

Dreaming

WE are told quite commonly, in the nature of a reproach, that we are dreamers, floating on the tide of events, waiting softly, like Micawber, for "something to turn up." 'Tis easy to drift. It requires no effort, no thought, no initiative, no courage; and it leaves us free to dream, like opium eaters, of vicarious triumph. Thus humbly are we discovered in the checkered drama of change.

Well let us hope we are dreamers. More or less we are all dreamers. If we did not dream dreams, we could hardly live life. And the world owes much to its dreamers. Robert Burns and Percy Shelley looked deep in the heart of the world, and in glorious song poured forth their visions of its future greatness. William Shakespeare dreamt of things that were not now, but would yet be. John Tyndal and Grant Allen, Morgan, the Ward's—looked backward into deep darkness and forward into brightening day. Robert Owen imaged the misery of existence and linked it to the bright stars. Marx, Engels, Dietzgen patiently garnered the harvest of reality, and dreamed the dream of man. But all of them dreamed open-eyed. Their gaze was but little on the gaudy pageantry of appearance, but much on the dark substance of reality. They stood on enduring fact. They thrilled with the life around them. They probed the tides of progress; grasped at the nature of things. From the founts of life and truth they drew the inspiration which crowns life with hope, and hope with realisation. Each of them clothed the child of his vision in the garments of his particular individuality. But each of them added to the slow growing temple of human happiness, and each of them knew, with the minute precision of understanding. That is why they were "great". Why they saw—where to us there is but darkness—the flying shuttles of time, weaving the pattern of the new world. Weaving it, not through the fragile wool of the ideal, but on the loom of throbbing reality.

Nevertheless, to dream is not to drift. Indeed, there is no such thing as "drifting." Throughout the whole universe, from the tiniest atom to the mightiest star; from the first faint pulsing of chemical reaction to the furthest co-ordination of vibrant sentience there is but the movement of "must." Man and his society is not isolated in this comprehensive scheme of things. We choose—in appearance, we do—by compulsion. We wrap conduct in the vestments of illusion, but act on the fundament of fact. Always, everywhere, we move on the determinants of inevitable necessity; and live as the standards of time shall decree. There is no ideal that does not rest on need; no thought that does not draw sustenance from condition; no act unrelated to the variants of interaction. Nothing is accident, yet nothing is design. There is but the majesty of law, dominant, through matter, in motion.

But matter in motion means change. Not change of law—which is eternal—but change of expression, which is ephemeral. Change itself is but the manifest of a new necessity of movement; and in that movement is outlined both the orbit and pattern of progress. Always is that orbit wider; always is the pattern new; always it carries with it the potential of the new order.

But also it carries with it the time spirit of its condition; the abstract of accumulated knowledge. This is the measure of progress, the hallmark of human attainments, stamped on human society. With it we cut away the ideation of yesterday, and generalize the concepts of tomorrow. With it we reclothe the passions and aspirations of the ancient years; discard their fallacies of accepted truth; and in the fleeting today lay the foundations for new development on the firm basis of established fact. So it comes there is no ideal that does not weep with change; no illusion that does not wither with progress; no sanction that does not grow wan with time. There is no thought that does not take on the char-

acteristics of the present, and no act which does not wear the impress of environing necessity. The abstracts of time are the abstracts of experience. They are the arbiters of mortal destiny, and it is not in human power to violate, either the movement of their growth or the force of their intensity. Thus it comes we think in the terms of contemporary time; live in the ethic of contemporary society. What that time gives we must take; what that ethic avows we must accept. Like death, there is no turning it aside. We may neither believe it nor cherish it—we may even challenge its sanction—but we cannot gainsay its existing supremacy. With the custom of the past we may linger, but we cannot exist; with the life of the future we may dream, but we cannot make it our own. As Paul puts it, "We are members one of another," and no nation, no community, no individual can realise the golden age of promise until omnipotent circumstance has forced society to shatter the tyranny of existing things.

All societies are organised on a definite basis. In that basis lives the spirit of its being, potential in its every movement. It is this thing, this spirit, which we call the economic of society. And in harmony with that economic, the overgrowing society must develop. Savage society was organised on kinship, and it produced the comradeship of the commune. Political society is organized on territorial acquisition (direct at first—and then financial) and it has blackened the world with the horrors of slavery. Savage society decayed because the technique of progress was not sufficiently advanced to enable it to support itself, and political society is dying because it can no longer sustain the masses it has subjugated. The wealth of the former was freedom—access to life's necessities; the wealth of the latter subjugated labor—the cause of its disruption. And until labor recognises its subjugation and abolishes capitalist exploitation, it must remain poor, miserable, degraded, a prostitute to all pleasures of the ruling class.

With Henry asleep, this abolition is not yet. With Henry awake, it might happen tomorrow. Clearly our work is to awaken Henry. Being members of the proletariat, we try to point out both the cause of its misery and the reason for the change. But being dreamers we realise that the task is one for a giant, the giant of social necessity. There are those of us who yearn for action, for something now. There is neither blame nor wonder to that; we know the weariness of waiting, and the fiery pangs that leap in fitful fever through the heart of impotent poverty. But wait we must, for progress is not to be hastened, nor yet hindered. It flowers and fruits in perfect accord with the forces of production. When the forces of production are spent in their old forms, society must change its form also and begin its new cycle of development. This is the revolution. But revolutions are not made, nor engineered. They come. They are the ripened fruit of social class antagonisms, and so coming they are invincible. But to force the pace is in vain. Long years ago the slaves of Sicily held the Roman armies at bay for 10 years. They failed in the end; because neither the world nor its industry nor its method were developed and organised on the only basis on which freedom can flourish—the socialisation of resource and production; its social ownership and administration, and the consequent elimination of class distinction. That is the point we must come to before we can be free. For the past five years Soviet Russia has held organised capital in check. That the struggle has been so tragic, so bitter and so prolonged, is mainly because the western proletariat looks askance at its Soviet brethren—simply that the western slave does not yet see his captivity, and therefore feels no need for freedom.

While capitalist exploitation shall find a market for the sale of its goods, dull though the market be, while capitalist government can juggle with finance

and charm with reform; while a large section of society can maintain even a precarious livelihood; while by monopoly and efficiency capitalist industry can extract profits sufficient to cover its limited charities; although wages may fall and the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie grow thin; and the standards of living decline and unemployment assume fresh bulk; still, the capitalist class, by its political power and greater sense of class-cohesion can retain its possession against a proletariat—turbulent perhaps—but hopeful of opportunity, partly benumbed with philanthropy and blind to its social relationship. For let it not be forgotten, although a minority controls society, it first receives and now retains its sanction of force from the mass of society. It acquired dominance on the tides of social interest and while that tide exists, i.e., while the social mind sees social interest in industrial profits, in financial ventures and in individual initiative, no minority however intelligent can prevail against it. And no intelligent minority would attempt it. Only when the market shall be dissipated, when monopoly has co-ordinated technique and production; and the forces of production and the consciousness of social necessity press irresistibly against the barrier of private possession, then will the power of the capitalist class fail, and the proletarian founders of the new society be compelled to make a breach in the citadel of authority.

Our business, our function, is education; to spread the knowledge, as well as we may, of social organisation, of social classes and their interacting relationships. To the end that when the class struggle culminates decisively, confusion may be a minus quantity. The spreading of that knowledge, in co-operation with the gathering antagonism of social production and private possession is the action that counts; its acceptance the union that matters. If our fellow slaves will listen—good. We can achieve all. If they will not listen—also good. But do not mistake the significance of refusal. Do not imagine that revolutionary ardor or dauntless enthusiasm can be substituted for class vision and class consciousness, or that they can ever lead the proletariat to the shining frontiers of success. To the clear verge of fact the proletariat must go. It may go of its own volition, or it may be driven. But it will never be led. Because to get there it must pass the substance of experience through the thinking mind of consciousness. Unity, to be strength, must be real. And the only interest which can make it real is the vision of our common slavery. We must all wear the "red cap" of understanding.

Nevertheless, we are the keepers of no man's opinions. To urge—or to oppose—are matters of personal taste—and experience. In the nature of things we cannot but cherish the fires of our own hearth. From social evolution we have derived socialist philosophy, and in the light of that philosophy we interpret social events and measure their significance. It takes value from the shimmering ideal, and places it on the more wonderful fact; it takes it from man and invests it in society: But it does so in order that, in the final term, man "may reach up to the stars." We ask none to accept; all to seek and for all, and from all, we demand a reason. For we are persuaded that whoso will begin to ask effect for its cause and assign specific reasons to specific things, will begin at the same time to dream the dream of the ages, and put his strength to the task of triumph.

R.

BASKET PICNIC

To be held at Second Beach, Vancouver, B. C.

SUNDAY 25th JUNE

Under S. P. of C. Auspices.

Directions: Assemble at 2nd Beach, Stanley Park, at 1 p.m. Bachelors are requested to bring fruit. The family baskets will carry whatever else is necessary to the grub supply for an enjoyable day's outing. COME ALL!