

The Gap

SOME speakers and writers often refer to the great gap said to exist between civilized man and our barbarian progenitors. They point to our great buildings, then to the hut of grass and boughs, or the tent of skins used by savages and barbarians. They tell of the precarious existence and violent life of early man, with his limited methods of acquiring food, and his blood feuds; of his abject superstition and his narrow outlook, and then point to the wonderful progress made in developing new sources of food supply, and the complicated machines used to day in the production of wealth. They also elaborate in glowing terms on our artistic outlook and the discoveries of science. It seems a long stretch between us and early man, but let us scratch away a little of the veneer of civilization, and we will find how closely related we are in our mental outlook.

While we may understand something of thunder, of earthquakes, or the movements of the solar system, a large number still hold that even the movements of planets, and the operation of the elements, are under the control of a supreme being or an all-powerful will, while legal phraseology, I believe, describes earthquakes and storms at sea as "acts of God."

If we look with contempt at the savage's devotion to fetiches, or his practice of human sacrifice, we would do well to remember that no Roman Catholic church is complete until it has beneath its altar some fetich in the shape of the bones of a long dead saint, and effigies of these persons abound in the churches and temples, and pilgrimages are made to shrines in various parts of the world for the miraculous cure of sickness. Catholics regularly sacrifice their god, and then eat him in the mass or eucharist. Puritans partake of communion to commemorate the sacrifice and to get close contact with their deity.

Those who want a fuller idea of the origin of ceremonial cannibalism, will find the subject dealt with in an interesting manner by Grant Allen in the essays on "The Worship of Death," contained in the collection of writings bearing the title "The Hand of God."

As to the violent life of the barbarians, it is not necessary to do more than point to the slaughter during the war just completed. If we needed more illustrations of violence in present day society, we could find them aplenty by looking at the huge numbers of workers continually being maimed and killed in "peaceful" industry through the lack of safety appliances. In passing, we might note that we still owe all the honors and decorations to fighting-men, or at least to those who command the fighting men, and let many inventors and artists die in poverty and obscurity.

Looking at the implements by which men procure their living, we might say that the gap between the savage and ourselves is wide indeed, but it can be bridged by tracing the development of the crooked digging stick used by the first horticulturalists, to the tractor of modern farms.

Similarly the great plants with complex machines turning out hundreds of autos per week, are linked directly to the race of barbarians who learned to smelt iron ore, and these in turn are connected with much earlier savages who discovered the art of making fire.

The voyages of Columbus and other discoverers could not have taken place, had not the despised savage made a dug-out canoe, from which our "floating palaces" have descended.

Almost every step of the march has been met by bitter opposition and oppression from those in authority; doubtless the men who first learned to make fire were accused of stirring up demons, while many of us can remember that a few years ago some people said that if God had intended us to fly, he would have provided us with wings. When in recent times the locomotive was first used, it

was described as the work of the devil, so to-day the Socialist is charged with trying to overthrow civilization.

True enough, the life of early man was precarious; he had to subsist largely on what nature provided ready-made, but there are ominous signs that the coming winter will find many face to face with privation, and cases of death from starvation are common enough. In periods of prosperity we are slowly poisoned by heavily adulterated food, something totally unknown to primitive peoples.

Floods and droughts caused famines in past ages. Today, so much has the machinery of wealth production and the organization of industry been improved, that we are largely independent of climatic conditions.

A comparatively small percentage of society can, in addition to providing—after a fashion—for their own wants, produce a surplus to feed and clothe an army of parasites, such as soldiers, policemen, preachers, politicians, flunkies, etc., as well as keep in luxury the small ruling class of capitalists.

With all this power of production the vast majority of us are not certain of our livelihood from day to day.

The gigantic and complicated machinery by which modern society produces its sustenance cannot be owned by individuals as was the digging stick or bow and arrow of our forefathers, or the small hand tools of the medieval artisan.

All history shows us that the products of labor go to the owner of the instruments of labor. The ownership of the means of production of today is in the hands of a comparatively small group, and to them therefore go the products of the labor of the rest of society—hence the uncertainty of our livelihood and the misery and poverty that is the lot of most of us.

Here we will also find the basic cause for wars, for repression in India and Ireland, and for the violence used against Socialists in well-nigh every country but Soviet Russia.

Our propaganda calls for the ownership of the means of life by the whole of society, so that the products of labor shall belong to all.

This change accomplished, we shall be assured a plentiful supply of life's necessities, and our mental vision widened by the removal of obstacles to learning, we will at last be in a position immeasurably superior to that of our primitive ancestors.

W. H. C.

Mobilization For The Class Struggle

WHILST the war was on it was quite common to be sagely told by casual acquaintances that we were living in great times and that those who emerged from the Great War would see great changes. Most of these comments were the reflections, gravely repeated as opinions, that had been culled from the magazines and newspapers. Nationalizing of industries and greater freedom for the common run of mankind were assumed on the basis that the war was for Democracy.

It was waged for Democracy, but what democracy meant is only just now dawning on the great mass. Democracy is business, and business has to be democratic in its own peculiar way, which means freedom to buy and sell. The workers, being wares for purchase and sale must of necessity be subject to the influence of business democracy and their freedom can permit them to seek the most favorable market for the disposal of their energies. To know that all such markets are controlled by others who are also champions of freedom should quite naturally appeal to those who fought for this principle. Having triumphed for

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The Glorious Fourth

THE 4th of July was a beautiful day. I mean the weather.

The bourgeoisie turned to their golf, or went to the mountains.

Like wise men, they fled from the rotten inferno called cities; from the noise, racket, and glare, to cool green shades, inviting streams, with none but the birds to bear them witness, and played or fished, or just rested from the grind of business.

Not so the proletaire.

They do not know how to rest, or they have perverted ideas of the same.

They crowded every flat-wheeled street car, and with the patience of their kind hung on to straps, shifted the babies from one arm to the other, sweated and waited—Job like—for the end.

They were going to see the parade.

In the city the streets were lined with them all craning their necks, and straining their eyes to get the first glimpse.

Presently it came into view.

A line of heavy footed policemen led, chewing stolidly, and trying to make as military an appearance as possible.

Their presence was no doubt necessary too, as some misguided patriot might try reading the historic declaration with its rolling periods: "All men are created free and equal," and so forth.

There are individuals who have tried it, quite ignoring the difference of time and place. But the police knew how to handle them. Then came a band, leading a company of serious faced militiamen, with their rifles at the shoulder, and their gaze straying to the police quite often.

It should be noted that the blue-coats had threatened a strike a few days before.

More solemn faced men, flags galore, cheers from the sweating proletaire.

Hats off occasionally as the great joss was carried by. Enthusiastic applause when the bearskin hats, and scarlet coated and kilted warriors swept proudly along.

Something different. An agreeable brain shock.

Two or three auto loads of innocent childhood; sanctimonious slaves at the wheel; inscriptions on the sides: "First Presbyterian Bible Class. We stand for Christian Patriotism."

Poor victims—so young, and full of possibilities.

Then came the real thing.

Decorated cars, with pretty maidens, and samples of the advertised ware.

"Try Money Bags Macaroni."

"Have you used Grafter's Gum Drops?"

"Patronize Home Industry. Buy, Buy, Buy."

There was the outstanding fact of the celebration. All the idealism, patriotism, the loud shouting and parading of the Sacred Fourth, degraded as all other one-time noble sentiments have been, to a mere boosting or booming of this or that commodity.

The slave still retains his sentiments; it furnishes a relief, a relaxation, from this daily grind.

But his master!

One motto will serve him: "What is there in it for me?"

The parade was gone. The cars were again clanging and groaning along, packed to the steps with the usual long suffering, good-natured freight, bound to the park for the afternoon.

There to lie on the grass till the evening, drinking pop, chewing pop-corn, peanuts, sandwiches, pie and other solid edibles.

Then, afterwards, the same scrambling rush to get a toehold for the ride home.

Sleepy tired men and women, crying children, all sure they had spent a happy day.

Back for a fitful night's slumber, broken too early by the alarm clock's dismal din.

Back to the factory, to produce more wealth for the boss to appropriate and advertise.

And proud, no doubt, of the "independence" they so fittingly celebrated.

F. S. F.