

Justice

FOR a generation in Britain, a certain paper published in London, dominated as the only mouthpiece of Socialism. But about 1902 there trickled down south what was called "the unholy Scottish current" which developed into a new paper and party. But its headquarters were in Scotland, as were its mainstays; inasmuch that, to worry the "Southron loons," the editor would sometimes make a reply in his "answers to correspondents" column in Scots Gaelic! Such were the fierce forerunners of the modern Clydeside Reds and Wild Men! But the original southern paper was civilised and sentimental; for it was—and we believe still is—called "Justice."

Now justice is supposed to be a pearl without price; hence its adoption as a paper's name. But again, some people see that it is not without its drawbacks; because everytime the writer went to a certain lawyer's shack to pay a monthly rent, this framed notice met one's view: "A lot of people who are always demanding 'Justice,' are mighty lucky they don't get it!" That too, seems to have been Shakespear's opinion; for when his Hamlet hires players to act a murder scene to test his uncle's guilt, and old, babbling Polonius tells the Prince when the actors arrive, that he will "use them according to their desert"; Hamlet answers "God's bodikins, man, much better: use every man after his desert and who should 'scape whipping? Use them after your own honor and dignity: the less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty." And when Shylock insists on carrying out the terms of his dreadful bond, Portia makes her famous speech on the beauties of mercy; and later on tells Shylock "as thou urgest justice, be assur'd thou shall have justice, more than thou desir'st."

It appears, then, that there is something higher than justice; and that is generosity, which not only includes justice but goes one or two better than it. Plain people recognise generosity's claims in exhortations such as "Be a sport," and "Make a good fellow of yourself." The merit of the Bible story of the woman taken in adultery, lies in its lesson of "charity," a principle which was given a modern setting by Burns with his "gently scan your brother man, still gentler sister woman," and his "man was made to mourn." Even the lower animals, if we credit R. L. Stevenson, crave something more than justice; for, in his "Memories and Portraits" he describes a dog who always expected certain of his minor offenses to be overlooked in the spirit of Montaigne's "Je ne sais quoi de genereux"—(with, I don't know what of, generosity.)

In his last two articles the writer successfully got away with statements, backed by Marx authority, that if the worker got the full value from the sale of his labor-power commodity, he suffered no injustice. From that it follows that the average capitalist is not "a legalised thief" as he was described by a prominent labor M.P.A., who, in 1919, had been martyred for his opinions and actions. The hardships of capitalism constantly goad socialists to speak thus: and therefore Marx, in his first preface to "Capital" deliberately warns us that capitalist and landlord are creatures of circumstances. Strictly speaking, the capitalist is not a thief, but an exploiter; which means one who makes an advantageous use of anything. Capitalists' profits are not got by a thieving process, but by a "milking" one, a process of exploitation. This is made possible because, under capitalism, the workers do not figure as human beings, but as commodities; whose purchasers are fully entitled to make any and every use of, they see fit. As commodities the workers receive perfect commodity treatment; they get justice and, like Shylock, the dose is more than they desire or relish.

Under another phase of socialist economics Marx appears to base the workers' claims upon generosity rather than justice. That is the case of the relative wage which, with real and nominal wages, make up

the three forms under which wages may be viewed. Hence, even if the worker gets full value for his labor-power and his scale of living is not lowered below the standard he needs, the employer at the same time may, by better organisation and new inventions, increase the amount of exploited surplus value. In that case, says Marx, the worker ought to share in the greater prosperity—not because he is underpaid, but because he deserves a higher proportion of a good thing which he had a share in creating.

There is another and a stronger reason (apart from love and value of Truth) for objecting to indiscriminate denunciation of the capitalists as robbers or legalised thieves. That reason is that if the worker is persuaded that the capitalist is a thief, he naturally thinks the capitalist may be converted to "sin no more" and roll away the burden. That was the old ante-socialist Utopian idea. Let the worker, however, once thoroughly grasp the fact that he suffers no injustice when receiving full value for his labor-power commodity, and it will dawn on him that if, under capitalism, all his sufferings, "by nature's law designed," are unavoidable, and that he neither must nor should expect the capitalists to release him from his harsh fate; then will his class learn to develop backbone and initiative and to rely upon themselves for emancipation from justice a la capitalism! In short, they will respond to one of the few good points of churchianity—the appeal to develop and strengthen the latent potentialities of the individual for their own salvation.

The workers are getting a fine sample of justice now! But what they need to seek for is generosity. That, neither the cynical, callous capitalist system nor the capitalists themselves can afford them so long as the workers function, as they cannot but do, as living tools, exploited conveniences, mere commodities.

Therefore, let not justice, but generosity, be the tailors demand. As "the Lord helps those that help themselves" their next step is to make this possible under the only system that makes a non-commodity working status possible—the Socialist Industrial System of Society. In other words, as Marx advises them, not "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work" should be their slogan and constant guide; but the "Abolition of the Wages System."

At present, by "Hiving" on 17 per cent themselves, and handing over 83 per cent to the capitalists; the workers are, perforce, models of beautiful generosity. Let the tables be turned and a little more to boot, by a "generous" retention of 90 per cent of their wealth production for themselves, and devoting the other 10 per cent to communal purposes. And as their "crowning mercy" and culmination of generosity, they might let all the ex-capitalists in on the new arrangement provided they were willing; and, if not, the latter could betake themselves to some bourn where fuel problems and hard winters never trouble the inhabitants!

PROGRESS.

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Obey that impulse and subscribe for the
WESTERN CLARION
Address P. O. Box 710, Vancouver, B. C.

Enclosed find \$.....
Send the Western Clarion to:

Name

Address

Concerning a White Canada

By F. W. MOORE

THE following is a quotation from the letter of a Negro to the Vancouver Star for February 27th, 1925:

"Sir: A news item under caption 'Ban all colored is aim of body' published in your paper recently excites the very vitals of all concerned. May I ask who has made the white man the lord and ruler of the earth? . . . In the name of justice, fair play, and your Almighty, where are you going to send the Canadian born negroes, also those born elsewhere under Britain's flag, who have become domiciled in Canada?"

In connection with the above we strongly suspect that the metaphorical dart in the quotation is directed principally against Orientals, and for that reason we think we are justified in assuring our coloured friend whose fears are evidently founded on a misunderstanding of capitalistic psychology, that the status of himself and of all his race, who are already established in this country, as long as they are loyal to our national institutions, is now, and will continue to remain, on a par with that of other species of the Canadian proletariat. He may rest assured that profit is profit, and that the human being of any description from whose industrial production it may be extracted easily, has the foundation of his citizenship established on solid bedrock.

Once this obvious truth is appreciated it is easy to see why it is utterly useless to appeal to Capitalism to receive with open arms competitors whom it has in its power to drive out of the country. Sentiment in matters of business is always a drug on the market.

There may be, and no doubt, are, tens of thousands of capitalists who are benevolent, but capitalism itself is driven and regulated by the stern emergency of economic necessity and in anything affecting its final struggle for existence it can recognise neither benevolence, nor race, nor yet nationality. The one essential food for capitalism is profit: if that is not supplied the system starves. Hence, following the discovery that Orientals are expert in competition disastrous to Caucasian businessmen, we hear of an agitation for a white Canada.

That is also the meaning of the Japanese exclusion law recently passed in the United States.

There was a time when Oriental competition, materializing in the labor market only, was the indirect source of much profit to certain sections of the exploiting classes: indeed, it must be so, to a certain extent, today, as witness the distress of cannery operators lest the restrictions on Japanese fishermen should deprive them of some of their Oriental employees; all of which goes to show that the colour of a man has little to do with the cause of the attempts either to import or to send him out of the country.

The fact of the matter is that wherever Capitalism flourishes, there distinctions between race, colour, and nationality must be made much of, otherwise there would never be enough money in the world to make workers slaughter each other in cold blood: nor, can such an undesirable condition be ended except by establishing an international industrial government under which the interests of the people would not be sacrificed to those of the few.

Let the members of all races then, when they have gained the little possible for them to gain under Capitalism, study books dealing with the question of "Economic Determinism." In this way they can discover the meaning of their industrial experiences—a meaning pregnant with importance.

It is only when such meaning is understood; when it inspires men to inaugurate the co-operative commonwealth, that universal freedom will take root. Then, every Jap, Chinaman, Negro, and Caucasian will assume: "A combination and a form indeed, on which every God did seem to set his seal to mark the world the image of a man."