

## Let's Change Environment

Roscoe A. Fillmore.

When a human being comes into the world he brings with him certain "gifts" inherited from his parents or ancestors. For instance, he may be in possession of a robust constitution or his father and mother may have been weaklings and in that case he would probably be sickly and of a weak uncertain disposition. But, whatever his inherited qualities may be, he is ignorant, helpless and dependent upon others for everything when he is born. Just as soon as he is born, in fact when he draws his first breath, modification steps in. Or in other words the environment, all those circumstances and things extended to him, begin to mold him for better or for worse.

So man is the result of the blending of the blood, gifts, genius or otherwise of his millions of ancestors plus the various modification or changes wrought by his surroundings. In other words heredity plus environment. Everything around us, the air we breathe, the food we eat, our companions, teachers, the language we hear, etc., all play their part in affecting marked modifications, both mental and physical, in us.

All the really great teachers of mankind have laid great stress upon environment. Today every parent who insists upon his boy attending Sunday School regularly or forbids his Johnny mingling with the bad Jones boys is paying his tribute to the power of environment. Every mother who insists upon her young daughter staying home instead of attending dances is admitting, although she would not perhaps understand the term, that she has great faith in good environment in the molding of her daughter's character. The prohibitionist who shouts for the abolition of the saloon is another who insists that environment plays a very great part in molding the minds and habits of men.

Environment being so important it behooves us to get busy today. For we see about us millions who are in surroundings which cannot but twist and mar them. Millions of children are born in the slums, surrounded by poverty, vice, crime, unspeakable misery. And there is no escape for them. They cannot get clear of or escape from their surroundings as they have not inherited the necessary strength from parents who themselves were degenerates and weaklings. So they remain in the slum districts and spawn there thus adding to the great army of incapable.

Various reformers have advanced various palliative measures that have for their alleged object the elimination of the slum. Yet the slum is increasing in extent and misery receiving huge reinforcements during each displacement by machinery of labor power as a saleable commodity. The preachers look wise and declare that all people both slum dwellers and capitalists must experience a change of heart (get converted) before the evils of slumdom can be abolished. So a few of the honest ones go into the slums and really try to "convert" the poor devils who dwell there. The irony of it—to tell one who has lived in hell all his life that he will go to hell when he dies unless he is "good"!! These soon find that the slum dweller doesn't want to be "saved" and go back to their fashionable congregations to moralize upon the innate depravity of the "lower orders."

In spite of religion the slum is increasing. And as economic conditions become harder it will increase the faster, until if the present system continues, these people, possessing all the brutality and ignorance of our primeval ancestors, will over run the earth.

There is a solution for this problem. The men we see today, our neighbors, we ourselves are the products of heredity plus environment. The slum child is the product of a weak, sickly mind and body inherited from degenerate parents plus the poor food and vitiated air of the slum, the brutal usage and language it receives at home and on the street, in other words its environment.

Poverty is the cause of the slum environment. Therefore we must remove poverty. But poverty is only an effect and we must get at the cause for its existence. This we find to be capitalism the system of society in which a class of idlers own the tools of industry and government, using them as means of robbing those who do not own anything but their power to work. We find that the idle class, because of its ownership of our jobs, is enabled to take four fifths of the things we produce, giving us in return for our labor power, only one fifth of the product.

This will continue just as long as we of the working class are content

to leave them in possession of the industries and the powers of government. When enough of us get tired of it we will take charge of government and use it as a means to get possession of our jobs. Then and only then will the slum problem be solved. Then and only then will the miserable hovels of the slum dwellers be burned and healthy habitable dwellings take their places. Then the change of environment will be affected and the slum child be given a chance to live and grow up in decency and make a useful and productive citizen. But, horror of horrors, that would be Socialism. And we must protect "vested interests," we of the working class, for goodness gracious who would employ us if it wasn't for the capitalists?

There are those who say that we must change human nature in order that Socialism may be obtained. To these we reply—we will change the environment, the chief factor in molding the characters and habits of people, and let human nature take care of itself.

### The British Budget

Cotton's Weekly:

Dear Comrade—I see that in your issue of Dec. 9, you fall into the error which has gone the entire round of the American Socialist press, that the British budget is an attempt by the capitalists to throw the taxation of the country on to the landlords. I think the following facts will convince you that you are mistaken:

1. The enormous majority of large British capitalists belong to the Conservative party. A Liberal millionaire is a remarkable rarity. If the budget were a capitalist one, it is very unlikely that the Liberals would propose it, and still more unlikely that the Conservatives would oppose it.

2. The House of Lords has long ceased to be a body of landlords. If you will look up Whitaker's Almanack, you will see that the vast majority of peerages have been created since the beginning of the reign of George the Third, that is to say, since 1760. Most of them have been created since 1800. What sort of persons have been raised to the peerage since then? Look up the annual list of creations, and you will find that the peerage is almost entirely recruited from such men as Bass and Alsopp, the brewers, Harmsworth the newspaper man, Overton the chemical man, and so on. The House of Lords is a club composed of all the great capitalists of the country. If the budget were favorable to large capitalists, the House of Lords would not have breath to shout loudly enough for it.

3. The budget hits the great capitalists very hard. It raises the death duties to 15 per cent on great fortunes, and places a supertax of sixpence in the pound on all incomes over \$25,000 a year. It has been proved over and over again by statistics that most of the wealth of England belongs to capitalists and not to landlords; so it is very unlikely that the capitalists would propose taxes so unfavorable to themselves.

4. Agricultural land is expressly exempted from the land tax, which only applies to city and industrial real estate. If the great industrial capitalists were authors of the budget, they would hardly take so much trouble to discriminate against themselves.

The theory that the budget is a capitalist budget must therefore be put in the same class with Achilles' Loria's immortal discovery that the Republicans in the United States are those who live on interest, while the Democrats are those who live on rent.

The true theory of the budget is that it is an attempt by the middle class to throw the increasing taxation of the country on to the large fortunes, whether owned by landlords or capitalists. The Liberal party is the party of the middle class. For some years the middle class has been bearing the brunt of the constant rise of taxation which has been necessitated by such reforms as old age pensions, public feeding of school children, and so on. Now, it has taken a tumble, and has made the glorious discovery that all this taxation might just as well be placed on the broad backs of the rich. For many years the Fabian Society has been putting wicked thoughts into the minds of middle class people, and has told them that, instead of being such fools as to fight Socialism, they should try to throw the burden of it on to the rich. Twenty years ago the Fabian Society published a tract called "A Democratic Budget." Read that, and you will understand the present budget. The ablest body of men and women that ever existed in the world has not been talking and writing twenty years for nothing.

Yours fraternally,

R. B. Kerr.

## Toilers and Idlers

Our Serial Story

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(Continued.)

### CHAPTER VII.

He asked further questions and she answered them, quoting statistics as well as making general statements.

"Let's go home," yawned Tom Locker, who had been idling and wrinkling his brows as if in an effort to follow the conversation. "The beer is no good here, anyway."

"I would like to talk with you some more," said Rensen, not heeding Tom's scowl.

"Everybody knows me," replied Sonia promptly. She handed him a card. "That's where our union meets, but you're likely to see me at many other places."

"Sonia Sofrosky," he read aloud from the card.

"Yes, isn't that as good a name as—Otis?" She laughed in her boyish way with a sparkle of jet eyes. He wondered whether she meant anything, but the cordial clasp of her warm little hand made him conclude it was a pleasantry.

He walked to his lodging thinking over the statements of this extraordinary girl. He did not know whether to be more fascinated with her personality or startled by her views that were probably deeper than his expressed. How much truth might there be in such ideas? There was a difference between these definite statements, apparent facts, and his own recent speculation. It would be well to enlighten oneself, not only by reading, but by keeping a note book and asking all sorts of people what their wages were, how they lived, what they hoped for.

He could not sleep, thinking of these things.

As he tossed about he happened to look out of the window and across the tenement yard. There was a light in Sonia's room, the curtain not drawn. The ill-formed figure of a man with a black beard passed before the light; it was Zienski. Somehow the discovery was unpleasant, especially after her talk on great important matters. Of course, one had no right to look at it in that way.

### CHAPTER VIII.

The men finished pouring the molds with unusual briskness. Everyone was good humored. They laughed and cracked jokes as they bent their backs to the incandescent ladles; the apprentices skylarked about, brandishing their skimmers. Nobody minded ordinary mishaps. For it was pay day. Saturday afternoon, and good money coming for another week's toil. The cupola hum ceased, and a quarter ton of molten iron was dumped by the hinged doors beneath, sending a last brilliant glare through the foundry steam and smoke. The men stood in line across the shop, a sooty battalion, while the paymaster, who was lean and wore spectacles, passed along calling the names and handing each man a little blue envelope.

Some tore open the envelopes, eagerly counting the bills and silver; others boisterously tossed coins in the air or made to swallow them in affectionate zeal. The elders were not entirely exempt from enthusiasm, and even the consumptive spectre debilitated.

Debts were settled. John Day received union dues from those who doubted their ability to pay at the proper time. One man said he would be drunk until the Monday whistle. Another vowed to take in the grand opera to see if the women in the audience had on as many diamonds as the papers reported. Someone suggested it would cost two weeks' wages, but he was told to go burn himself, because once a tramp molder got a job as super and was paid for seeing everything.

A group of young molders gestured and talked loudly in a corner where one of them was smoothing the sand with a shovel. A narrow line was traced across one end of the smooth space. Tom Locker, his sleeves rolled up, excitement in his eyes, stood a dozen feet from the mark and jingled a handful of silver dollars.

"Make it a quarter, Tom," pleaded a thin-faced small man. "Half a dollar, anyway."

"You pikers get off by yourselves," shouted Tom, and stooping he poised a dollar between thumb and forefinger. The white disc twirled away and fell an inch beyond the mark.

"You fellows can't beat that!" exclaimed the next man as his coin missed by six inches.

"Just my luck," mourned the third player, farther astray. "And I was going to buy my girl—"

Not until the sixth and last throw was there any doubt of the winner. This dollar grazed Tom's coin with a faint clang and nestled almost beside it. The men rushed up, squatted and peered across the line. The apprentices, who were pitching dimes nearby, came to learn the large decision. It was a narrow case, productive of language, but Tom had won. Flushed with victory, he took all the dollars sown in the black sand and went back to begin a new game.

Rensen as a spectator was vastly diverted and found himself laughing and shouting with the men. For a few moments, too, the coins in his pocket were fingered one by one. The old feverish desire that took him by surprise made him guess how much keener must be the passion that stakes the money earned in sweat, risking food and drink. He realized the craving for amusement, the pulse quickening exaltation of those compelled to monotonous toil, shut from the similar pleasures of art, science, invention.

It came to him also that, veiled under infinite forms, gambling is the cornerstone of our system, a principle more ancient and revered than any constitution or Magna Charta. Farmer and merchant, poet, clergy-

man, laborer and statesman, doctor and clerk, all pitch their coins to the mark. Many fall short; a few are lucky.

There was a lull in the game while a messenger went out to exchange greenbacks for dollars.

"Boys," cried a squint-eyed, gap-toothed humorist, clapping Rensen on the shoulder, "let's make this fellow tell where he dropped from. He says he ain't a counter-jumper."

"Maybe he was a swell, eh?" shouted another.

"Ha, ha, I'll bet he was!"

"I was a swell," said Rensen, quietly. He had not intended especially to make this answer; but now he folded his arms ready for the utmost frankness.

"And look at him," cried the humorist, recovering from the shock, while the men roared derisively.

"What time did yeh get up in the morning, boss?" asked the other man with mock deference.

"About ten o'clock," said Rensen, "when my valet told me the bath was ready."

"Hooray fer you! Now tell the lads what that there bathroom was like."

"The bathroom was done in Italian marble, with silver fittings. I took first a warm bath, having my back scrubbed, and then a cold shower. The valet shaved me, brought out the proper suit of clothes for the day, helped to put them on, and laced my shoes. He was scolded for the least mistake, though I never swore at him. The man then brought the newspapers, a pot of coffee and rolls, and held a match while I lighted a gilt-monogram cigarette, especially made for me in Cairo."

"Say, you're a fine liar. . . . He smokes a good brand, all right. Don't stop him, lads."

"Next I went downstairs to the clubrooms, perhaps played a game of billiards or answered some letters."

I found a bill in my mail for five hundred dollars—the cost of a special train in which I went to a golf tournament, having overslept the regular train time. I drew a check for the amount, and sent my man to the bank for an equal sum in cash, so as to have it handy for small expenses. I was liberal with the servants. After this a visit to the manure to have my nails cut. Perhaps a call on the tailor or the florist. After luncheon, I sat in the club window—"

"God, you was a busy man! . . . A girl trimmed his nails!"

"I sat in the club window talking about the people who passed on Fifth Avenue and those who stayed at home. It might be there was a new divorce to discuss or the fashion in neckties. A little later I sent for my mount and took an hour's ride through the Park, stopping beside some carriages to gossip with the ladies. This was an important duty. If I did not ride, I invited a friend or two for an auto trip to Tarrytown. I dined at the club from seven until nine—certainly, champagne and duck—and then perhaps played for two hours. We refreshed ourselves with cordials and Scotch whiskey. At eleven o'clock Williams hurried me off to a reception, where I talked divorcees and neckties for some time. I came home, ate, drank, smoked and went to bed."

The auditors guffawed. Amid exclamations of derision there were some compliments for the cleverness of these falsehoods.

"You done noble," said the gap-toothed wag.

"Here's a medal for you," said another, slicing a piece of leather from his belt.

The men laughed so heartily that they could scarcely continue the game.

Rensen went to his room in Seamen street strangely disturbed, half amused that the mildest statements of his life for the past ten years should be considered a fancy picture. A sincere confession passed for a joke. The simple credulity of these men had a tragic element in it. But doubtless men of education would laugh even more heartily at such a recital, knowing its truth, understanding well its meaning.

His thoughts became agitated as he paced the little room. He was feverish and uneasy. Lack of appetite, a sensation of languor and a faint dizziness indicated physical causes.

(To be continued)

### PERFIDY OF THE RULING CLASS

W. R. Shier.

The ruling class, except in some isolated cases, has always proved inimical to the interest of the majority, where the ruling caste has represented only the minority, as in aristocracies, timocracies, absolute monarchies and oligarchies. The nation has not the ruling caste to thank for its present liberties. What eternal dickering with the perfidious kings, what perpetual struggles with privileged minorities (as witness plebeian with patricians,) what treasure and blood has been spent for our liberties to-day. The masses may accept the injunction of Stratford, "Put not your trust in princes," extending it, of course, to aristocracies, leaders, and those privileged above them. Let the masses trust only in themselves. The ruling caste has ever been inimical to reform, repressive to the masses, and subversive to progress. The statue of labor is an example. "It is the people who build cities," cried Erasmus, "while the madness of princes destroy them."

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## Getting Recognition

(The present article is from Solidarity the new paper published by A. M. Stirtion in the interests of industrial unionism.)

"Recognition is all we want. We're not out on strike for higher wages or shorter hours. We're not on strike for better working conditions. All we want is for the company to recognize the union and sign the scale."

"Sounds familiar doesn't it? Very important too, this matter of recognition."

The worker can get it, too, just as they can get anything else they want, when they go at it in the right way.

The way to get recognition from the employers is the same as the way to get any other concessions from them—compel it. Take it by the strong hand.

That can't be done very well by one little craft union going out on strike while three or four other little craft unions in the employ of the same company stick to their jobs, or by all the little craft unions going out while the unorganized laborers around the mill stick to their jobs and if need be are ready to take a hand at filling the strikers' place.

The way to get recognition from the bosses is to get a union that the bosses can't help recognizing, one that ties up the whole plant when there's a strike, one that says, "An injury to one is the concern of all."

That's the I. W. W.

The bosses recognize the I. W. W. without being asked. That's the way they did at McKees Rocks.

If a highwayman held you up on your way home on pay day and attempted to take your wad and you wouldn't think of asking him to sign a paper saying that he recognized that you had a club, would you?

So long as you put him out of business of robbing you, you'd take it for granted that that was sufficient recognition, wouldn't you?

Exactly.

Well, build up the kind of unionism that will put the robber capitalist out of the business of going through your pockets in withholding from you what you earn, and what more recognition do you want from him either?

The I. W. W. will do it.

Getting the capitalist to sign a piece of paper saying "recognition," isn't worth anything.

After the paper is signed he will only live up to it on condition that the union is strong enough to enforce it; and if the union is that strong, it doesn't need the piece of paper.

The way to make an enemy recognize the fact that your sword is made of steel—if it really is—is to let him feel its edge. If it isn't made of steel, his saying that it is won't make it so, or make it one whit easier for you to defend yourself against him. The only probable result will be that it will furnish you with a false hope and throw you off your guard.

Get the union that will get you the goods and you'll have the recognition.

If you bought a sack of potatoes and had them on your shoulder ready to take home you wouldn't think of bantering with the storekeeper to give you a written certificate saying, "This man has potatoes," would you?

Still less would you think of taking the certificate in place of the potatoes. What would you expect your wife to think of you if you came home with an empty sack on your arm proudly flourishing a scrap of paper, saying: "This man has potatoes."

Why sure I've got 'em, Taters. Got 'em down here in black and white. Signed statement. Had to jaw around a long time to get it and picket the store besides. Threatened to boycott. Badly handled by a policeman but I made the old fellow give in and sign this. See, here it reads, 'This man has potatoes!'

Glorious victory! Nobly waged the class struggle! Taters! Whoop! Hooray! 'This man has potatoes. Great, isn't it?"

Your wife would well be justified in thinking that you had been bantering pretty freely of that which made Milwaukee famous.

I guess she'd want something more than that to put in the pot for dinner. You do, too. You want the goods. Shorter hours and better pay. More dinner and less work. Build up the union that will get them for you and secure them to you by organizing all your fellow wage

### CIRCULATION STATEMENT

Following is the circulation of Cotton's for the issue of last week Dec. 23rd.

Ontario	1459
British Columbia	921
Prov. of Quebec	894
Nova Scotia	514
Alberta	420
New Brunswick	268
Saskatchewan	267
Manitoba	492
Elsewhere	67
Yukon Territory	8
Prince Edward Island	4

Total . . . . . 5014  
Gain for week . . . . . 202  
Total issue for last week 6,000.

slaves so that they all move together and you needn't worry about the boss not recognizing it.

We've got recognition now. Got it in chunks. Got it to burn. The bosses all over the country have already recognized the I. W. W. So have the politicians. So have the employment sharks. So have the labor fakers. So have the parasites that have been sucking the blood of honest toil. They recognize the fact that the I. W. W. is the organization that is destined yet to brush them aside like the vermin they are and win for the producers of wealth not simply the scanty pickings of a shabby existence but all the wealth that they produce.

### THE PEOPLE'S POEMS

#### THE KINGDOM OF PROFIT

Matthew, 19: 14.

They stood in the factory doorway,  
Mary and brother Dan,  
A child with the face of a woman,  
A child with the face of a man.

Hungry and thin and ragged,  
And undersized were they,  
As they stood at the door and shivered  
Ere night had turned to day.

The tender care of a mother  
They had not known for years.  
Their father had died a pauper  
And left them with their fears.

Left them alone in Boston,  
(The home of pork and beans)  
Where little babes are "cheaper"  
Than grown-ups or machines.

Boston the smooth and cultured,  
The "classic" and "refined,"  
Where into books and baubles  
The children's lives they grind.

The church of (God?) felt keenly  
The children's sorry plight,  
And got them a job with Skinner,  
Who was their leading light.

And thus it was that we found them,  
Ere night had turned to day,  
With toil-worn limbs and with faces  
That had not learned to play.

They stood in the factory doorway,  
Mary and brother Dan,  
And the devil laughed at the prospect,  
—By The Unknown.

#### WHAT CAN YOU DO?

You can study for all you are worth. Read the best books, subscribe to the best papers, hear the best lectures.

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