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## ARE WE GIVING VALUE.

The following, which may be called a lay sermon, and an interesting one, is contributed by a correspondent of the Manchester Guardian:

"We are all—and by 'we' I mean the more or less prosperous, enlightened, cultured classes—beset by one ugly doubt, the doubt whether, on the whole, we give value for what we get out of our society. Some of us give more value than others; but those who give no value at all are but drunken helots for the rest of us. In our hearts we fear it is all a matter of degree; and that is why we are so angry with the drunken helots. We can sneer at those charming ladies who have been made charming at so great a cost, and who seem to think that they pay it all back by being charming. They are exquisite superiors on the stage of the world; they go about opening bazaars for us, being patronesses of our charities, patronesses of our whole civilization. They encourage the arts, or the flimsy part of them; they seem to know everything, while they know nothing. Often they have the tenderest hearts; but the tenderness of their hearts, as of their skins, is a luxury; they would lose it if they did any work. And the strange thing is that the poor, the very people who do the hard work for them, often are their greatest admirers. A beautiful lady is an angel to them, a native of that paradise we all long for, where something can be got for nothing; where wages are given not only to the eleventh-hour laborer in the vineyard but to those who have never labored at all. But we of the prosperous classes have too much in common with those beautiful ladies to admire them. We know how it is done for we all do more or less of it ourselves—we know that they exist so beautifully because they do not give value. They are artists in the art of getting something for nothing; and we too, unwillingly perhaps, are not guiltless of that art.

"Christ's own disciples were troubled by the harshness of the condition which He imposed on the young man who had great possessions. He was to sell all he had and give to the poor. To understand that story one must see it in terms of to-day. The young man was a prosperous, enlightened, good young man; a liberal who supported all high causes, a vegetarian perhaps, and one who would wear sandals now, but did not wear them then because they were the common wear. He had a conscience which he tried to satisfy by doing good. He saw himself as a 'trustee' of his own wealth. But still there remained a doubt in his mind, which made him ask, 'What must I do to be saved?' The answer came in general terms; he had done all these things, but his doubt still remained. 'What

lack I yet?' he asked, and then the answer came. It was expressed in our language: 'You are not giving value. If you would really be saved, you must get rid of your wealth, which prevents you from giving value; you must become as the poor who do give value.' It is a hard condition, and Christ Himself thought it hard, for He gave it only when pressed, and because he loved the young man. And still we know it is the condition of salvation, and we are troubled because we doubt whether we fulfill it.

"This trouble, this doubt, is conscious in some and unconscious in others. But it drives even those in whom it is unconscious to make apologies for themselves. They persuade themselves that they do give value, by being patrons or patronesses of mankind; by upholding the banner of the ideal, like the gentleman in Ibsen; by preserving the culture of the world. If there was not a leisured class—that is to say, a class that does not give value—the world would sink back into barbarism. There is a story of an exquisite young man who, before conscription, was asked why he did not go and fight for civilization. He replied, 'I am the civilization they are fighting for.' That is the apology often made in answer to an unconscious doubt within. And those who can make it, and be satisfied with it, become incapable of thinking rightly on any subject whatever; that is to say, they become incapable of salvation. The one great he they have told to themselves infects all their thought. They have reconciled themselves to the notion of an irrational universe, one in which they rightly get something for nothing; and the universe, irrational in that one respect, becomes for them irrational in all. Because they do not give value or try to give it, life itself gradually is emptied of values for them. It is like a tale told by an idiot, signifying 'nothing'.

Figures compiled by the U. S. Bureau of Mines show that there were 2,575 fatal coal mine accidents in that country last year, as compared with 2,636 in 1917. The fatality rate in 1918 was 3.30 per 1,000 men employed, as against 3.56 the year before. The coal production per fatality in 1918 was the largest on record, being 266,000 tons, as compared with 241,600 in 1917. Estimates made to the Bureau of Mines by State inspectors indicate that there were about 760,000 men employed in coal mining last year, as against 757,317 in 1917.