

The Common Herd and the Commonwealth

BY F. W. MOORE

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE, when driving in his carriage through the streets of Paris, was once asked why he did not seem to be affected by the applause of the multitude, "I am not moved at all," said he, "They would applaud just as heartily if I were going to my execution, provided they had the necessary inspiration from the press and pulpit."

In a similar manner Scott referred to the crowd in the following lines:

"Who o'er the herd would wish to reign?
Fantastic, fickle, fierce and vain, etc."

And not only Scott and Napoleon, but thousands of soi-distant intellectuals imagine that these attributes are inherent in the constitution of humanity. They never for a moment suppose that they are imminent merely, and not inherent; in other words, the attributes are not inseparable from the constitution of humanity but are temporarily remaining there as the effect of suggestions embodied in a crude environment.

As a matter of fact the herd is the heir apparent to the industrial throne. The continually increasing ability of man to produce by means of machinery more commodities than he can sell in any expansion of the world market, assures this, and at the same time heralds the early decease of the capitalistic system. The really momentous question incidental to the opportunity is as follows: Will the fantastic ones rise to the occasion?

Will they be able, when capital breaks down of its own weight, to operate the industries of the world on a basis of production for use? If they don't, we may rest assured that the whole civilized world will be adversely affected by the most regrettable calamities.

But in the meantime we are merely considering their capacity to rule. Men in the mass are fantastic, fickle, fierce and vain only in direct ratio to their lack of opportunity for self-culture. When they have no set of general principles, the truth of which they know how to prove, and the value of which as a standard they can use in estimating the worth of the opinions and judgment of others, it is impossible for them to be anything but slaves to their own credulity. Hence being fantastic, fickle, vain and unconscious of their class position in society, they send representatives of the plutocracy to parliament under the impression that their interests are identical.

That is why the promoters of industrial interests, whose money is instrumental in sending these men to power, can afford to despise the opinions of the majority of their constituents; that is why their hired men as members of parliament can so flagrantly treat the people as a herd in positively refusing to account for millions of dollars placed in their trust, as we shall show later. They hold them in contempt because the opinions of the majority, so-called, are in reality the opinions of their masters imbibed unconsciously in various subtle manners through the feeding-bottle of suggestion, insinuated too subtly for notice amongst the dining utensils with which they introduce their mental pabulum to the system; they despise them all the more because in case of dissatisfaction with the government in power, they know that the wrath of those whom their poets have dubbed "the herd," will be expended at the polls in throwing out one set of their servitors, and putting another, equally useless, in its place; yet, to be perfectly candid, the lack of judgment is not the only reason for these conditions, since the class that controls the wealth, has various methods of controlling the votes also. Nevertheless, the lack of judgment, and the environment that is partly responsible for it, are of tremendous importance. This is all the more so since environment, which is in a great measure factitious, possesses all the potency of its creators as a medium of suggestion. Its influence begins in our boyhood's days. What emulatory emotions, for instance, may be aroused by the statue of

a far-famed warrior in the subconscious mentality of a boy scout whose environment involves inspirations from the swash-buckling characters of a dime novel no less than from the apotheized heroes of his text-book literature!

In an analogous manner the political orators of every country, hypnotizing the crowds by flattery, induce them to believe they are the most fortunate people on earth flourishing, as they are, under an ideal system of government.

Nowhere are the citizens more easily cajoled in this way than in the great republic to the south, sometimes grandiloquently described by the term "God's country," where, as in the case of the Morgan interests, 60 per cent. of the wealth is owned by 2 per cent. of the people (The Nation, N.Y., quoted from Clarion 935).

We may behold the same joyous crowd, obsessed by the flattery of their rhetorical sophists, in every country of the civilized world. They are particularly in season when the Machiavellian "spielers" of capitalism, after announcing that their countrymen are the most superior people on earth in times of peace, go on to dilate on their invincible courage and prowess in time of war, and that, when they are drawing part of their incomes from foreign munition factories whose weapons are used later against their own armies.

About the time that immediately preceded the outbreak of the world war it was commonly reported that certain prominent Englishmen had shares in the Essen cannon foundries established

Krupp in 1848; and even if that were so, we know that the paradoxical state of affairs did not end there, for sometimes we find titled Englishmen's names inscribed on the guns captured from their enemies. On one side of a cannon that now adorns the town of Bedford, England—a cannon taken by the Bedfordshire Regiment from the Turks at Gaza, in Palestine—is the following inscription: "Made by Sir George Armstrong, Whitworth & Co." (See pamphlet "Women and War," by Rose Henderson.

Such extraordinary situations are no discredit to their human factors. They go to show that while our chauvinistic sophists are trying to keep the human race divided, the inexorable tendency of the development of trade, commerce, and finance is to create an international federation of the world.

A greater bar to progress in that direction even than the sophistries of the chauvinists, is the insidious propaganda of the press veiled by a mantle of patriotic enthusiasm; indeed so potent are the suggestions from this source that their effect descends unto the children of the third and fourth generations. Sometimes a grandson of the original recipient of capitalist psychology may quite innocently disseminate distorted portrayals of the stern realities of life.

We shall finish this article with a quotation from the "B.C. Teacher" for March. It is a statement in which 99 per cent. of the teachers of Canada would place implicit confidence, coming as it does from an obviously honorable man who believes in his own words himself. Here they are: "If our teachers acquire a personal knowledge of the various

provinces and gain a vision of Canada's splendid possibilities, they will make such an impression on the minds of our future statesmen, who are yet at school, that the narrow provincial viewpoint will disappear in wise legislation for a united Canada."

The sentiment embodied in the above is all right as an ideal, but the idea of materializing it under modern circumstances, where opposing interests are at stake, is to say the least, grossly absurd.

It is an open secret that members of parliament on this continent are returned by means of funds supplied by the plutocracy (See charges sworn to by prominent citizens and preferred against the agents of both the Liberal and Conservative parties involving the acceptance respectively of \$300,000 and 350,000, as campaign funds. Other larger funds of a similar nature are referred to in the same section of the "Searchlight" No. 9, page 29—pamphlet got up by the Provincial Party.)

In connection with the helplessness of members of an organization controlled by campaign funds we shall quote Mr. Woodsworth, M.P., for Centre Winnipeg in referring to a parliamentary enquiry into the expenditure of \$50,000,000 voted for war purposes:—

"The total amount of money involved in the purchase investigated was not more than \$3,000,000. This included the price of the submarines, in other words, the Public Accounts committee's investigation touched less than one sixteenth of the \$50,000,000 voted by parliament for war purposes."

We wonder, if the habit of sending plutocratic nominees to parliament persists, how any knowledge whatever of our provinces could influence our future members in bringing about legislation in any way opposed to the interests of the masters at whose hands they are fed. Teachers' ideas as to the future are usually grand, but when entertained without taking into consideration the doctrine of Economic Determinism they are likely to remind one of some accredited faculties of the subjective mind, which, they say, are specially adapted for use in a future life; yet, in connection with the ideas, heaven is not meant here, but the world as it will be when its inhabitants, no longer the unthinking herd, have at last awaked to the necessity of initiating a real civilization by combining together politically and industrially in an international federation of the world long expected by socialists and known to them as an ideal under the name of the "Co-operative Commonwealth."

Then for the first time in history shall all these have been metamorphosed into real men and women of whom it may be justly said in the adapted words of Tennyson that they: "moved upwards having cast out the beast, and let the ape and tiger die."

In other words civilization, which is now embryonic, will have seen the light. The higher development of man will have begun.

BUSINESS HELPS ITSELF.

In the United States the business man "views with alarm" all things that disturb his political peace. Following upon the recent presidential election there the National Republican League has actively bestirred itself on behalf of "sound principles of government" by circularising all and sundry who may have more of the world's wealth than the other fellow, sounding the warning note against overconfidence concerning the defeat of radicalism. "Radicalism," says the circular letter sent out by the League, "is not dead. Two years after the great Harding landslide the radicals 'came back'." Apparently this was somewhat astonishing to big business which now, through the Republican League, urges the policy of organising a nation-wide campaign ahead of next year's Congressional election, and, specifically, to send literature broadcast "to

(Continued on page 4)

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