

wages, or interest, or rent or all combined. He has not talked in socialistic jargon of "production for use" and not for profit, but he came perilously near to it. Some of his friends say it for him. These men are not only ignorant of natural laws; they do not know the meaning of terms.

THAT there are large groups ignorant of the fundamental laws of political economy is proven by the half-baked theories which are current and are urged as panaceas. The money theory of prosperity held by these ill-informed gentlemen, of whom Mr. Roosevelt is one, is at the basis of most of these theories. There are groups, mutually destructive, who advance theories of money with the object of doing away with interest, forgetful that interest is not paid for the use of money but is the return to capital; that if we had no money at all interest would still be paid for the loan and use of capital.

THE prevailing confusions are numerous and many of them, as we have said, self-destructive. The real factors in distribution are calmly ignored and explanations for the existing depression in the oracular style are constantly forthcoming. Thus William Truant Foster says in April *Survey Graphic*, concluding an article entitled "A Bill for Hard Times," "All of which means that every major depression is exclusively a mismanagement of currency and credit."

NOW to deliberate further. That less than five per cent of the people are receivers of economic rent paid by ninety-five per cent; that the richest resources of the earth are held by the few; that industry is burdened by excessive taxation and commerce throttled by tariffs, mean nothing to these wise pundits who find it easier to think crookedly than to think straight; easier to put aside all these plainly obvious violations of natural laws and their outcome, and wander into labyrinthian caverns for explanations that lie wholly within the shadows and are only a pale reflex of prevailing conditions in which all economic laws are violated or set at naught. This is the explanation of the amazing profundity of these "thinkers" who are held in such high esteem by their equally ignorant disciples who think what is taught must be profound in that is bottomless. Marcel Proust has said: "Each finds lucidity only in the ideas that are in the same state of confusion as his own."

IT is true that the poorest may now in certain ways enjoy what the richest a century ago could not have commanded, but this does not show improvement of condition so long as the ability to obtain the necessities of life is not increased. The beggar in a great city may enjoy many things from which the backwoods farmer is debarred, but that does not prove the condition of the city beggar better than that of the independent farmer.—"PROGRESS AND POVERTY."

Intellectual Malnutrition

AN EVIL ARISING FROM THE DEPRESSION
THAT IS MORE SINISTER THAN
PHYSICAL STARVATION

By JOHN LUXTON

(Concluded)

IN the same number of *Harper's* appears a discussion of liberty by Dr. Alexander Meiklejohn, formerly president of Amherst College. It is entitled: "Liberty—For What?" It is plainly an expression of the confusion in his own mind of the various concepts of liberty held by Americans, especially those of our scholars and practical men who call themselves "realists," and an attempt to justify his own concept of liberty, equality, fraternity, and the sum total of these, democracy. He is sound in his own concepts. We would wish for no better result of the American educational system than that each and every young American should leave school with the concept of liberty possessed by Dr. Meiklejohn. But we feel that the doctor has treated us to some mental food that will counteract the effect of his very sound doctrine. We do not see why he needed to do this. In education it is never wise to present conflicting ideas or theories when the intention is to have the students reject the false by logical reasoning unless the true is well supported by facts. Yet the doctor admits that his evidence in support of his assertion that Americans still love equality and fraternity is not of the laboratory type, but merely his own interpretation of events of history and of the state of mind of the American people. Who would ask for better proof? The Chinese do not attempt to prove by laboratory methods what is perfectly obvious. Even as they, the doctor is depending upon something inherent in all men, intuition, but his admission weakens the case in the eyes of many who will say that his belief is merely his own personal opinion.

The doctor speaks of the paradox in our interpretation of liberty. It is that liberty forbids the interference with certain of our activities and requires that we interfere with others. The First Amendment to the Constitution prohibits Congress from interfering with religion, the freedom of the press, or of speech, or with the right of the people to assemble peaceably, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances. These are things in which we are guaranteed absolute freedom. The Fifth Amendment, says Dr. Meiklejohn, suggests that people may be deprived of life, liberty, or property, *with due process of law*. Later on the doctor explains this seeming paradox by showing that the Constitution guarantees in the Fifth, and in the Fourteenth Amendments, in regard to ownership and management of property, not freedom from restraint, but restraint in conformance to justice and regularity. He does not attempt to explain

the reason why the government may take life but not interfere with a man's religion.

We believe that the Fifth Amendment expresses the ideas prevalent at the time of its formulation and does not imply that the Congress may or must regulate and restrain, even take, life, liberty, or property. At the time of the adoption of this amendment no one questioned the right of the state to take life or property or to deprive a man of his liberty. The Fifth Amendment was intended to prevent the state from doing so except for good and sufficient reasons after due process of law. There is no need of implying that the state may do what everyone admits it has the power to do. But human opinion had not developed at that time to the point of seeing that the state has no right to take what it can not give, that is life. And the Declaration made it perfectly clear that the right to life is inalienable. No man is fit to be judge of the right to life of any other man, and no man may take life except as a means of protecting his own or that of another. What applies to the individual applies to society. We have reached a point in our civilization where we may question the right of society to take life except as a means of preserving life. We had not reached such a stage when the Fifth Amendment was adopted.

In regard to liberty we do not see that the Fifth Amendment does anything but guarantee justice for those who have sold their endowed rights by the disregard of the endowed rights of others. A man who takes the life or property of another man without good and sufficient reason has violated the inalienable rights of all men including his own, and has thus forfeited his right to liberty. It is the business of the state, or of society, to restrain him from further violations of the inalienable rights of all men. To restrain him does not mean to kill him nor to confiscate that which is rightfully his. We think now of crime as due to maladjustment to society. We may not know the cause but at least we have reached the point where we are considering the social rehabilitation of criminals. If we kill the man, we are admitting that we are doing so as the easiest way of solving the problem, or we are satisfying revenge. The trouble with both reasons is that the problem is not solved and revenge upon one criminal does not deter others.

What we have said in regard to life and liberty applies with equal force to property. The Fifth Amendment is a safeguard, not necessary in a highly developed state of civilization, but we are not in such a state as yet. Our ancestors had fled from a continent where the few personal belongings, even the daughters and wives of tenants, were not secure from the greed of the overlord. The confiscation of property in America in retaliation for acts of insurrection against the royal governors and the British crown was not very long past. The possibility that patriots might try the same thing against persons they

disliked was very real. Therefore the Fifth Amendment guaranteed security in possession of property. But the conception of property was wrong then and is still wrong in the minds of most people. Property at that time referred to the material products of labor, and to natural products, men and land. We have modified our conception to the extent of abolishing property in men by the Thirteenth Amendment. We still believe that one may own property in land. In course of time, if we do not succumb to mental malnutrition, we shall realize that private property in land is as wrong as private property in men. Then we must revamp the Fifth and the Fourteenth Amendments so that land and natural resources shall be recognized as common property, and private property, in which the owner has title due to his own production of the property, or to exchange or surrender of title by a former owner, shall be free from confiscation or regulation as long as the owner does not use it or maintain it in such a way as to limit or obstruct the right of any one to life, liberty, and property. The state has no business to interfere in any man's affairs, internal or external, unless that man is interfering in any way with the rights of all men to life, liberty, and property. In interfering with these a man forfeits his own rights. We do not see the implication in the Fifth Amendment that Dr. Meiklejohn sees. We do see an effort to make us more secure in our inalienable rights, which was a great step forward at the time of its formulation.

Let us consider, in passing, the First Amendment, which prohibits Congress from establishing religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. Does this amendment prevent Congress from making laws to prevent the practice of polygamy among any religious sect, or the offering of human sacrifices should such a sect appear, or the buying of slave girls to be temple prostitutes should a sect from Asia be transplanted to our dominions by conversion of native born? Or suppose a sect similar to the Doukhobors should begin one of their milleniums by shedding their clothes and marching on the capital of the United States? Would not restraining legislation be a prohibition of the free exercise of religion? We believe it would. Therefore we refuse to see paradoxes in the amendments mentioned, nor in any part of the Constitution. We understand the background and agree with Dr. Meiklejohn that Americans loved the spirit of liberty, equality, and fraternity in those days and continue to do so today, but we believe that his efforts to confound the enemies of this spirit have served but to make them more sure of their position. Dr. Meiklejohn seems to assume that we have always enjoyed these ideals in actuality but that we have been discarding them in practice while we have been conquering a continent. The fact is that we have never enjoyed any but a small fraction of liberty, either economic or spiritual, and na-

turally, never the full blessings of democracy nor justice. We have been getting near to these ideals as we have progressed in education and liberality, but economically, we have been getting further away from the opportunity to enjoy health and happiness, because such opportunity depends upon the bargain we can make with the owners of the natural resources of the nation. Truly, we must pay the price demanded by the owner of land for the chance to live. As long as this condition exists liberty is an abstraction.

The most dangerous mental diet, however, is not presented in the better magazines, since their food, dangerous as it is, reaches a small proportion of our body politic. That food which nourishes blind adherence of the vast number of workers who live on the verge of starvation to the false and self-interested doctrines of demagogues is more destructive of ideals of justice and democracy. Take the tabloids such as *The Mirror* and *The Daily News*, and all of the Hearst press. Just now they are trying to inflame the workers against Japan and Japanese goods. Recently the *Daily News* declared that it was impossible for American girls earning \$2.98 per week to compete with the labor of Japanese women who are "willing" to work for \$2.50 a week. Other such statements for those accustomed to think are to the effect that the workers of Japan are willing to work long hours for a bare subsistence and that American laborers and skilled workman, at five days of eight hours can never hope to compete with such labor. In consequence we are being flooded with goods of Japanese manufacture which will drive American articles off the market and throw millions out of work, thus prolonging the depression. The average working man or woman, finding it hard to live on the low wages or relief funds prevalent here readily accepts such statements as facts. Carry this out to its end and we shall have no trouble in getting the people to approve of high tariffs, overlooking the fact that the highest tariff in history did not prevent the present depression.

The assumption that Japanese workers are content to work long hours for small wages is simply not so. In *Asia*, an authoritative source available to all who read, there are articles and pictures that give us a truer conception of things in the Orient than any newspaper can, for news articles are momentary, and merely reproduce current events. They can not show causes nor trends. These are continuous and must be treated in the entirety by those fitted for the task. A scholar might keep track of events from news articles over a long period but the average reader does not. Not so long ago the labor situation in Japanese factories in the larger cities was discussed in *Asia*. Long processions of kimono-clad Japanese girls, marching four abreast, proceeded through the principal streets of the industrial sections of Yokohama and Tokio, and strange to say, with police protection and guidance. They were striking, and protesting in mass against low wages and long hours. This would

be a revelation to the American working man or woman. Not so long ago another thing happened for which we are indebted to the *New York Post* and one of its staff writers. If such a thing happened in the United States we would wonder what we were coming to, yet it happened in the land of emperor worship, where soldiers gladly offer themselves as human bombs upon the altar of love for fatherland. The soldiers of the Imperial Army of Japan protested in the following terms against conditions of living:

"It (Japan's economic system) creates class differences, enables the few to hoard wealth, causes poverty and unemployment among the masses and makes life for the people insecure. . . . All our people must be placed in a position to obtain an income in ratio to their labor. . . . Taxation must be readjusted to obtain fairness and justice."

Is it possible that a people whose army makes such protest are willing to slave long hours for just a living wage so that the industrialists of Japan may sell goods cheaply in foreign countries? But of course the readers of the *Mirror*, *News*, and the Hearst press will never know this side of Japan as long as they read nothing except the papers mentioned.

The average working man never stops to consider that Japanese goods are sold here for American goods. Money does not flow from here to Japan but credit does. But if money did flow, the cost of transportation, etc., would net the manufacturer in Japan no more than he could get for his goods in Japan or China. When we consider Japanese goods for American goods we see that to purchase an American electric sewing machine at the lowest price in this country and not considering transportation charges a Japanese would have to give the equivalent in goods of 11.6 weeks work. The lowest price offered now is \$29.00. At \$15.00 per week, and this is considered a living wage in the United States as a whole, an American could get the machine for the equivalent of two weeks work. Who is getting the worst of the bargain when the labor of twelve men must be given to get in exchange the labor of two men? Beyond doubt the Japanese are the losers in spite of high tariff propaganda. With free trade it would require under present wages six Japanese workers working at least forty-eight hours a week to keep one American employed the same length of time, for we must never lose sight of the fact that we do not buy Japanese goods, nor any other goods, with some fund laid away for such purposes in the dim and distant past. We buy with the products of labor producing now. If Japanese or any other goods, can be sold in the United States, some one must be producing in order to buy them. This disposes of the claim that such goods drive Americans out of employment. And one thing more; have any of the advocates of exclusion of Japanese goods examined any of these cheap articles and compared them with the American made article of higher price? We have, and

we wish to state that in our opinion the average low priced Japanese article would be dear at half the price. The final touch of the ridiculous was the statement that Ruby Bates, of Scottsboro notoriety, at \$2,98 a week in the Southern cotton mills could not compete with Japanese who work for \$2.50 for a week of 84 hours! So the system that breeds Ruby Bates must be protected from competition? And what guarantee will these gentlemen give us that the system will improve with a tariff? Didn't the Southern cotton industry begin because of cheap labor costs in the South compared with the North while a high tariff was in effect? It is to laugh.

The foregoing illustrations are sufficient to show that we are being supplied with intellectual nutriment that must be shown to be just the sort that will prepare us for all the social evils we are trying to escape, Hitlerism, Facism, Communism, all of which mean loss of liberty of mind and body. If we want that sort of thing it is proper that we should have it. But have we a right to prepare the coming generation with such diet? We believe we have no such right.

From A Venerable Priest of Dublin

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The writer of this article, with the humility typical of members of religious congregations, has asked that the authorship be ascribed simply to "an old Dublin priest, etc., etc.," That he, now in his ninth decade, is the venerable man of God who is as beloved in the Henry George movement as he is in his own congregation, will be recognized by followers of the movement from his own explanation: "It is an honor to me to be known as a friend of Henry George, or even as one who understands and shares the views in which he was my chief instructor. But simply my own taste, as well as our sensible rules of carrying on in our own special duties, will make me dislike 'advertising.'")

I CAN well understand the regret that is felt, by those who understand the Social Problem, when they consider how little is done by the Catholic Church to bring things round to a good and just conclusion. Of course justice comes before charity. Of course it would be to make religion an opiate, if it were used to hinder or to delay the doing of justice in this world. But we ought to acknowledge what really has been done by church authority, and what enormous difficulties stand in the way of doing more.

More than half a century ago, Henry George himself foresaw that the truth which he perceived and made plain would "not find easy acceptance." You may remember that I was astonished to hear how hopelessly Mr. (now Lord) Snowden had spoken to Anna George de Mille, (daughter of Henry George) in Downing Street in 1929. Evidently he is a man of great courage and resource, as well as a lover of justice. In 1931, somehow

or other, he succeeded in having legal effect given to a plan for the taxation of valuable land. It was a mild measure, quite considerate of the private interests of the lords of the land. But by slow working, and in the course of years, it would have lessened the evils of the landlord system, and eventually would have made it possible for all industrious persons to provide for their own needs. But the "Vested Interests" prefer the present system of the dole. They prefer that multitudes of men should remain unable to work without some man's permission, although God Almighty has given more than permission. Snowden's colleagues would not allow his plan to work, and very soon they removed it altogether from the Statute Book. In a letter published at the time they acknowledged that they were acting on behalf of the vested interests. But the persons unwilling to touch vested interests are very numerous. They are not merely society and fashion. Not merely agents and stewards, and solicitors and clerks, and all salaried officials (including the politicians) and prosperous shopkeepers. Indeed, of all people who are fairly well off, not one in ten will take any interest in improving the condition of others. They tell a story in England about some nobleman whose account books had grown rather confusing, and who asked a friend to look into the matter. In a little while the friend said, "Duke, there is really great extravagance in this establishment of yours: I find, for instance, you have two confectioners." "Well, a fellow must have a biscuit," said the other. Now one may very easily suppose that the two confectioners would feel no eagerness to vote for any project which might be contrary to the wishes and interests of His Grace. And the whole number is very great of those who are hangers-on to the existing long-established order of things.

It is a very simple, if pardonable, idea that exhortations and condemnations by the authorities of the church would be able to put an end to men's unjust dealings with their fellow-men. This is like the notion that the Pope has it in his power to prevent the beginning or the continuance of what is called war. The church or its head has no more power to prevent public crimes than to prevent the many other mortal sins which are committed in private. Men who, as often as they choose, protest against clerical interference in affairs of state, and declare that the church must not preach politics; men who would never think of submitting any matter to papal arbitration; men whose whole official policy is a prolonged protest against papal authority, will have the effrontery, on some particular occasion, to call upon the Pope to do his duty by declaring that they alone are reasonable and just in their decisions concerning affairs of state.

Those who would like the Pope to solve the social problem by one word are not so faulty or foolish as the persons to whom I refer. They may ask only, "Why be content to preach that we ought to be just, and that a wage or