real or solid ground for the innovation. Everyone knows and admits that women are just as intelligent—on the average—as men, and just as capable—on the whole—of exercising the franchise wisely. But it is equally well known that most of them are not politically disposed, and that they are not inclined, for one reason or another, to give the needful thought and study to public affairs that they may become qualified for voting. What good, then, has been done by this final and radical extension of the franchise? It has simply doubled the electorate, without making it wiser or better or more discriminating. It has greatly complicated the election preparations. It has opened the door to far wider and more demoralizing corruption. It has imposed on women a public duty from which many of the best men confessedly recoil or shrink, and for which they are often physically unfitted. In doubling the electorate it has, in most cases, merely doubled the numbers of each of the parties, thus leaving their relative standing unchanged. But it has wrought prospective evil in this; while many of the better class of women will not vote, no such abstention is to be expected from a less desirable class. Such women will be open to undue—not to say improper—influences of many sorts. The number of electors to be “seen” hereafter will have been far more than doubled. It used to be a favourite plea of the suffragettes that the vote of an intelligent mistress might be cancelled by that of her “ignorant butler or footman.” How much happier or better off will she be, now that her vote and the votes of her daughters may be overbalanced by those of her kitchen maids, influenced by the policemen on the beat or the milk or ice man or some unknown “friend-boy”? The thing does not look pleasant or commendable just now, but it may improve on acquaintance. Let us hope so. Everyone, however, may as well awake from the dream that women are going to “elevate politics” by their votes or otherwise.

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“**D**EMOCRACY” is a splendid subject for press and platform mouthings. What would our elections be without it? It is then that we “trust the people,” and that politicians try to get trusted by “trusting the people.” So much mutual confidence is reminiscent of the legend “In God we trust” on the United States silver dollar when it was worth only fifty-six cents. This was explained to mean that our American neighbours trusted Him for “the other

forty-four cents." The solid political worth of democracy as revealed in practice is indefinitely less than fifty-six per cent. Very few "democrats" even know the meaning of the word. For most it stands as an excuse for disregarding decent social conventions, and as a swaggering assertion of "I am as good as you, if not better", regardless of the actual facts. The facts are that one person is not "just as good as another," nor anything near it. No two people are exactly alike. Consequently there are infinite varieties of merits and demerits. But, even if we were all on one moral dead level, we should not necessarily be all democrats. There might be as many potential autocrats and potential shirkers among us as ever. Democracy means, if it means anything worth while to state, the government of all the people—wise and not wise, good and bad—by themselves and by themselves alone. This is about the same thing as government of the waves of the ocean by their own ebb and flow, apart from the influence of moon, winds, and the turning of the earth on its axis. If a people were fitted for democracy, they would have no further need of *kratos* of any kind. Each would rule himself or herself, and all would be properly ruled without exterior interference. As things are, under democracy they have settled down to majority domination, the counting of heads or noses to ascertain where wisdom or fitness for rule lies. The majority, however got together, is never tyrannical of course. It merely exercises its own will. Being a majority, its will must be right. It is not always pleasant, however, for the minority who have the quite undemocratic habit of being usually in the right. If anyone objects to this saying which is proverbial, let him reason with himself. It is the mob which makes the majority in nearly all cases, and the mob is not guided by reason. Its supreme desire is to be "on the winning side." It is the ready and willing tool of the mob-leader, the born demagogue. In rendering its "judgments" at the polls it merely records the prejudices or false ideas which have been impressed upon it. It is a well known fact that not one elector in ten is capable of forming an intelligent political opinion founded on real knowledge. Yet we must all bow to "democracy"! We must not only adore but love it. We must "trust the people." Is it any wonder that there are not a few who in their hearts would prefer a good old-fashioned autocrat as their ruler? Him at least they could club if he too persistently trod on their toes. And, at the worst, in ruling arbitrarily he would not do so with an intolerable air of moral superiority as a mob-chosen majority does. Moreover, at bottom democracy spells autocracy, for behind it or at its head there is always some one man whose will is supreme, who real-

ly commands and in effect rules. But, such as it is or may ultimately become by process of evolution (in which a million years are but as a watch in the night) we have democracy, that is to say majority domination, and must abide by it until a better way is devised or opened up. There is at least one good thing about it;—it enforces the grace of resignation.

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**I**T may not be an agreeable fact, but it is a fact, as anyone can see and hear—indeed cannot help seeing and hearing—that Labour is now on a path which leads to dangerous radicalism. It is not necessary to give that path a specific name, because it is made up of various stages after it passes that of legitimate beneficent Trade Unionism. Its end is Leninism or anarchy. The advance is likely to be more rapid hereafter, unless some rational effort is made to halt and turn it back. There is only one strongly restraining influence at present in operation, that of the older men still constituting a majority who have been trained to observe and think with soberness, to whom the doctrines of Karl Marx do not appeal, and whom the fiery speeches of young agitators trained in Marxian schools leave cold and passive. As the older men drop off, restraint on the younger will lessen if it does not cease. No preparations are being made against the probable coming evil day. Neither State nor Church is putting forth a sanely-warning or staying hand. Our seats of learning are apparently content to remain mere “seats of learning”, not centres of instruction, so far as Labour is concerned. The Churches are prepared to preach and pray, but not to educate. The State is concerned with politics, not with practice, keeping an eye on popular tendencies purely for election purposes. If this condition of apathy or indifference is to continue, the end will be hastened. It may be hard to realize that old conditions have passed, and that we face a new world requiring new means or the adaptation of old means to its necessities. But, if we do not soon do so, that which is best in our civilization may perish under our eyes which, although they look, see not. In the first place, religion is being rapidly eliminated among the workers. That they have largely given up church attendance is evident. It may not be so generally known that Marxianism is accompanied by infidelity and pronounced hostility to ecclesiasticism. Labour is even learning to indulge open sneers at Christianity. Surely that could be checked by abandoning theological problems to their special devotees, and teaching in Christ’s spirit what Christ taught, by carrying His actual gospel to the needy people of our own land with the same

devotion that is displayed towards "the heathen." Again, the State is charged with oversight of education. Does not that imply the duty of safeguarding against *miseducation*, or at least of providing the antidote for the bane? The ordinary press has ceased to have influence with Labour. Workmen simply do not read it. They have been taught to regard it as "Capitalistic", hostile, and untrustworthy. They are to be reached only through their own newspaper organs or by the living voice. Their press organs are, as a rule, not very well off financially. Space might be bought in them by the Government in which properly trained political and social economists could present sound doctrine and combat false in a popular manner. Further, the State might and should either support adequately equipped teacher-lecturers of its own in industrial centres or give financial aid to University extension work in such quarters. It should certainly do something in the interests of Labour and of us all. For lack of vision the people perish. But how are they to see with eyes never properly opened, and with the dazzling glare of Marxianism constantly flashed upon them by skilled manipulators? There is no greater or more vitally important work to hand to-day for earnest men and women than enlightening the popular mind with regard, first, to the real teachings of Christianity, and, second, to the basic principles of genuine political and social economy.

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THE Board of Arbitration appointed to deal with the appeal of Canadian railway employees against a reduction of twelve and a half per cent in their wages, in accordance with a similar reduction approved by the American Railway Board, has arbitrarily decided that a smaller reduction should be made in the case of "lower paid" persons. Possibly this was within their power as arbitrators, but it is impossible to see the principle of it. American and Canadian railway employees are members of the same international union. When, largely for political reasons, American railway wages were doubled and trebled under Government management, Canadian railway folk promptly demanded and exacted identical increases. They recently threatened to strike against similar uniform reductions. All employees, low-paid or high-paid, received the benefit of the huge and unjustifiable American increases. Why should there be discrimination with regard to reductions? And why fix upon \$125 per month as the exact dividing line between low and high wages? The rate named comes to \$1500 per year, which is enormously above the average income of other members of

the community. As a matter of well known fact, at least nineteen out of every twenty men in Canada would regard themselves as almost rich with such an income. Yet this merciful and considerate Arbitration Board is of the opinion that for railway men it should not be reduced even by twelve and a half per cent from the height of war time rates, notwithstanding the way in which it was pitchforked up, the general reduction in wages and cost of living, and the fact that our railways are being run at enormous annual loss borne by the general tax-payer in addition to his many other grievous burdens due to the war! This wise and considerate Board of Arbitration sagely states in its official report that the employees concerned could indeed be replaced immediately by others at wages much lower than would be paid under the proposed twelve and a half per cent reduction, but that it "refuses to admit that the fixing of wages should be entirely left to the economic law of supply and demand" because "such a condition would imply strikes and lock-outs." So it decrees in its wisdom that the railways, which in this case are just the people of Canada, shall be rigidly subject to the said "economic law", while employees earning up to \$1500 a year are to be practically exempt. They were by no means exempt from the artificial privileges of the war time—the extravagant and unwarranted increases—but, when it is proposed to cut twelve and a half per cent off those increases, the unstrained Arbitration "quality of mercy" steps in with its veto. The arbitrators contribute additional kind words about "a decent standard of living." When is crude folly of this kind to end? One half of what the people of the world had to divide among themselves went up in smoke during the war. Workmen, generally under Marxian suggestion, neglected or refused to go to work energetically to create a new supply for distribution, but in Canada they must be accorded a "decent standard of living" to the tune of \$1500 a year, while others are starving all around them and industry is languishing because of the cost of production. Boards of Arbitration of this sort "never would be missed."

W. E. M.