

STUPIDUS AND SAPIENS

(Continued from page 1)

"Yet, as long ages rolled he learned
From beaver, ape and ant to build
Shelter for sire and dam and brood,
From blast and blaze that hurt and killed."

Age by age, we can trace the march of our fathers towards us, ever, as they come, proving painfully and slowly by the accumulated experience of past generations; growing in knowledge, growing greater in brain, and less brutish in body. Ever impelled by the stern necessity of obtaining a better hold upon the means of life. Improving their dwellings, their boats, their clothing, their tools and weapons. Discarding the rough stone weapon for the polished, that for the flint, thence to copper, to bronze, to iron.

Free, wandering, warring, hunting, lawless, propertyless, "ignorant" savages. Living thus for nigh three hundred thousand years before the first dawn of barbarism even. Then, finding a new source of food supply in the cultivation of the soil, swinging open the gates of Eden and passing out on the way that led to labor and to slavery, to progress and to civilization.

That ancient forbear of ours, the child of the man-ape, the scientists call "homo stupidus"—stupid man. Us they call "homo sapiens"—wise man. Oh, fond conceit! Wise man! We, who revere the antiquity of a civilization barely ten thousand years old, and that with lapses. Who invest with a

halo of heaven-born sanctity a mushroom system of property of little better than a century's growth. Who bow before the altars of "eternal" deities discovered but yesterday. Who crystallize our miserable modern characteristics as "human nature"—as it was in the beginning and always shall be. Who elevate to the ludicrous dignity of divine law an upstart moral code co-eval with shop-keeping. Who conceitedly plume ourselves upon the possession of a higher ethical sense than our rude forbears, and daily and habitually stoop to practices which the most untutored savage would abhor. Who lie, and cheat, and thieve, and prey upon one another. Who rob, ravish and oppress the weak and cringe before the strong; who pander to lust and prostitute for a pittance; who traffic, traffic, traffic in all things—in manly "honor," in womanly "virtue," in childish defencelessness, in the flesh and blood of kith and kin, in the holiest of holies or in the abomination of abominations; and who crown our achievements by pouring over the festering heap of our iniquities the leprous, foetid slime of hypocrisy.

Wise man! Wonderful creature! Lord of creation! Hub of the universe! For whose uses all things, the quick and the dead, were especially created; the stars and the planets, the sun by day and the moon by night to light him; the earth, the seasons, the winds, the rain, the waters, the lightning, the metals, the mountains, the plains, the valleys, the forests, the fruits, the beasts, the fishes, the birds, the bees, the fleas and the flies and the corned beef and cabbage.

A Glance Back---And a Forecast

By C. STEPHENSON

AS A CONTRIBUTOR to the columns of the Clarion, I have been asked to moralize in this its final issue. The Clarion passes, but the cause abides. So our last note shall ring of defiance to reaction. There are elements who hate education designed to develop a knowledgeable and thinking labor movement. They hated the Clarion. "The common rabble, they sneer privately, have no capacity to know, they can only feel; therefore, educate only to feed the flames of impulse and prejudice. The few elect are the saviours of society." So runs, in effect, the reactionary concert. Spread abroad, its fruits are havoc. It slows up thinking, dries up the springs of intellectual power, leaves labor a creature of moods, unstable, futile. The point of view of reaction, rationalized as progress, was frankly put recently by a Vancouver labor journal. Announcing its first issue as opening a new epoch in labor journalism, it told us that, "the antiquated stereotyped brand of labor journalism which served our movement well enough in its infancy" (meaning, of course, studies of social theory and technical treatment of social problems) this, it continues, "has grown obsolete and today is more of a fetter than a champion of those who toil" Issues of that journal so far, show the "new journalism" proposes to educate us with scraps of news and tidbits of comment. What brass, though, to say "it marks a new epoch in labor journalism!" Find a labor movement counting for something in its community and it will be found its press lays itself out to furnish discussions on theory and other technical matters. How otherwise can our minds be really informed and latent intellectual powers developed for the service of the movement? There is no stint of journals of the master class point of view, and the universities still function. However, some day the tide will turn and a group, having a proper sense of values on education, will launch a scientific and technical journal for socialism and labor. Speed the day.

Socialism, reform and revolutionary, once an active movement, has suffered a decline on the whole North American continent. I have been told the S. P. of C. once contested twenty-three seats in a B. C. election. In my own time, since 1911 or '12, the

party had branches in almost every city from coast to coast, and in smaller places in mining and agricultural districts. The Social Democratic Party with "Cotton's Weekly" as its organ, was also active. Organizers were constantly on the road. Propaganda meetings in halls and at street corners were regular features. An enormous mass of literature circulated. The "Appeal to Reason" had a greater circulation in Canada than the combined labor press today. Yet that glory has dimmed everywhere, and practically departed from the Canadian scene.

Experience teaches, it is said, if mind gets to work upon experience. The following explanation for the decline is given for what it is worth. Many factors operated. These are often cited, the war, revival of nationalism, breakdown of socialist prognostications, Russian revolution, press propaganda, shattered socialist preconceptions, split in the movement, industrial depression and working class defeats, fools and traitors, etc. Yet, I think, those factors merely hastened on what was, even if they had been absent, inevitable. That they operated in other countries without similar results points that way. The primary cause of the decline, a set of conditions, is as follows: The fact is, the North American scene, including Canada, is one hostile to socialism, as yet. It is the scene of a young, vigorous and developing capitalism. The psychology and ideals of the people are highly individualistic. Whereas, socialism, with its implications of group psychology and ideals, is a product of European historical conditions, stratified group life, class struggles and consciousness of class. It came to America from Europe with emigrant urban peoples, affected with socialist ideas, streaming in since 1848. But the descendants of emigrant socialists have shown little disposition to hold the faith. It has been maintained and nurtured mainly by the succession of newcomers and those who were resistant to the American environment. This is in general, of course. Americans of old stock have taken up with socialism, but are singular in the mass. When the stream of emigrants reached flood-tide, then socialism waxed in prosperity. But there are limits to the rate a country can absorb new population. In time a point of absolute saturation may be reached, to

go beyond which promotes vicious problems as, for example, unemployment on such a scale as to menace the standard of living. The government curtails or stops expenditures for emigration, qualifications for entry are raised, the war comes and the stream falls to a trickle for some years. The war over, quota rulings are enforced. All this time the population grows by natural increase. Thus the restricted European emigration is less and less able to contaminate the mass of American born and new elements who are taking on, by force of habituation, the individualistic and competitive habits of life and thought of the American environment. And so, socialism declines—the habitudes of the environment prevail against it. Our other factors but hastened the process of decline.

The following ventures a forecast in regard to the future of socialism on the North American continent. In the light of modern science, the place and function of habit and habit forming environments in social change, is sketched in. For an adequate discussion of the psychology of habits, read Dewey's "Human Nature and Conduct," as an introduction to social psychology.

"Social progress, is at bottom, a matter of the evolution of habits accompanied by technical changes." (American Journal of Sociology). A hundred years ago it was taught that man was a purely rational animal. And even today social theorizing unwittingly works with that assumption of an exaggerated role of rationality in controlling conduct. Yet all conduct is a matter of habit, and we often act contrary to the dictates of reason. Theorizing with that old psychology, the idealists of the French revolution believed they were inaugurating the reigns of reason, justice and universal brotherhood. That was magic. A sounder science today says that men are bundles of propensities, impulses and habits, as well as reasoning beings, conduct guided more by the former than intellect. The wave of the French revolution rose high, impulse overflowed the channels of habit momentarily, but it settled down at last nearer where habits had evolved with the tools and techniques of livelihood. In a study of Russia, a writer, a supporter of the Soviet, says that perhaps the most hopeful thing in that country today is the Russian Co-operative Movement. Aside from its value economically, it is a technical advance, within its area of influence developing group activities and thinking in terms of the interest and welfare of the groups. It is a habit breaking, habit forming factor in the environment of peasant and urban peoples. "We have to go back," said Lenin at the height of the Communist programme of nationalization. Routine minds protested, but Lenin sensed the peasant man's psychology. Men do not change their habits under the spur of words and doctrines or decrees; in the mass, they learn by habituation rather than by reflection. Political revolution may sweep custom and institution away, but the habits of mind shaped to their pattern persist until new environmental conditions of life have operated to break them down and form others. To a large extent, what we do makes us what we are.

The core of socialism is the age-long, never-dying desire for a co-operative social life. It finds its objective support in the modern world from an environment in which the machine process demands a social life. Socialism will advance again. The coming socialism will learn much from Russia and from twentieth century science that the socialism of the nineteenth did not know. It will rise this time native to the soil of America and its developing conditions, technical, economic, political and psychological. It will evolve a strategy of change promoting education and political struggle for environmental changes. It will estimate reforms not only by their economic values, but also ask: Will this reform reduce the area of competition, or make for group co-operation where individual activity prevails and build up habit and disposition for the social life the machinery process demands?

(Continued on page 4)