

# *The Right To Be Lazy*

*By Paul Lafargue*



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# *The Right To Be Lazy*

BEING A REPUDIATION OF THE  
"RIGHT TO WORK" OF 1848

*By Paul Lafargue*

Translated and adapted from the French  
by Dr. Harriet Lothrop.

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PAUL LAFARGUE (1841–1911)

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

In 1849, Thiers, as member of the Commission on Instruction in Elementary Schools, said: "I believe in making the influence of the clergy general, because I count upon it to spread that healthy philosophy which teaches man that he is here to suffer, and not that other philosophy which in direct opposition says to him: enjoy!"

When bourgeoisdom fought against the nobility which was supported by the clergy, it planted the banner of free investigation and atheism. Scarcely had it attained its aim before it changed its tone and attitude; and to-day we see it endeavoring to uphold its economic and political supremacy by religion. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it merrily attacked the remnant of heathenism and glorified the flesh and its passions, this "horror" in the eyes of Christian morality.

To-day, on the other hand, when it is almost suffocated by wealth and pleasures of all kind, it does not care to know anything of the teachings of its thinkers, of

Rabelais and Diderot, Lessing and Goethe, but preaches the doctrines of abstinence to the wage workers. Capitalist morality, a pitiable copy of Christian morality, curses the flesh of the worker by a solemn ban; its ideal consists in reducing the needs of the producer (i.e. of the real producer) to the lowest minimum, to smother his pleasures and his passions, and to condemn him to play the part of a machine out of which work is exploited ad libitum, without rest and without thanks.

To the revolutionary Socialists, therefore, is assigned the task of again taking up the fight which the philosophists and the satirists of bourgeoisdom once fought. The revolutionary Socialists have to mount to the assault against the morality and social teachings of capitalism and eradicate prejudice from the brains of the class which is summoned to action; prejudice, the seeds of which have been sown by the ruling class. It is for the revolutionary Socialists, in opposition to all hypocritical moralists, to proclaim that the earth will cease to be a valley of tears for the workers, that in the Co-operative Commonwealth which we shall build up, human passions will have free play, since all, as Descartes has already said, are by nature good, “we have merely to avoid their false and excessive use.” This will be accomplished by the free counterplay of the passions and the harmonious development of the human organism, for, says Dr. Beddoe: “Only when a race has attained the maximum of its physical development, does it also attain the highest degree of moral strength and energy.”<sup>1</sup> This was also the opinion of the great naturalist, Charles Darwin.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of Anthropological Society.*

<sup>2</sup> *Descent of Man.*

# THE RIGHT TO BE LAZY

(A REFUTATION OF "THE RIGHT TO WORK" OF 1848.)

## CHAPTER I.

### A PERNICIOUS DOGMA.

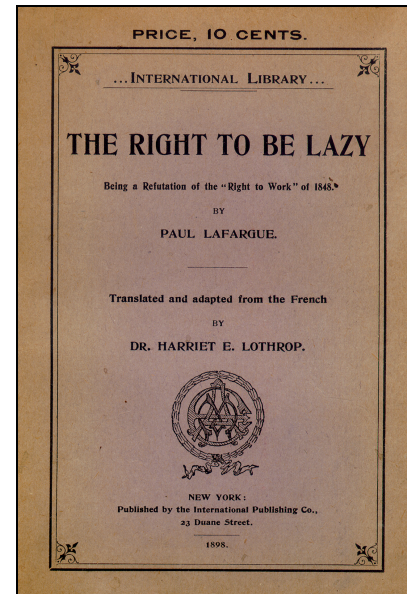
A strange mania governs the working class of all countries in which capitalist civilization rules, a mania that results in the individual and collective misery that prevails in modern society. This is the love of work, the furious mania for work, extending to the exhaustion of the individual and his descendants. The parsons, the political economists, and the moralists, instead of contending against this mental aberration, have canonized work. Blind and limited human beings, they have wished to be wiser than their God; weak and unworthy creatures, they have sought to honor what their God has damned.

I who make no boast of being either Christian, economist or moralist, I appeal from their declaration to that of their God; from the precepts of their religious, economic or free thinker's morality to the horrible consequences of work in capitalist society.

In capitalist society, work is the cause of mental deterioration and physical deformity. Compare the full-blooded steeds in the stables of a Rothschild or a Vanderbilt, served by a whole flock of stable boys, with the heavy beasts of Normandy or Pomerania that must plow the land, pull the fertilizing wagons, and drag in the harvest. Contemplate the wild savage, before missionaries of commerce and the traveling salesman for articles of faith have yet corrupted him with "Christianity," syphilis, and the dogma of work, and then compare our strained machine slaves with him.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> European scientists are often much amazed at the physical beauty and proud bearing of the members of the primitive races who are as yet unpolluted by the "poisoned beauty of civilization," to speak in the language of the poet.



(FACSIMILE)  
COVER TO THE FIRST AMERICAN EDITION,  
PUBLISHED IN 1898 BY THE  
INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHING COMPANY.

If we wish to find a trace of the primitive beauty of man in our civilized Europe, it is necessary to go to the nations in which politico-economic prejudice has not yet eradicated the hatred of work. Spain, which, to be sure is now degenerating, may yet be proud of possessing fewer factories than we have prisons and barracks; and the eye of the artist tarries admiringly upon the daring, chestnut brown Andalusians, elastic as steel; and our heart beats stronger when we hear the beggar majestically draped in his ragged “Capa,” address a duke of Ossuna as “Amigo” (friend). To the Spaniard, in whom the primitive animal has not yet been killed, work is the worst slavery. The Greeks also, during the period of their greatest bloom, had but disdain for work; the slave alone was permitted to labor, the free man knew but physical exercise and play of the intellect. That was the time of an Aristotle, a Phidias, an Aristophanes; the time when a handful of braves destroyed the hordes of Asia at Marathon which Alexander soon conquered.

The ancient philosophers taught contempt of work, this derogation of the free man; the poets sang of laziness, this gift of the Gods; “Melibaeus, a God, gave us this idleness,” sings Virgil. In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ teaches: “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin, yet I say unto ye that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” Matthew

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Lord George Campbell writes of the aborigines of the Australian islands: “No race in the world, is more striking at first sight. Their bronze or copper-colored, shining skin; their curly, golden hair; their beautiful and graceful figures—in a word their whole personality{—}presents a new and brilliant specimen of the genus man; their physical appearance gives the impression of a race superior to ours.”

With not a little admiration, did the old Romans, a Cæsar and Tacitus, regard the Germans of the communist tribes who penetrated into the Roman Empire. Like Tacitus, Salvianus, “Teacher of the Bishops,” held the barbarians up as an example to the Christian and to the civilized world of the fifth century. “We are unchaste in the midst of barbarians who are more virtuous than we are. Still more; the barbarians take offence at our lewdness. The Goths suffered no profligate of their own tribe to remain among them; only the Romans among them have the right to be unclean, thanks to the sad privilege of their name and their nationality; the oppressed go to the barbarians to seek human kindness and protection.” (De Gubernatione Dei.)

The old civilization and young Christianity corrupted the barbarians of the old world exactly as Christianity in its senile debility and the modern capitalist civilization corrupt the savages of the new world. The well-known Catholic writer, Mons. F. Le Play, whose talent of observation must be acknowledged even if his sociological conclusions filled with philanthropical and Christian sophistry be thrown aside, says in his book *The European Workman* (1855): “The propensity of the Baschkins to laziness (the Baschkins are half-nomadic shepherds in the Ural), together with the leisure consequent upon a nomadic life and the habit of meditation which the former call forth in the more gifted individuals, often results with these people in a refinement of manners, a sharpening of intelligence and judgement, such as is seldom found in the social plane in a higher civilization. . . . Nothing is more disagreeable to them than agriculture; they prefer to do anything else than to make up their minds to the calling of husbandman.”

In fact, agriculture is the first appearance of servile work among mankind.

VI, 28–29. Jehova, the Old Testament God of the Jews, sets his worshippers the most sublime example: after six days' work, he rests for all eternity.

Which, on the other hand, are the races to whom work is an organic necessity? The Auvergnanes of France; the Scotch, the Auvergnanes of the British Isles; the Gallegos, the Auvergnanes of Spain; the Upper Silesians, the Auvergnanes of Germany; the Chinese, the Auvergnanes of Asia. Which, in our society, are the classes that love work for the sake of work? The small farmers and the small tradesmen, who, the former, bent over their fields, the latter, busied in their shops, resemble the mole grubbing about in his hole, never raising themselves to take a leisurely look at nature.

And the proletariat, the great producing class of all civilized nations, the class which by its emancipation will release mankind from servile work, and will create a free being out of the human animal; the proletariat, too, mistaking its historical calling, has allowed itself to be seduced by the dogma of work. Its chastisement is hard and terrible. All individual and society misery takes its origin in the passion of the proletariat for work.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE "BLESSING" OF WORK.

In the year 1770, an anonymous pamphlet appeared in London, entitled, *An Essay on Trade and Commerce*, which at that time created a certain sensation. The author, a great philanthropist, was exasperated that the English factory hand had got it into his head that, as "Englishman, he had the privilege by right of birth, to be freer and more independent than the working people of any other European nation whatever. Now," continues the worthy man, "this idea, in so far as it affects the bravery of our soldiers, may be of some use; but the less the factory workers have of it, the better for them themselves and for the state. Workingmen ought never to consider themselves as independent of their superiors . . . . . it is exceedingly dangerous to encourage mobs in a commercial state like our own, where perhaps seven parts of the whole population are persons with little or no property . . . . . the cure will not be complete until the industrial armies are satisfied to work six days for the same amount they now earn in four days." Thus already a hundred years before Guizot, and more than a hundred years before

Atkinson and Depew, the doctrine of work as a bridle for the nobler human passions was preached.

“The more my people work, the less vice will there be,” wrote Napoleon on the 5th of May, 1807, from Osterode. (Did the condition of the land slaves inspire him to this declaration?) “I am the authority . . . and I feel inclined that on Sunday, after religious services are over, all business be re-opened, and that the workmen apply themselves to their occupations.”

In order to eradicate laziness and to bend the pride, and sense of independence, the author of “The Essays on Industry,” etc., proposed to confine the poor in “ideal workhouses,” which must have been houses of terror, and in which work should be performed fourteen hours a day, in such a manner that, after the deduction for meals, twelve full hours of work should remain. Twelve hours of work a day, the ideal of philanthropists and moralists of the eighteenth century. How far beyond this non plus ultra are we!

The modern workshops have become ideal houses of correction, in which the tolling masses are confined, and in which not only the men, but the women and children also, are condemned to twelve and fourteen hours of compulsory labor.<sup>4</sup>

And the descendants of the Terrorist heroes have so far permitted themselves to be degraded by the religion of work, that in 1848 they accepted the law limiting work in factories to twelve hours a day as a “revolutionary conquest;” they proclaimed the right to work as a “revolutionary principle!”

Shame upon the French proletariat! Slaves only are capable of such humiliation. Twenty years of capitalist civilization would have been necessary to make such a humiliation conceivable to a Greek of ancient times! And if the sufferings resulting from compulsory work have closed upon the proletariat, more numerous than the locusts of the Bible, it is the proletariat itself who have conjured them up.

The same work which the proletarians demanded, weapon in hand, they have laid upon their families; they have handed their wives and children over to the factory barons. With their own hands they have destroyed their household hearths;

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<sup>4</sup> At the first European Congress of Charity, (Brussels 1857) a Mr. Scrive, one of the wealthiest manufacturers of Marquette, near Lille, France, said amidst applause of the members of the Congress, and with the satisfaction of fulfilled duty: “We have introduced some means of distraction for the children. We teach them to sing and to count during their work. It entertains them and induces them to enter bravely upon the twelve hours’ work necessary to procure them a livelihood.”

Twelve hours work and what work! Materialists will lament eternally that there is no hell into which these “Christians,” these philanthropists, these executioners of childhood can be expedited.

with their own hands dried up the breasts of the women. They have allowed pregnant and nursing women to go into the factories, into the mines where they shattered their nerves and tortured their spine; with their own hands have they undermined the life and the vitality of their children. Shame upon you, proletarians! Whither are gone those women with playful speech and fresh humor, of whom our old legends and tales relate? Whither are gone those vivacious women, who, always cooking, always tripping about, scattering life, brought healthy and strong children into the world when they gave themselves the pleasure. To-day we have women and girls in the factory, stunted flowers with pale complexion, colorless blood, poor stomachs and exhausted limbs. A healthy pleasure is unknown to them. And the children? Twelve hours' work for the children!

O, Misery! All the Jules Simons of the Academy of Moral Sciences; all the Stoeckers and Morgan Dixes of the clergy could have devised no evil more stupefying to the mind of the children, more injurious to their disposition, more ruinous to their organism than work in the pestiferous atmosphere of capitalist workshops! Our century is called the century of work; actually it is the century of pain, of misery, of corruption!

And yet the bourgeois political economists and philosophers, from the tiresomely confused August Comte to the ridiculously clear Leroy Beaulieu, the bourgeois author, from the charlatantly romantic Victor Hugo to the ingenuously silly Paul de Kock,—all individually and collectively have sung loathsome songs of praise to the God Progress, the oldest son of work.

To listen to them, it would seem as if happiness must rule upon earth, and as even now its presence might be felt. They have meandered through the centuries of earlier ages, burrowing through the dust and misery of feudalism in order that the sun of the present day may shine more brightly. These satiated people—only lately retainers of the nobles, to-day fat-salaried press servants of the bourgeoisie—how they have bored us with their boors of orators, La Bruyère and Cabot Lodge!

Now, we wish to show them that brilliant picture of proletarian pleasures in the year of progress 1841, as portrayed by one of their own writers, the Academician de Villermé, who in 1848 belonged to that group of literati who tried to instill into the masses the platitudes of bourgeois morality and bourgeois political economy.

It is of the industrious Alsace that the Monsieur Villermé speaks, of these flowers of philanthropy and of bourgeois republicanism. Before giving him the platform, let us first hear how an Alsatian manufacturer, Mr. Thomas Mieg, of the



firm Dolfuss, Mieg & Co., describes the situation of the manual worker under the earlier system of industry: “Fifty years ago (1813), when modern industry was in its infancy, all workmen in Muehlhausen were native to the country; they lived in the city and the surrounding villages, and almost every one had a little house and a bit of land.<sup>5</sup>

That was the golden age of the workmen. At that time, however, Alsatian industry had not flooded the world with its cottons and had not yet made its Dolfuss and Koechlin millionaires. But twenty-five years later, when Dr. Villermé visited Alsace, the capitalist factory, the modern Minotaur, had already conquered the country; in its greed for human labor, it had snatched the workmen from their homes that it might the more easily exploit them, and the more successfully press out the labor-power embodied in them. The workmen ran by thousands to the whistle of the machine. A great number, “five to seventeen thousand,” says Villermé, “were obliged to live in the neighboring villages in consequence of the high rents. Some live two hours, yes, even two and a quarter hours distant from the factory in which they work.

“In Muehlhausen, in Dornach, work began at five o’clock in the morning and ended at eight o’clock in the evening, summer and winter.—It is a sight to see the workers coming into the city every morning. Among them are a lot of thin, pale women who run barefooted through the dirt, and when it rains or snows, for lack of an umbrella{,} pull their aprons or skirts over their heads in order to protect neck and face; and there is still a greater number of children not less dirty and emaciated, wrapped in rags all greasy with the oil that drips down upon them from the machines they tend. These children{,} who are better protected from the rain by the imperviousness of their clothing, have not even a basket of provisions for the day upon their arms like the women, but carry in their hand or hidden in their smock the bit of bread upon which they must live until they return home.

“Thus these unhappy human beings, in addition to the fatigue of an excessively long working day (for it amounts to at least fifteen hours) have added a long and oftentimes very laborious walk. Consequently, they reach home over-fatigued and leave in the morning before they have had the proper amount of sleep, in order that they may reach the factory punctually.”

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<sup>5</sup> Speech delivered in May, 1863, before the Parisian International Society for the practical study of political economy, and published in the “French Economist” of the same year.

And as to the quarters, into which those who live in the city must impen<sup>6</sup> themselves: “In Muehlhausen, in Dornach and suburbs, I have seen those miserable rooms in which two families slept, each in a corner upon straw which was spread out on the floor and held together by a couple of boards. . . . The wretchedness in which the workers in the cotton industry in the department of Oberheim live, is so great that while fifty per cent. of the children of the manufacturers, merchants, superintendents, etc., attain the twenty-first year, the same percentage from the families of the weavers and spinners die even before the completion of the second year of age.—”

In respect to the labor done in workshops, Villermé says: “It is no work, no day-work, it is a torture, and it is saddled upon children of six and eight years.—It is chiefly this long daily torture that enervates the worker in the cotton and spinning industry;” and in respect to the length of work, Villermé remarks, that “the convicts in the bagnos (prisons) work on the average ten hours, the slaves in the Antilles but nine hours, while in France, that has produced the revolution of 1789, and has proclaimed the pompous Right{s} of Man, there are factories in which the working day consists of sixteen hours, only one and a half of which are granted to the workers for their meals.”<sup>7</sup>

O, the sorrowful miscarriage of the revolutionary principles of the bourgeoisie! O, the pitiful gift of its idol—progress! Philanthropists call those men who build factories and suffer workers to toil for them that they may enrich themselves benefactors of mankind; it were better to poison the springs, to spread pest than to erect capitalist factories in the midst of a country population.

Whenever they have entrance it means good-bye to joy, health and freedom; good-bye to everything that makes life beautiful, that makes it worth living.

The political economists never tire of calling out to the laborers: “Work, work that the national wealth may be increased!” And yet it was one of themselves, Destutt de Tracy, who said: “It is in the poor nations that the mass of the people find themselves well off; in rich nations they are generally poor;” and his pupil,

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<sup>6</sup> [*impen* is given as *lodge* in the Kerr translation—R.B.]

<sup>7</sup> L. R. Villermé: “A picture of the physical and moral condition of the silk, woolen and cotton operatives (1840).” It was not because the Dollfus {Dolfuss?}, the Koechlin {Koeschlin?} and other Alsatian manufacturers were Republican patriots and Protestant philanthropists that they thus treated their employees; for the Messrs. Blanqui, the Academicians Reyboud and Jules Simon have verified a similar merry life among the employees of the very Catholic and very monarchical manufacturers of Lille and Lyons; these are capitalist virtues which harmonize in delightful manner with every political tendency, with every religion.

Cherbuliez, adds: "Inasmuch as the workers assist in the accumulation of productive capital, they themselves father the factor which sooner or later will rob them of a portion of their wages." But the political economists, deafened and made stupid by their own croaking, reply: "Work, work for your welfare!", and in the name of Christian mercy a minister of the Anglican Church, Townsend (he might as well be called Talmage, Dr. Hall, or otherwise), preached: Work, work day and night; by working you increase your sufferings; and your misery releases us from the task of legally compelling you to work. Legal compulsion of work causes "too much trouble, requires too much force and too much excitement; hunger on the other hand is not only a peaceful, noiseless, indefatigable incentive to work, it also, as the most natural motive of work and industrial activity, secures the most powerful effort."

Work, work, ye proletarians, multiply the national wealth, and, thereby, your own personal misery! Work, that you, growing steadily poorer, may have still more reason to work and be wretched. This is the inexorable law of capitalist production!

The workers themselves, by believing the illusory phrases of political economists and by selling body and soul to the demon WORK, contribute to the industrial crises in which overproduction sets the social organism into convulsion. The factories are closed because of a superabundance of goods and a lack of consumers, and hunger scourges the laboring population with a thousand-skeined whip.

Fooled by the dogma of work, the proletarians fail to perceive that the extra labor to which they have submitted themselves during the ostensibly good time of business is the cause of their present misery. Instead of marching up and down before the granaries and crying: "We are hungry, we want to eat;—to be sure we have not a red cent, but, even if we are poor devils, it is we who have harvested the grain!" instead of laying siege to the storehouses of the Armours, Havemeyers, Leiters, Pillsburys, and others, and cry: "Here, you gentlemen, are your reelers, twiners, spinners and weavers in their patched cotton rags, shivering so with cold that a Shylock could shed tears over them, and yet, they it is who have spun and woven the silken robes of the mistresses of all Christendom. The poor things, with their thirteen hours' work, could not think of their own toilet; now that they are in enforced idleness they have time, themselves to rustle in the silks they have produced. They have created riches for you ever since they cut their second teeth, and at the same time starved themselves; now that they are idle they also wish to enjoy a little of the fruits of their toil. This way, Messrs. Cheney, your silks, the

Messrs. Stark will unpack their cottons, Mr. Macy his small wares, Mr. Plant his pretty little boots for their cold and damp feet. Arrayed from head to foot, and merry with joy, they will afford a sight better than could be desired. Only no evasions, gentlemen; are you not Christians and philanthropists as they are pictured in the books? Place at the disposal of your wage slaves the wealth which they have obtained for you at the cost of their own starvation. You are friends of trade? Further the exchange of wares; you have consumers here in plenty; open unlimited credit to them. You have to do this for business people whom you have never seen in your life, who have given you absolutely nothing, not even a drop of water!—Stead of that, instead of demanding a distribution of products and general recuperation during periods of crises, the workers run their heads in vain against the doors of the factories. With sunken cheeks and emaciated bodies they importune the manufacturers with plaintiff appeals: “Dear Mr. Pierce, good Mr. Hanna, only give us work, it is not hunger that tortures us but simply the love of work!” And, scarcely able to stand erect, the wretches sell twelve to fourteen hours of work half as cheaply as they would do at a time when they still have some bread on hand—and the Messrs. Industrial Philanthropists make use of the lack of work to produce still more cheaply.

If industrial crises succeed periods of overwork with the same necessity as night does day, and drag in their train compulsory stagnation with boundless misery; they also bring inexorable bankruptcy. So long as the manufacturer has credit he gives reins to the mania for work; he borrows and borrows in order to provide raw material for his employees. He suffers them to produce and produce without reflecting that the market will be overstocked and that if he cannot sell his goods he also cannot redeem his paper. Then, at last, he gets into trouble and runs to the usurer; beseeches him, throws himself at his feet, places blood and honor at his disposal. “I should prefer a little gold;” the Rothschild replies: “You have in stock twenty thousand pair of stockings at the price of twenty cents a pair.” “I will take them in payment at five cents a pair.” If the bargain be completed, the good man sells at ten or twelve cents a pair and pockets jingling dollars, for which he is indebted to no one. The manufacturer, on the other hand, has gained time only to succumb to a more complete bankruptcy. Finally the general crash comes just at the moment when the storehouses are packed full to the ceiling. Then so many goods are thrown out of the windows that it is impossible to conceive how they came in through the door. The value of the destroyed property can be reckoned by hundreds

of millions; in the previous century they were burnt or cast into the water.<sup>8</sup>

But before they decide upon such a regulation, the manufacturers search the world through for markets in which to unload the goods they have accumulated; they clamor for trading colonies in Congoland; they demand the conquest of Tonkin; they compel their government to destroy the walls of China merely that they may be able to sell their cotton goods. During the last centuries, England and France duelled for life to determine which should have the exclusive privilege of American and Indian markets. The colonial wars of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries forced thousands of strong youths to stain the ocean with their blood.

As superfluity of wares prevails, so also does superfluity of capital—of course not for those who need it. The financiers no longer know where to place their money and therefore set about building railroads, erecting manufacturies and introducing the curse of work among those happy people who still lie in the sunshine smoking cigarettes. And one beautiful day, this exportation of capital terminates in “diplomatic complications”: England and France nearly tore each others hair out in Egypt in order to make sure whose usurers should be paid first; and in wars à la Mexico, where French soldiers were sent to play the part of an executor of the law in the collection of bad debts.<sup>9</sup>

## CHAPTER III.

### A SEQUENCE OF OVERPRODUCTION.

Until now, my task was easy. It was simply to describe actual evils, which unhappily are only too well known to us all. But to convince the proletarian that the

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<sup>8</sup> At the congress of German manufacturers, held in Berlin, February 21, 1878, the loss suffered alone by the iron industry of Germany was estimated at 455,000,000 marks (\$113,750,000.)

<sup>9</sup> The newspaper of Monsieur Clemenceau, *Justice*, said in the financial column of its issue of April 5, 1885: “We have heard the opinion expressed that the billions of the war of 1870 would have been lost to France just the same, if Prussia had not taken them. This loss would then have been in the form of a loan, imposed from time to time, to balance the budget of foreign states; that is also our view.”

The loss that English capital suffered in the South American Republics is reckoned at five billions; the French laborers not only have worked out the five billions paid to Mr. Bismarck, they have also to raise the large interest which is gathered in by those who were to blame for the war and the debacle—the Oliviers, Girandins, Bazaines and other possessors of titles and of bonds.

However, there remains one consolation to them; the five billions will have no war of re-annexation as a sequel.

morality, with which he has been inoculated, is topsy-turvy; that work without moderation and without aim, as work has been, since the beginning of the century, is the worst frightful scourge which mankind has ever known; that only then when work is regulated according to reason, and is limited to a maximum corresponding to the social needs will it be a spice to the pleasure of idleness, a useful exercise to the human organism;—that is a difficult task which exceeds my power. Only physiologists, hygienic scientists and social political economists can undertake it. I shall limit myself to the proof that, in consideration of the modern means of production and their enormous possibility of multiplication, the exaggeration of labor must be checked, and it must be made a duty of the working class to consume the wares they produce.

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Autiparos, a Greek poet of the time of Cicero, thus sang of the invention of the water mill (for grinding grain) as an emancipator of slaves and as establishing the golden age:

“Spare the hand that grinds the corn, miller girls, and softly sleep. Let chanticleer announce the morn in vain!

“Dea has commanded the work of the girls to be done by the Nymphs; and now these skip lightly over the wheels, so that the shaken axles revolve with the spokes and pull round the load of the revolving stones. Let us live the life of our fathers, and let us rest from work, and enjoy the gifts that the goddess has sent us.”

Alas! the age of leisure, prophesied by the heathen poets, has not come to pass; the blind, insane and homicidal mania for work has transformed the machine, from an instrument of emancipation, into an instrument of enslavement for free beings: the productive power of the machine has become the cause of the pauperization of the masses.

With the hand-bobbin, a good workman finishes five meshes a minute; certain bobbin machines finish thirty thousand meshes in the same time. Every minute of the machine then, is equal to one hundred working hours of the workman or, preferably, every minute of machine-work affords the workman ten days' rest. What holds good for the lace industry, applies more or less to all industries which have been transformed by modern machinery. But what do we see? The more the machine is perfected, and, by constantly improved speed and safety, displaces human labor, the more the workman, instead of increasing his rest, redoubles his

efforts, as though he would run a race with the machine.

Oh! Foolish, destructive competition! The laws limiting work to the members of the old guilds were abolished, holidays were suppressed, that there might be free course to the competition between man and machine. <sup>10</sup>

But does any one believe that, because the toilers of that time worked five days out of seven in a week, they lived upon air and water only, as the deluding political economists tell us? Go to! They had leisure to taste of earthly pleasure, to cherish love, to make and to keep open house in honor of the great God,—LEISURE. In those days, that morose, hypocritically Protestant England was called “Merrie England.” Rabelais, Quevedo, Cervantes, the unknown authors of the spicy novels of those days, make our mouths water with their descriptions of those enormous feasts, at which the peoples of that time regaled themselves and towards which “nothing was spared.”<sup>11</sup> Jordæns and the Dutch school of painters have portrayed them for us, in their pictures of jovial life. Noble, giant stomachs, what has become

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<sup>10</sup> In the middle ages, the laws of the church guaranteed ninety days of rest to the toilers (52 Sundays and 38 holidays); work on these days was strictly prohibited; that was the great crime of Catholicism, the chief cause of the irreligiousness of the industrial and commercial bourgeoisie.

As soon as that bourgeoisie took the helm in the French Revolution, it abolished the holidays, and displaced the seven-day week by the ten-day week, so that the people had but one day rest in ten. It liberated the workers from the yoke of the church, in order to place them under the much more severe yoke of work.

Hatred of holidays is first noticeable at the moment in which the modern industrial and commercial bourgeoisie appears upon the scene, that is, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Henry IV. demanded a reduction in the number of holidays from the Pope, who refused “because one of the heresies appearing at this time, concerns the holidays.” (Letter of Cardinal D’Ossat.) But in 1666, Perefisus, Archbishop of Paris, forbade seventeen of them. Protestantism, that form of church adapted to the new commercial and industrial needs of the bourgeoisie, troubles itself but little about the recuperation of the people; it dethroned the saints in heaven in order to abolish their festivals upon earth.

<sup>11</sup> These gigantic festivals lasted whole weeks. Don Rodrigo de Lara won his bride by driving the Moors out of Calarava, and the romance relates that

Las bodas fueron en Burgos  
Las tornabodas en Salas;  
En bodas y tornabodas  
Pasaron siete semanas;  
Tantas vienan de las gentes  
Que non caben por las plazas.

(“The wedding took place in Burgos; home-coming was celebrated in Salas; thus seven weeks were passed in wedding and home festivals; so many people came thereto, the halls could not contain them.”)

The participants at this wedding festival of seven weeks’ duration were the heroic soldiers of the wars of independence.

of you? Exalted spirits, ye who comprehended the whole of human thought, whither are ye gone? We are thoroughly degenerated and dwarfed. Tubercular cows, potatoes, wine made with fuchsine, beer from saffron and Prussian whiskey in wise conjunction with compulsory labor have weakened our bodies and dulled our intellects. And at the same time that mankind ties up its stomach and the productivity of the machine goes on the increase day by day, do the political economists wish to preach Malthusian doctrine, the religion of abstinence and the dogma of work to us?

Nevertheless since the working class in its simplicity and ingenuousness has allowed its head to be turned, and with congenital impetuosity has been blindly entrapped by the motto “work and abstinence,” the Capitalist class on the other hand, finds itself sentenced to compulsory laziness and luxury, to unproductivity and overconsumption. If the overwork of the proletarian tortures his body and shatters his nerves, it is not less fruitful of suffering for the bourgeois.

The abstinence to which the producing class has allowed itself to be condemned, makes it the duty of the bourgeoisie to dedicate itself to the overconsumption of the wares produced in surplus by the proletariat. At the beginning of capitalist production, one or two hundred years ago, the bourgeois was still an honorable man of orderly and peaceful habits; he was contented with his own wife, at least usually; he drank only when he was thirsty, and ate only when he was hungry. The fashionable passion of excess he left to the gentlemen and ladies of the court. To-day there is no bourgeois who does not lard himself with capon and mushrooms, and fills up with Chateau Lafitte, in order to promote the breeding of poultry and the cultivation of the vine; no son of an upstart who does not consider himself duty bound to increase prostitution, and to mercurify<sup>12</sup> his body, merely in order that the death bringing work in the quicksilver mines may have an object. In this trade, the body is quickly destroyed, the hair becomes thin, the teeth fall out, the abdomen swells, the chest becomes asthmatic, the movements more cumbrous, the joints stiff, the limbs gouty. Others, too weak to endure the strain of dissipation, but equipped with the exquisite dose of philistine-pseudo intelligence, dry up their brains like Mr. Lazarus von Hellenbach, the “man without prejudice,” and hatch out thick, soporific books in order to provide occupation for the typesetters and book publishers.

The ladies of the fashionable world lead the life of martyrs. They spend the whole day in changing gowns, that they may test and display their fairy-like

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<sup>12</sup> *mercurify* translated as *quicksilver* in Kerr edition—R.B.]



wardrobes, in the preparation of which dressmakers toil till they bring on consumption. For hours they place their heads at the disposition of hair-dressers who are paid large sums of money to build up the most impossible coiffures for them. Tightly laced, so décolleté that a lieutenant of the guard might blush, and their feet forced into narrow little boots, they spin themselves around at their charity balls the whole night through, in order to get a few dollars together for the poor.—O, ye saintly sufferers!

The bourgeoisie, in order to fulfill its two-fold calling as non-producer and overconsumer, must not only do violence to its modest needs of old, wean itself from the industriousness to which it has been accustomed for a hundred years, and give itself up to unbridled luxury, to gorging with mushrooms as well as to lewdness and dissipation, it must also withdraw an enormous mass of people from productive work in order to create messmates for itself,—hence an enormous increase of lackeys, servants and menials. To this servant class, the enormousness of whose numbers characterizes the high water mark of capitalist civilization, must, furthermore, be added the large class occupied solely in satisfying the costly and senseless desires of the wealthy class: diamond cutters, lace makers, fancy embroiderers, jewelers, fashionable tailors, etc., etc.

The bourgeoisie soon accustomed itself to its parasitical life, despite the evils that grow out of the same, and it now regards any alteration of the status quo with terror. Yet, in sight of the pitiful mode of life to which the working class resignedly subjected itself, and to the arrest of physical development, the consequence of the unnatural mania for work, did its aversion increase still more to any imposition of work, and to any limitation of its pleasures. And just at that season, without in the least heeding the demoralization which the bourgeoisie had imposed upon itself as a social duty, the proletariat got into his head the notion to compel the capitalists to work! In their simple-mindedness, they accepted as good cash the theories of work promulgated by political economists, and girded up their loins to make capitalists practice this duty. The proletariat proclaimed the watchword: “Who does not work, shall not eat.” In the year 1813 Lyons arose for “Work or Lead”; the June insurgents of 1848 claimed the “Right to Work,” and the Federations of March 1871 designated their uprising as the “Revolution of Work.”

To these barbaric attacks upon bourgeoisie comfort and all bourgeoisie laziness, the Messrs. Capitalists could answer only with suppression by force; but even if they do oppress these revolutionary outbreaks, they know withal that the absurd

idea of the proletariat of imposing work upon the satiated idlers has not been drowned in the ocean of spilt blood. In order to avoid this calamity, they surround themselves with soldiers, police, magistrates and jails, who all together perform unproductive work. To-day the character of modern armies can no longer be doubted; they are “standing” only for the holding down of the “industrial” enemy. Belgium, the modern land of capitalism, is an instance of this, that cannot be contradicted; its neutrality is guaranteed by the European powers, nevertheless its army is one of the most powerful in proportion to its population. But its glorious battlefields are the plains of the Borinage and of Charleroi. The Belgian officer is accustomed to baptize his sword and to fish for his epaulettes in the blood of the unarmed laborers and miners. The European nations have no militia but paid armies for the protection of the capitalist against the people who would condemn them to ten hours of mine or factory work.

But, however great this army of useless mouths, however insatiable its greed might be, it is yet by no means sufficient to consume all the goods which the workmen, stupefied by the dogma of work, produce without wishing to consume them, without troubling themselves whether there be any one to consume them. And so, in view of the double madness of the laborer to strain himself by overwork, and to drag out his life in privations, the great problem of capitalist production does not consist in finding producers and in increasing their strength but in discovering consumers, in tickling their appetite and encouraging it by habit.

And since the workers, trembling with hunger and cold, refuse themselves to wear the stuffs they weave, themselves to consume the grain they cultivate, the poor manufacturers see themselves forced to run to the antipodes, and seek for people who can use the creations of the flesh of their workmen. Hundreds of millions’ and billions’ worth are exported annually to all four corners of the globe for people who know not what to do with it all. The explored portions of the earth are not extensive enough for them; therefore they require virgin soil.

The manufacturers dream day and night of Africa, of the Sahara Ocean, of the Soudan Railroad, the Klondyke fields; with close attention do they follow the journey of a Stanley, a De Brazza, of a Nachtigall to the miraculous and prophetic tones of the courageous pioneers and discoverers. What unknown wonders are not hidden in these “dark portions of the earth,” whole fields are sown with elephant teeth, whole rivers of palm oil flow through beds of gold sand, whole mountains of gold nuggets, millions of black backs, bare as Bismarck’s skull, awaiting cotton in

order to make the acquaintance of the properties of Prussian Whiskey and the English Bible in order to learn the “virtues of civilization.”

But all this is still insufficient: the bourgeois who gorge themselves, the serving class which is more numerous than the producing class, the savage tribes who are killed with capitalist wares,<sup>13</sup>—nothing, nothing avails to exhaust the mountains of products, which grow higher and stronger than the pyramids of Egypt. The productivity of the workers defies all consumption, all squandering. In their anxiety, the manufacturers no longer know what to do, they cannot scare up enough material to satisfy the crazy desire for work on the part of the employees. Certain woolen manufacturers purchase dirty, half decayed woolen rags and therefrom make a cloth which lasts as long as election-promises. In other industries the conditions are similar: products are adulterated in order to make an easy sale and shorten their period of life. Ignoramuses, therefore, accuse our pious manufacturers of cheating while in truth they are animated merely by the thought of giving employment to the workers who cannot bring themselves to the point of enjoying life with folded arms. Yet these adulterations, which arise wholly and solely from humanitarian considerations and yield enormous profits to the manufacturers who practice them, have in truth the most pernicious effect upon the quality of the wares and are an inexhaustible fountain of waste of human labor. They characterize the philanthropic genius of our bourgeois and the frightful perverseness of the laborers, who, in order to satisfy their sinful mania for work, cause the Messrs. Manufacturers to smother the voice of conscience and even to break the laws of mercantile honesty.

Yet despite all overproduction, all adulteration of goods, the workers overflow the market in steadily increasing numbers and cry beseechingly: “Work! Work!” Their excessive numbers ought to prompt them to bridle their passion; instead of that, it drives them to fury. Whenever the mere prospect of work offers itself, they swoop down upon it. They work twelve, fourteen hours, only to be able to flay themselves right well; and the very next day they are out on the street and know not how to satisfy their mania for work.

Year by year, with the regularity of the seasons, depressions appear in the different industries; upon an overwork, deadly to the organism, follows absolute rest

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<sup>13</sup> Thus, for instance, the Australian savages, unconcerned that it is the cause of their extinction, clothe themselves à la England, intoxicate themselves à la England, for the sole reason that the Scotch distillers and the manufacturers of Manchester need consumers.

for three to six months and—no work, no bread!

Now, if the mania for work is rooted in the laborers, if it smothers all other natural instincts, and if, on the other hand, the amount of work demanded by society is necessarily limited by the consumption and the quantity of raw material, why devour in six months the work of the whole year? Why not rather equalize it during the whole twelve months, and compel every worker to content himself with five or six hours' daily work the year through, instead of getting indigestion by working twelve hours daily for six months? When their daily portion of work is secured to them, the workers will no longer be jealous of one another; no longer will they tear the work out of each others' hands and the bread from each others' mouth; then, no longer exhausted in body and soul, will they begin to practice the virtues of laziness. What the workers themselves refuse to perceive manufacturers have demanded in the interest of capitalist exploitation: a legal limitation of working hours.

In the year 1860, the manufacturer Bourcard Gebweiler declared before the Commission of Industrial Instruction that "twelve hours' work is excessive and should be reduced to eleven hours, and on Saturdays work should cease at two o'clock. I recommend these regulations, although at first sight they may appear oppressive: we have tried them in our establishments for the past four years and find that they work well; the average production has risen instead of fallen." In his article on machines, Mr. F. Passy quotes the following letter from a Belgium merchant, Mr. Ottavaere:

"Although our machines are the same as in the English spinning mills, they do not produce as much as they should, and as the same machines turn out in England, despite the fact that the working day there is two hours shorter . . . we work two full hours too much; I am convinced that if we worked but eleven hours instead of thirteen, we should produce just as much and in consequence of this more economically."

On the other hand, the liberal political economist Mr. P. Leroy-Beaulieu testifies that "a great Belgium manufacturer has made the observation that the weeks in which a holiday occurs show no smaller output than the ordinary weeks." ("The Labor Question in the Nineteenth Century." Paris, 1872.)

An "aristocratic" government has dared to do what the people, made fools by the moralists, have not ventured. Unconcerned by the high moral and economical arguments of the political economists, who croaked like raven-prophets of evil, that

to shorten the factory time a single hour meant to decree the ruin of English industry, the English government introduced the legal ten hours' working day; yet England remains the first industrial country of the world.

The great experience of England, the experience of intelligent capitalists{,} is submitted; they prove it incontrovertibly that the working time must be shortened and the days of rest must be multiplied in order to increase human production, yet other nations do not comprehend it. Can the workers, then, not realize that by overburdening themselves with work they exhaust their own vitality and that of their descendants? That, worn out, they become prematurely incapable of work? That they kill all lofty parts in themselves merely for the sake of the furious mania for work?

Like parrots they prattle the preaching of the political economists: "Let us work to increase the national wealth." O ye idiots! Because you work too much the technique of industry develops too slowly. Stop your cry and listen to a political economist. He is no great light, only Mr. L. Reybaud: "In general, the revolution in the methods of work directs itself according to the condition of manual labor. So long as manual labor is cheap, it is employed in excess; let it become dearer, an effort is made to economize in it."<sup>14</sup>

In order to force the capitalists to perfect their machines of wood and iron, it is necessary to raise the wages of the machine of flesh and blood and to shorten their working day. Proofs of this? They can be brought by the hundreds. In the spinning trade the self-acting mule was discovered and made use of in Manchester because the spinners refused to work as long as formerly.

In America machines took possession of all branches of agricultural production, from the manufacture of butter to the harvesting of the crops.

## CHAPTER IV.

### A NEW SONG, A BETTER SONG.

When the shortening of the working day brings new mechanical forces to social production, the duty of the workers to consume as well as to produce their products will have as a consequence an enormous multiplication of the working forces.

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<sup>14</sup> Louis Reybaud, *Cotton: Its Kingdom and its Questions*, 1863.

The bourgeoisie, rescued from its mission of being the consumer of the whole world, will speedily set free the great number of soldiers, officials, middlemen, etc., whom it has withdrawn from useful work in order that they may assist it consume and squander; that signifies—free them for the labor market. This, when all social forces are brought to it, will be so overfilled that it will be well-nigh a matter of compulsion to forbid work: it will be almost impossible for this swarm of hitherto unproductive human beings to find employment, for they are more numerous than the locusts. Then some thought will be taken of those who had been compelled to labor to supply the costly and useless wants of these people. When it is no longer to adorn lackeys and Generals, to swathe married and unmarried prostitutes in laces, and to cast cannon, then men and women in passementerie, lace, iron, etc., etc., will, in the interest of hygiene and the ennoblement of the race, be enjoined by Draconic laws to rowing and dancing exercises to restore their undermined health. From that moment when “merchandise” is no longer sent forth to the whole world, the sailors, the porters, the watermen will begin to learn to twirl their thumbs. Then the happy South Sea Islanders can give themselves up to love without need to fear the footsteps of the civilized Venus and the sermons of the bourgeois moralists.

Still more. In order to find work for all the unproductive forces of the present society and to promote still further the perfection of the instruments of work, the working class, like the bourgeoisie, will have to place restraint upon its tendency to abstinence and seek as much as possible to increase its capability of consumption. Instead of eating from twenty to thirty grams of tough meat a day, if it ever does eat meat at all, the working class will eat one or two pounds of juicy beef-steak. Instead of drinking one modest glass of wine which is more catholic (i.e., baptized) than the Pope, it will drink full glasses of Bordeaux and Burgundy, that has undergone no industrial baptism and has left water to the cattle.

The proletarians have got it into their heads to hold the capitalists to ten hours of factory work—that is the great mistake, the cause of social contrasts and internal conflict. Work must be forbidden, not imposed. The Rothschilds, the Krupps, the Astors will be allowed to furnish proof that they have been do-nothings their whole life long; and if, despite the general bias for work, they promise to live as complete do-nothings, they will be placed under supervision and every morning a five dollar gold piece will be given them for their little pleasures. Social discord vanishes. Once convinced that no evil will happen to them but that they will only be freed from the trouble of being forced to be overconsumers and spendthrifts, the capitalists will be

the first to make common cause with the people.

The bourgeois who are unable to prove their qualifications as perfected good-for-nothings will be allowed to follow their instincts: there are callings enough to provide for them all.

But bitter requittal is in store for the “moralists” who have perverted human nature, for the hypocrites and canterers who openly preach water and secretly drink wine. At the great peoples’ feasts, where glasses will circulate, savory roasts and cakes invite enjoyment, the members of Boards of Education, the priests politico-economical,—Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, or free thinking who wander about in frock and robe, the propagandists of Malthusianism, of Christian or philosophic morality, in yellow costume, will be forced to hold the candles until their fingers are burnt; they will go hungry at heavily laden tables, served by arrogant women, they will thirst near filled casks. Four times a year when the seasons change, they will have to grind wind in the treadmills ten hours at a stretch. The same punishment will be meted out to lawyers and barristers. In order to kill time, that kills us second by second, theatricals of all kinds will be arranged—healthy work for our Messrs. Legislators. They will be organized into troops who will travel from village to village and give exhibitions in law making.

Generals in riding boots, their breasts belaced, adorned with medals of encounters and covered with orders of all possible beasts of prey, will run through the streets and invite the dear people to stare at them. Bismarck, Stoecker, Cleveland, McKinley and Talmage will crack their little jokes in front of their booths. Bismarck, costumed as Iron eater, will roll his eyes, curl his mustache, expectorate burning tar, and threaten everybody with sword, revolver, beer Mug, etc.; but as soon as he is shown the portrait of Herr von Muenchhausen, will throw himself into a deep pit.

Stoecker, Dr. Hall and Talmage as apostles of brotherly love will preach the weal of the workman and hatred of the exploiter, of Christian mildness and Christian Socialism, of national manners and—then, suddenly dropping their robes will stand there in black {and} white costume, in one hand a knot, in the other a contribution box; around their necks will hang a placard: “Agent for the land barons and capitalist Princes.”

Inside the booth, first the election trick will be performed. Bourgeois candidates, in buffoon costumes, will execute the political-freedom dance before electors with wooden skulls and donkeys’ ears, by wearing sandwich election

programmes full of promises; with tears in their eyes will talk of the suffering of the people, and with brazen voice will proclaim the glory of the country. Whereupon the heads of the electors will roar in chorus an emphatic “Y—e—s! Y—e—s!”

Then begins the great drama: The “Theft of the Property of the Nation”:

Capitalist Germany, a monster of a woman with coarse face and bald skull, ashy skin and fat bloated body, lies stretched out on a sofa yawning, and with lustreless eyes. At her feet, Industrial Capitalism, a giant organism of iron with the mask of a monkey, devours automatic men, women and children whose heart-rending cries pierce the air. The bank with Martin Snout, hyena body and hawks’ claws, steals one gold piece after another from his pocket. Whole armies of miserable emaciated proletarians, wrapped in rags, escorted by policemen with unsheathed blades, driven by Furies who lay on the whip of hunger, bring piles of wares of all kinds, casks of wine and beer, whole sacksful of money or grain, and lay them at the feet of Capitalist Germany. Mr. Adolph Wagner, in one hand the writings of Rodbertus, in the other the address of thanks of the Anti-Semites, and in his mouth the imperial message, places himself at the head of the defenders of the property of the nation and stands guard. As soon as the burdens are laid down they chase the workers with thrust of bayonet and club, and open the doors to the dealers, manufacturers and bankers. In wild confusion they throw themselves upon the objects of value, grab the manufactured goods, the bars of gold, the sacks of grain, and empty the sacks. At last, they can consume no more and like cattle wallow in their own mire.\*\*\* Then the storm breaks, the earth trembles. Historical Necessity steps forth. With iron foot she crushes the heads of those who place themselves in the way, and with powerful hand she overthrows trembling Capitalism covered with the sweat of terror.

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When the working class shall have thoroughly liberated itself from the vice that governs it and degrades its nature, and shall have arisen in its giant strength, not to demand the famous “Rights of Man” which are but the rights of capitalist exploitation, not to proclaim the “Right to Work” which is only the “Right to Misery,” but to forge an iron law forbidding every one to work more than three hours a day, will the old earth, trembling with bliss, feel a new world stir within it.

But how can a manly decision be expected from a proletariat corrupted by capitalist morals!

Like Christ, the embodied suffering of the slavery of ancient times, our



proletariat, men, women and children, for a century has climbed the rough Mount Calvary of suffering. For a century compulsory work has broken their bones, martyred their flesh, destroyed their nerves; for a century hunger has tormented their stomachs and stupefied their brains.

O, Laziness, have thou mercy upon this eternal misery! O, Laziness, mother of the arts and the noble virtues, be thou balsam for the pains of mankind!

## APPENDIX.

### A WORD TO THE MORALISTS.

Our moralists are very modest people. Even if they have devised the Dogma of work, they are nevertheless not quite clear as to its influence upon the tranquilization of the soul, the elevation of the spirit, and the healthy functions of the nerves and of the rest of the organs. They wish first to test it upon the masses, to make the experiment in “anima vile” (upon a lower soul) before they apply it to the capitalists; for it is the mission of the moralists to excuse and to defend as virtuous the vices of the capitalists.

But ye philosophers at five cents a dozen, why then so torment your brains in working out morality, the practice of which you dare not recommend to your bread givers? Do you wish to see your Dogma of Work, which you see as a means for benefiting yourselves, scorned and damned? If so, turn to the history of the ancients, to the writings of their philosophers and law givers: “I cannot say,” writes the Father of History, Herodotus, “if the Greeks have copied the Egyptians in their disdain for work, because I find the same contempt spread among the Scythians, Persians and Lydians; in a word, because among most barbarians (non Greeks) those who learn trades and even their children are regarded as the lowest of citizens \* \* \* all Greeks, especially the Lacedemonians, are educated in these principles.”

“In Athens only those citizens who occupied themselves in the defence and administration of the community were real nobles, like the savage warriors, from whom they traced their descent. As it was essential for them to have free disposal of their whole time that they might devote their intellectual and physical powers to caring for the interests of the Republic, they assigned all work to the slaves. Thus in Lacedemonia the women were not allowed even to spin or weave for fear of

degrading their noble rank. (Biot: *De L'abolition de l'esclavage ancien en Occident*. 1840.)

The Romans recognized but two noble and free callings: agriculture and military service. All citizens had the right to live at the expense of the State Treasury and could not be compelled to depend for a living upon one of the “sordidæ artes” (dirty arts as they termed the trades) which by right fell to the lot of the slaves.

When Brutus the Elder wished to incite the people, he accused Tarquinius, the tyrant, in particular of converting free citizens into artisans and masons. (Titus Livius, book 1.)

The ancient philosophers wrangled over the origin of ideas, but when it came to the horror of work they were a unit. “Nature,” writes Plato in his utopian society, in his ideal republic, “has created neither shoemaker nor smith; such occupations degrade the people who practise them: low workers, miserable nameless beings who by their position are already debarred from political rights. The tradesmen being accustomed to lies and deception will be considered only as a necessary evil in the community, the citizen who degrades himself by commercial business shall be punished for such transgression. If convicted, he shall be sentenced to one year in prison. For every repetition of the offence his punishment shall be doubled.” (Plato: *The Republic*, book 5.)

In his political economy, Xenophon writes: “The people who devote themselves to handicrafts are never promoted to higher positions, and rightly. Compelled to sit all day long, some even to endure a continual fire, the majority of them cannot prevent their bodies becoming deformed, and it is hardly possible that this does not also reach up to the mind.”

“Can anything honorable come out of a shop?”, declares Cicero, “and can commerce bring forth anything lofty? Everything called shop is unworthy an honorable man \* \* \* since merchants can make nothing without lying (and what is more shameful than a lie?), therefore the calling of those who sell their labor and skill must be considered as low and vulgar; for whosoever gives his work for money sells himself and places himself upon the same plane as the slave.” (Cicero: *Duties* 1, tit. 8, chapter xviii.)

Proletarians, made stupid by the Dogma of Work, do you hear the language of these philosophers, which is hidden away from you with jealous care? A citizen who gives his work for money lowers himself to the rank of slavery; he commits a crime

that deserves a whole year's imprisonment!!

The Christian hypocrisy and capitalist utilitarianism (creed of usefulness) had not yet corrupted these philosophers of ancient times; as they lectured for free men, they uttered their thoughts without bias. Plato and Aristotle, these giant intellects, to whose knees even our fashionable philosophers could not reach, even if they were to stand on tip-toe, desired the citizens of their ideal republics to enjoy the greatest leisure, for, adds Xenophon, "work requires the whole time, and whoever works has no time for the republic or his friends." According to Plutarch, Lycurgus, the wisest of all men, has the greatest claim upon the admiration of posterity, because he promised leisure to the citizens of the republic by forbidding them to practice any handicraft.<sup>15</sup>

But the Talmages, Windthorsts, Treitschkes and Wanamakers of Christian and capitalist morality will reply: "These thinkers, these philosophers preached slavery!" Quite so, but could it be otherwise under the economic and political conditions of their epoch? War was the normal condition of ancient society; the free man had to dedicate his time to formulating laws and caring for the defence of the state; handicrafts were then too undeveloped and too laborious for a man to be able to follow his calling as citizen and soldier in addition to the practice of a trade; in order to have warriors and citizens, the philosophers and law givers were compelled to tolerate slavery in their heroic republics.

But do not the moralists and political economists of capitalism preach the modern slavery, the wage system? And what kind of people are they for whom the capitalist slave creates leisure? The Rothschilds, Astors, Bradley-Martins, Marlboroughs—useless and harmful parasites, slaves of their vices and servitors. "Pro-slavery prejudice controlled the minds of Aristotle and Pythagoras" has been scornfully written, yet Aristotle dreamed: "If every tool could perform its proper work at command or by presentiment, as Daedalus' works of art, move by themselves, or the tripod of Hephaestus performed holy work by its own impulse, if the shuttles move by themselves, neither helpers for the master workmen nor slaves for the gentlemen would be necessary."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Plato: "The Republic, V., "The Laws," VIII.; Aristotle: Politics, II. and VII.; Xenophon: Economics, IV. and VI.; Plutarch: "The Life of Lycurgus."

<sup>16</sup> "Oh, those heathens! They understood, as the learned Bastiat, and, before him, the still wiser McCulloch, have discovered, nothing of political economy and Christianity. They did not, for example, comprehend that machinery is the surest means of lengthening the work-day. They, perhaps, excused the slavery of one on the ground that it was a means to the full development of another. But to preach slavery to the masses, in order that a few crude and half-educated parvenus

To-day the dream of Aristotle has become a reality. Our machines with fiery breath, indefatigable limbs of steel, wonderful, inexhaustible power of creation, perform their holy work by themselves; yet the spirit of the great philosophers is governed, now as heretofore, by prejudice in favor of the wage system, the worst of all slaveries. They do not yet comprehend that the machine is the emancipator of mankind, the God who will liberate men from “sordidæ artes” (“the dirty arts”) and from wage labor, the God who will bring them leisure and freedom.

THE END.

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might become “eminent spinners,” “extensive sausage makers,” and “influential shoeblack dealers,”—to do this, they lacked the bump of Christianity.” Karl Marx, *Capital*.