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ALSO

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By EDWARD BELLAMY

VINCENT ASTOR is the heir of the Astor millions and one of the best types of modern capitalists—a man who lives in luxury of rent, interest and profit.

UPTON SINCLAIR is the well-known Socialist author who has written many powerful novels, the most prominent of which is "The Jungle," an expose of the meat packing industry.

1914.
APPEAL TO REASON,
Girard, Kan.
What does a millionaire think of Socialism?
What has Socialism to offer him?
What is Socialism?
What has Socialism to offer the workingman?

These questions and others are interestingly answered in the famous letters exchanged between Upton Sinclair, the Socialist author, and Vincent Astor, heir to the Astor millions. The Astor letter was given much publicity in the capitalist press while Sinclair’s views were cunningly distorted or suppressed. Read both sides and you will understand why the Socialist position was not given publicity by the plute newspapers.
Sinclair to Astor

New York City, Dec. 20, 1913.

Vincent Astor, Esq., Rhinebeck, N. Y.:

My Dear Sir—In the New York Times for Sunday, December 14th, there were two articles which especially held my attention. One of them dealt with yourself, and is my reason for addressing this communication to you.

We live under a social system which has received the condemnation of most of the leading spirits of our time; I mean our poets, moralists and philosophers. But we get used to it, and we do not realize the full horror of it except now and then, when something especially brings the truth of it home to us. Such an occasion was the reading of those two articles in the Times, which put me in a state of mind which John Ruskin somewhere describes: "I can neither write, nor paint, nor enjoy the beauty of nature—the very light of the morning sun has become hateful to be—because of the suffering which I know is in the world and has no need to be."

The first of the two articles is a description of your country home, with a full page of photographs; and the second is a Christmas appeal from three charity organization societies. I am going to quote simply the headlines of the two articles, sufficiently indicative of their contents. The first:

ESTATE TO WHICH VINCENT ASTOR WILL TAKE HIS BRIDE.

Ferncliff, Which Mr. Astor Inherited from His Father, Col. John Jacob Astor, Is at Rhinebeck, N. Y. and One of the Show Places of the Hudson River Country. It is Filled with Every Luxury Which Could Be Desired by One of the Wealthiest Young Men in the World. The Owner will Soon Wed Miss Helen Dinsmore Huntington, Whose Family Estate, Hopeland
House, Adjoins Ferncliff, and Who Has Been His Friend Since They Were Childhood Playmates. She is 20 Years Old and He is 22.—VIEW FROM THE FRONT: There Is Nothing Showy About the House's Exterior or the Grounds. Everywhere the Prevailing Note is One of Solid Comfort and Dignified Spaciousness.—THE BREAKFAST ROOM. LODGE AT ENTRANCE OF THE ESTATE. ENCLOSED TENNIS COURT, WITH GLASS ROOF, Where Mr. and Mrs. Astor Can Play Their Favorite Game in Winter or on Rainy Days in Warm Weather.—ENTRANCE TO AMUSEMENT HALL THAT COST A MILLION DOLLARS.

And then comes the second—also a full page article, with these headings:

CHARITY ORGANIZATIONS' 100 NEEDLESS CASES.

Selected for the New York Times by the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, the Charity Organization Society, and the State Charities Aid Association.


Such is the list. It makes monotonous reading, and yet every one of these cases represents the suffering and degradation of several human beings, men women and children; and the cases are merely typical of a condition which we know exists among vast numbers of people in our other great cities. A student of social conditions who is generally recognized as an authority, Mr. Robert Hunter, declares that there are ten million people in our country living in poverty, which he defines to mean the inability to obtain the absolute necessities of life.

These conditions cannot be wholly unknown to you. It may even be that you saw the two articles in the New York Times, and realized something of the terrible contrast they make. Judging from the part you took in the recent reform campaign in New York City, you are interested in social welfare. On this account I venture to address you, and I wish that I might
be able to speak, not merely to you, but to tens of thousands of others who happen to be in possession of great estates, and who may never have had pointed out to them the injustice of our social system.

POVERTY NOT NECESSARY.

In the first place, let me set forth one or two simple economic facts. There have been times in the history of the human race when poverty was a necessary evil. Men did not know how to produce more than the bare necessities of life, and if there was to be any leisure or culture at all, it had to be at the expense of the laboring class. But that time is now past. We can produce many times as much of everything as is necessary to maintain all the members of the community in comfort. If you will consult Kropotkin's "Fields, Factories and Workshops," you will see an overwhelming demonstration of this truth.

Assuming that you admit the contention, you cannot but grant that in a country of such natural resources as our own, ten million people should have to suffer the horrors of destitution. You cannot but grant it is your duty to do your part, as a citizen, in putting an end to such evils; and still less can you be unconcerned if there is reason to think that you yourself, the privileges which society has granted to you, may have something to do with the existence of this enormous and terrifying mass of human misery. It is of this that I write you; I cannot believe that a man who is young, and has his life before him, can be wholly indifferent to the considerations which I mean to urge.

I assume that you give generously to charity; and that you may even have sent a special check when you read that special appeal. But I wish to point out to you that charity has been tried for a long time, and that the evils of which I speak have gone on increasing in spite of it. They are increasing to-
day with terrific rapidity. Wages are lower, in relation to the actual cost of living, than they were last year; they are twenty or thirty per cent lower than they were ten years ago. Industrial accidents are increasing in number; suicide and insanity are increasing; women and children are being driven to work in constantly greater throngs.

THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG.

If these things are true—and a study of the question must prove to you that they are true—is it not obviously a waste of time to endeavor to remedy them by charity—that is, by giving to the poor after they have been beaten down and broken in body and mind? Is this not saving at the spigot and wasting at the bung hole? Is it not obvious that there must be some fundamental wrong in our social system, some great economic force which is causing human misery more rapidly than we are able to remedy it, with our improved machinery of investigation and relief? I, for one, have become convinced that this is so, and I am devoting my life in trying to bring others to realize it.

We live under certain laws and social conventions, which we have inherited from our ancestors; and it is very easy for us to accept these. It is the way of happiness and peace to take it for granted that things are as they ought to be and that they must continue to be as they are. You, for instance, are in possession of a great deal of land; perhaps not much in actual acreage, but located at points where it is indispensable to other people. This land was purchased by your great-grandfather, and has come down to you in accordance with the laws which it may seem to you absurd to question. But if it could be shown to you that your ownership of this land is directly responsible for the conditions which the charity organization society reports, then you could hardly be surprised that some would claim that the law of inheritance of land is
not in accordance with the law of elemental justice; and you could not blame them for seeking to bring the laws of man into greater harmony with the laws of God.

PEOPLE DEPEND ON LAND.

I do not know if you have ever considered this question, or how the proposition may strike you; but it is an elemental fact that the land is necessary to the life of every human being. Fundamentally, almost everything we use comes from the land. And the land was not created by any individual—it existed before the human race came into being. And now, if any private individual is allowed to lay claim to this land (and by land I mean not merely the surface of the ground, but the mines, the oil wells, the forests and the water power) if any private individual is allowed to say, "These things belong to me, and you can only have access to them by paying to me a certain part of what you produce from them"—then it is obvious that such a person controls the destinies of others, and to some extent makes slaves of them.

This condition, continued through many generations and developed under the sanction of the law, is responsible for the existence of classes in our community; also for the bitter class hatreds which manifest themselves in so many ways that are painful to the sensitive-minded among us. Try, for a moment, to put yourself in the position of any member of the hundred families whose terrible stories are summed up in those brief phrases I quoted. They see in the papers the pictures of your magnificent and luxurious home, and they realize that it is out of the rents which they pay to you in one form or another that all this luxury comes. Can you not realize how this embitters them? How they find it impossible to understand that anyone can be happy in such luxury and magnificence, while he knows that his fellow-beings, men, women and children, are suffering these horrors of starvation? Can you blame them for
thinking that you must be a heartless man, without any real care about our fellows? Some of them, of course, may be under the sway of churches, which teach them that this condition was established by God; but every year great numbers of them are coming to realize that it is not the laws of God, but solely the law of man which is responsible for the evils—and that these laws have been imposed and are daily maintained by a small group of men, who rule the country by means of the privileges which they have inherited or gained by cunning.

CRISIS IS COMING.

This is a terrible frame of mind for the people to be in, in a terrible condition to exist in any society. It cannot be a matter of indifference to you, nor to other members of your class, your friends and associates. The older ones among them who have taken part in the grim battles of industry and finance—they may perhaps be hardened by the conflict; they may content themselves with the philosophy of *laissez faire* and “the devil take the hindmost.” But your generation, which stands upon the shoulders of the past, which has had education and leisure to think—surely it cannot fail to realize that a crisis is coming in this country, and that something must be done about the constantly widening chasm between wealth and poverty. It is for this reason that I, a stranger, am writing to you this urgent letter.

I am aware that you cannot do anything about it alone. You might give up all your land to the state, but it would make very little difference. The evils are social evils, and they require social remedies. One thing only you can do—study them and understand them, and then use the power which you possess to persuade others to study and understand them in turn.

History shows us many cases in which the power of one class has been overthrown, with bloodshed and terrible suffer-
ing. History does not as yet show a single case in which a privileged class has had the intelligence to recognize the justice of the demands of a subject class, and to yield without compulsion. But the hope of humanity lies in the possibility that we shall in the end outgrow the failures and follies of the past, and be able to substitute reason for brute force and cunning. I myself am a persistent optimist; I believe in human brotherhood, and I cannot be persuaded that it is impossible it can ever be made to prevail in public life.

So I write to you—the age-long appeal, which has never yet been heard, the cry of the dispossessed and the disinherited of the earth. I tell you that this country is moving today with the speed of an avalanche into one of the most terrific cataclysms in the history of mankind. I have seen our society, in the depths and at the heights; I have lived in both, and understand both, and I know why they do not understand each other. At the risk of being called impertinent and a meddler, I implore our leisured classes to take their fingers out of their ears and listen to the rumble of the coming storm.

LESSON IN FRENCH REVOLUTION.

Your friends and advisers will have their answer ready. They will tell you that I am an agitator, that I myself am making the storm which I invite you to hear. That has always been the answer—it was given before the French revolution, precisely as it is given today. But I tell you it is a false view of life which teaches that millions and tens of millions of human beings, in every part of the civilized world, should begin to behave in a precisely similar way, unless there exists some fundamental and compelling reason for their conduct. And if that way is one involving sacrifice and suffering to them, requiring continuous effort and moral heroism, and if you see that heroism continually displayed, by wider and wider groups
of men and women, over a period of forty or fifty years, then
you may be sure that what you are witnessing is no arti-
ficial product of a few evil-minded agitators, but one of the
great movements of human history, big with the potentialities
of the future.

I am referring to the Socialist movement, which it is
my purpose in this letter to ask you to study. You are an edu-
cated man; but it does not follow from this that you know any-
thing about the Socialist movement. I myself spent nine years
in colleges and universities, and came away hardly knowing that
such a thing as the Socialist movement existed. But things are
changing now in that respect. We have founded an Intercol-
legiate Socialist society, whose fifth annual convention meets
in New York this month. We have now over sixty study
chapters in American colleges, and we do a little to make up
for the intentional deficiency in the education of the young men
and women of our leisure classes.

I say intentional deficiency. The Socialist movement is
systematically and deliberately lied about in every nation of the
world. Its adherents are made the victims of blacklist and
intimidation, or persecution and imprisonment by established
authority. That is true in the so-called free United States—
just as true as it is in Russia or Germany or Japan; it is going
on right now, as I will very certainly prove to you if you care
to investigate.

A GREAT OPPORTUNITY.

There lies my reason for appealing to you, and to others of
your privileged class. I do not ask you to give up your wealth
for the sake of Socialism; I remember the experience of Jesus
when he made that request of the rich young man. But I do
ask you to enlighten your own mind, and then to use some por-
tion of your vast income to enlighten the minds of others. You
have that enormous power; you could, if you possessed the vision and the courage, almost single-handed, dispel the mists of falsehood and slander which the capitalist system of greed and knavery has conjured up about its future destroyer, the International Socialist movement. You could cause to be made investigations which would make clear to every voter in the land precisely what were the causes of social discontent, and precisely what would have to be done about it. And you might send your name down to posterity as one who had in the crucial hour perceived the need and met it; one who, when he might have given himself up to the movement of luxury and selfish pleasure, preferred to labor for the benefit of his fellows; and who had much to do with the fact that the greatest social change of all history was accomplished without bloodshed and destruction, by peaceful and constitutional means.

I have no means of knowing whether or not you have in you the making of such a man. But at least this is now certain, the future will say of you either that you rose to the occasion and made use of your power; or else, that having had the possibility offered to you, you deliberately turned your back upon it. For this, I would beg your pardon personally; save that the issue is too grave and too terrible to permit of considering the personal feelings of any one man. When you know that so many are suffering ruin and death every day at the hands of the murderous system, the life of anyone—even of yourself—becomes a thing of little importance.

With all sincerity,

UPTON SINCLAIR.
Your open letter of December 20th received, which I have read with interest. This is the first opportunity I have had to reply.

You call my attention to a compilation of social and industrial evils and invite me to make a study of Socialism, with a view to my lending aid to the Socialist party, through which you hope these evil conditions may be remedied.

Replying, I write to say that I am, fortunately, associated with various organizations which are interested in the study of sociological questions. In one of these there are many of the leading officers of the American Federation of Labor and the chiefs of the railway brotherhoods, whose lives and energies are devoted to the study and to the solution of the social and industrial problems to which your letter refers. I have had the benefit of their experiences, and I believe myself somewhat familiar with their views and their general policies.

His friends against Socialism.

It is not overstating the matter to say that not one of these members of the labor organizations whom I have met accepts your philosophy as a cure for the evils which we all recognize and deplore. On the contrary, they reject as fallacious and impracticable the program of the Socialist party in whose interest you speak. This program, boiled down, as I gather it from the Socialist papers, magazines and books that I have had opportunity to read, is contained in a statement of a recognized leader of the Socialist party, Mr. Morris Hillquit, to-wit:

Stated in more concrete terms, the Socialist program re-
quires the public or collective ownership and operation of the principal instruments and agencies for the production and distribution of wealth—the land, mines, railroads, steamboats, telegraph and telephone lines, mills, factories and modern machinery.

This is the main program and ultimate aim of the whole Socialist movement and the political creed of all Socialists. It is the unfailing test of Socialist adherence and admits of no limitation, extension or variation. Whoever accepts this program is a Socialist; whoever does not is not.

As the result of my association with the representative labor men referred to, I am fully convinced that the serious evils which have attended our industrial development can be and will be in time eradicated without overturning the fundamental basis upon which our government and social fabric is founded. In saying this, I am not unmindful of the fact that far too many social evils exist, that there are great wrongs to be righted, and that it is the duty of every man who has the interest of his country at heart to do what he properly can to establish and maintain industrial and social righteousness.

CLAIMS CONDITIONS ARE BETTER.

While from my necessarily limited experience I do not have the fullest information and, therefore, do not pretend to speak with authority, I am obliged to dissent from many of your conclusions, especially that the conditions of the working people are worse now than they have been in the past. On the contrary, I am convinced, not alone from the study of official investigations and the views of experienced social workers, but from the testimony of the representatives of labor, to whom I have referred—men whom the great mass of the working people of our country have authorized to speak for them—that the condition of the laboring people has greatly improved during the last few generations.

Confirmatory of this, from the standpoint of organized labor, are statements made in the American Federationist, the
official organ of the American Federation of Labor, for September and October, 1913, and January, 1914. I take pleasure in sending to you herewith copies of these articles, in two of which you will note the actual improvement in the various crafts in 1912. The third shows what are regarded by the workers as the gains in national and state legislation during the year 1912. But most impressive of all, it seems to me, is the testimony to the progress of the working people contained in the statement of the executive council of the American Federation of Labor to the annual convention at Seattle last November. These are the views of men who speak with knowledge and authority for millions of American wage earners.

Not only has there been progress made in numbers, but for the increasing numbers there have been increase in wages, shortening of the workday, improvement in sanitary and general conditions under which the work is done, better protection for the life and health of the workers. These are fundamental factors in determining the standard of living prevailing among working people—the greater proportion of all the people. The test of the degree of civilization of any nation is the standard of living generally prevailing. There can be no question of the statement that the general standard of living among Americans has been raised year after year. The things which today are held to be necessities were deemed luxuries a decade ago.

I am unable to see how any one can read such a statement and consider carefully the material I am sending you and still assert that we "are moving today with the speed of an avalanche into one of the most terrific cataclysms in the history of mankind."

VINCENT ASTOR,
Sinclair to Astor

Vincent Astor, Esq.:

Dear Sir—Your courteous answer to my letter has been read by me in the New York papers. Owing to the slowness in the mail service here, my reply is delayed until now. To the same cause I must attribute the fact that I have not received the copy of your letter sent personally—which is unfortunate, because I cannot read the inclosures to which you ask my attention. I will reply to the balance of your letter, and when I receive the inclosures, I will consider them as you request.

In the first place, permit me to say that I appreciate the significance of your having answered my letter at all. For the most part the attitude of those who happen to be in possession of great worldly power is that of dignified aloofness and reserve. Most men under the circumstances would have considered that the proper thing to do with my letter was to pretend not to know that it was written, or that its author existed. That you have not seen fit to take this easy course—which must have been recommended to you by many of your friends—is, if you will pardon me for saying so, to your credit.

ASTOR'S INFLUENCE DEMONSTRATED.

It is a sign that you have realized the gravity of the problem at issue and the necessity of facing it fairly. I am aware, of course, that in my approval of this action I cannot be entirely free from the suspicion of thinking of my propaganda. The fact that you have seen fit to reply to the letter has been the cause of its being published in many papers which had previously refused to publish it, and of its being read by millions of people who would otherwise never have been allowed to hear of it. I can only plead that we are dealing here with issues which involve the life and death of millions of our suffering fellow mortals; and in the face of such considerations, everything else becomes of no importance whatever.

You tell me that your own experience has been necessarily
limited, but that you rely for your ideas of the needs and conditions of the working class upon the opinions of their authorized representatives, the leaders of the American Federation of Labor.

IGNORANCE CURSES LABOR.

I can understand that this is a perfectly natural thing for you to do; that you might even feel it was absurd for you to recommend something for the working classes which the working classes themselves do not want. But I think that I can point out to you a number of considerations that may modify this seeming truth. In the first place, may it not well be that a class which is opposed and ignorant may be slow in finding out the sources of its sufferings, and in working out a method of escape therefrom? And may it not be that disinterested students of social condition, who have had the advantage of wider culture and intellectual training may be the first to work out the theory upon which the necessary changes in social organization are to proceed? Such men as Garrison, Phillips and Sumner, who made the abolition movement, were not negro slaves, nor were Voltaire or Diderot French peasants.

SOCIALISTS GAINING CONTROL.

It is true that the American Federation of Labor is not at the present time in sympathy with Socialism, but let me point out that there is a very strong Socialist minority in it, and that the minority is constantly increasing in strength. I have not the figures by me, but I believe that the vote in favor of Socialism at the last convention was close to one-third, and that a vote in favor of the essential elements of Socialism has been carried by the miner's organization, the most powerful single body in the federation. I would remind you, also, that in such matters the declarations of the officials are not entirely trustworthy as a guide to the feelings of the rank and file. Workingmen, when they become "leaders," cease to live the lives of workingmen, and become upper class personages, that is, they wear evening clothes and attend banquets and have their speeches reported in the papers, and all these things tend to make the capitalist system appear much more tolerable to them, and the needs of the everyday toilers less urgent to them. So
everywhere the leaders are found to be more conservative than
the rank and file. I can assure you that of the union work-
ingmen I have known—scores and hundreds of them not So-
cialists—there are few indeed whose desires and intentions as
regards the social system are such as to carry comfort to our
orthodox armchair economists and exponents of capitalist
opinion.

What is actually happening, Mr. Astor, is that everyday
events are opening the eyes of the workingmen to the nature of
our competitive system, and compelling them to recognize the
existence of classes and of the class struggle—in spite of
their unwillingness to do so. They have been taught in school
that there are no classes in America, and they are taught in
church (if they go to church) that they and the capitalists are
equally the children of one Father. But then on the working
days of the week they find the pay in their envelopes growing
less sufficient to buy the necessities of life and when they go on
strike they meet with such treatment as they did in Lawrence,
in Paterson, in West Virginia—and such as they are now get-
ing in Colorado and Michigan. And this makes them more
bitter and rebellious.

But it takes some time for these feelings to produce effects
in the whole body of organized labor. The present leaders have
grown up in a struggle for more wages under the present wage
system. To make them understand and adopt a new program,
that of the abolition of the wage system, is a slow process. The
leaders of any big organization constitute a machine and to turn
them out means a long struggle.

Let me remind you also that the American Federation of
Labor represents but a very small minority of labor; some 2,-
000,000 organized workers, mostly skilled. There are some 15,-
000,000 workingmen in the country, besides farm workers and
the women and children who are employed in gainful occupa-
tions. You will see, therefore, that your statement that the
leaders of the American Federation of Labor as “those whom
the great mass of the working people of our country have au-
thorized to speak for them,” is entirely incorrect. There is an-
other organization of workingmen with a large membership—
the Industrial Workers of the World. I notice that you do not
quote me the opinions of any of its leaders. Yet it is a fact that
the Industrial Workers of the World stands for the interests of a class of workers who are far more numerous than those represented by the American Federation of Labor. The latter represents skilled workers, the former the unskilled; and it is the unskilled for whom, in this present emergency, our prayers are needed.

ONLY CRAFTS HAVE GAINED.

The American Federation of Labor publishes a review of the conditions of organized labor in 1913, and you send me this as an evidence. I have not yet seen it, but I shall be much surprised if it deals with any save the crafts organized by the federation itself. All that I have seen of the arguments and the activities of the American Federation of Labor leads me to think of it as a narrow and selfish organization of men who use their skill and their ability to make it scarce, to get higher pay for their work, at the expense of the unskilled men whose labor is just as necessary and whose claim to a living wage is just as valid as their own. Take the railway engineers and conductors, for example; they occupy a strategic position and they command $5 a day—and what do they care about the poor devil of a “Hunkie” who walks the tracks or pushes a truck in a repair shop? Nothing.

But I can assure you that the processes of industrial development are breaking down that little aristocracy of skilled labor, and forcing it to look for help to the unskilled man. Sooner or later the skilled man finds that when he goes on strike it is the unskilled man who takes his place; and every day new machines are breaking the monopoly of skill. Take the glass bottle industry, which I studied some six years ago. Bottle blowers were getting $7 or $8 a day and were in clover. I said: “But suppose some one invents a machine?” They laughed at me. “Invent a machine to blow bottles? Never!” But a year later it was done, and now one small boy tends a machine which does the work of several skilled men—and the boy gets 50 cents a day. I assure you, Mr. Astor, that when Mr. Gompers tells you that organized labor is doing beautifully just now, the old gentleman is whistling to keep his courage up. Deep in his heart he must be disturbed by many things, including the jail sentences which are hanging over his head.
The question as to whether the conditions of the working class are becoming better or worse is one of the greatest questions of our time. Within the Socialist movement there exists a sharp difference of opinion as to whether the condition of the workers is growing absolutely worse, or whether it is merely not improving so rapidly as the condition of the other classes. The latter point of view, which is known as revisionism, was argued strongly by the German Socialist deputy, Bernstein. His arguments have recently been worked over and presented to Americans by Professor Simkhovitch in a book entitled "Marxism vs. Socialism." This title, I think is not quite honest, because Professor Simkhovitch is an opponent of all kinds of Socialism.

STATISTICS PROVE CONTENTIONS.

My reason for referring to his book is because I am going to ask you to read a reply to it which was published in the New York Call about two months ago by my friend, Dr. Rubinow, who is a professional statistician, and the author of a very learned work on social insurance. I myself am not a statistician, and I cannot, where I am at present, obtain the necessary figures, but in these articles which I am going to ask Dr. Rubinow to send to you, you will find abundant evidence of the facts which I state in my earlier letter as to the tendency of wages in relation to the cost of living.

You must not let yourself be deceived by the figures brought forward by labor leaders interested in maintaining their own power as showing how wages have increased. It makes no difference how much wages have increased if the cost of commodities has increased faster. The cost of commodities in this country has, according to government figures, increased 40 per cent in the last ten years, and no labor leader can dare to assert that wages have increased anything like as much as this. I would also like to ask you to read a recent exhaustive presentation of this subject as regards England, which was published in the New Age (London). The editor will surely send you these articles if you will ask for them.

But after all, these things are merely figures. To me the pressing and desperate urgency of this crisis is not a matter of
anybody's statistics, but a matter of actual sights which I have seen with my own eyes, of cries of agony and despair which I have heard with my own ears. Let me talk to you about one aspect of labor which I know. You were very young when my book about the Chicago stock yards was published, so possibly you have not read it. I said concerning it that I aimed at the public's heart, and by accident I hit it in the stomach. The public thinks that the conditions surrounding this meat supply have been improved. I know that they have not improved. I know of a thorough and exhaustive investigation which proved this—the results of which investigation I have never been able to get published.

But, so far as concerns the conditions of the workers, men, women and children in this industrial inferno, nothing has been done and nobody cares whether anything has been done or not. Thirty or forty thousand human beings are living in exactly the same conditions as I portrayed with such agony of soul and heartbreak.

So far as concerns the American Federation of Labor, whose advice you take in this matter, their conditions never will be improved. The unions in Packington were broken up after the big strike in 1904, and they have never been put together again. Exactly the same thing has been true of the steel industry since the Homestead strike. There are something like 200,000 men employed in the steel industry, and the American Federation of Labor has been unable to unionize them, in spite of all its efforts.

* * * *

The overworked and underpaid postal employes are forbidden to organize by the decree of an ardent reformer, ex-President Roosevelt, continued by another ardent reformer, President Wilson. It is proposed to nationalize first the telegraph and telephones, and then the railways. So all these employes will be taken out of the union lists. In West Virginia the American Federation of Labor leaders are under indictments for conspiracy in restraint of trade. In Connecticut they have been fined enormous sums for similar offenses. All these things taken together cause me to marvel at the patience of these leaders, the simple faith which enables them to claim that their nos-
trums are adequate for all the ills under which the working class of this country are suffering.

SILENT ON IMPORTANT POINTS.

Now, Mr. Astor, I have tried in all sincerety to answer your claim that the representatives of the 2,000,000 organized workers of the country are entitled to be regarded as authorities on the social ills of our time. Let me point out that our letter leaves most of the points in my letter entirely unanswered. You do not say anything about my contentions as to the fundamental moral wrong involved in the private ownership of the natural sources of wealth, the land, the mines, the oil wells, etc., which were created by nature, which are necessary to the existence of every human being. I assert that the class in the community which, by its ownership of these things is enabled to place a tax upon industry, and so to live without working, is a parasitic class, and whether deliberately or innocently, an immoral class, and you do not tell me whether you consider this to be true.

You will perceive that even though statisticians were able to prove that the condition of the working class is improving slightly, this would not be answering my argument. Even if it could be proven that the increase in property coming to the workers was greater than the increase coming to the exploiting classes, this would only be proving that our social conditions were slowly improving. And let me point out that any such claim for improving is practically the admission of the Socialists' contention that exploitation is wrong. Improvement in society is found only in its abolishment.

My purpose is to ask you why it cannot be abolished deliberately and intelligently with a clear and explicit understanding that it is an evil thing.

REFORMS WILL NOT CURE.

You tell me that you believe that these evils “can be in time eradicated without overturning the fundamental basis upon which our government and social fabric is founded.” I believe that you are mistaken in this idea. Socialism does not require and does not desire any such overturning. It demands only one
thing, the abolishment of private property in the instruments and means of production of the necessities of life. Only fifty years ago we had chattel slavery in this country, private property in human beings. It required a terrible war to abolish this institution, and yet the fundamental basis of our government and social fabric remained very little affected.

I believe that today the interstate commerce commission could take charge of our railways and abolish the claim of their bondholders to interest and of their stockholders to dividends, either reducing the cost of the service or turning over the profits to the government, precisely as in the case of the post-office, and I do not believe that the fundamental basis of our government and social fabric would be destroyed thereby. I believe that the same thing could be done in the case of express companies, the telegraphs and telephones, the steel trust, the oil trust and the coal trust. I believe that it could be done in our cities for public service corporations and for land, and still the fundamental basis of our government and social fabric might endure. All that is needed would be a constitutional amendment abolishing private property in the instruments and means of production, precisely as all that was needed fifty years ago was a constitutional amendment abolishing private property in human beings.

CRISIS HAS BEEN DELAYED.

I am on record as having predicted that the economic conditions which will compel such a step would occur in this country in 1913. My prediction has not been verified. But my critics overlook the fact that a number of events which I mentioned as possible causes of delay have actually occurred. There have been several great wars which have delayed the development of over-production. The government has spent the cost of a small war on the Panama canal and the governments of the world have spent the cost of enormous war upon military preparations. The discovery of dry farming and the development of irrigation plans have postponed the closing of our frontier for about ten years, but in spite of all these things the signs of the crisis are clearing manifesting themselves.

What these signs are you will find in the book I am refer-
ring to, "The Industrial Republic." I am taking the liberty of asking the publishers to send you a copy, and my final request is that you will read this book thoroughly. When you have read it, I shall be glad to have you tell me what you think of it and to discuss with you any points with which you may disagree.

You will notice the fact that whereas my letter to you was published only in Socialist papers (and in one non-Socialist newspaper in Chicago), your letter to me was published in full in every important paper in the country. This must make you realize that your opinions are of interest to many millions of people. It puts upon you a very serious responsibility, and I am sure that you will pardon me for urging you to consider carefully the arguments I have presented before coming to a final conclusion.

Very sincerely yours,

UPTON SINCLAIR.

Shelly Bay, Bermuda, Jan. 19.
The Parable of the Water Tank

BY EDWARD BELLAMY.

THERE was a certain very dry land, the people whereof were in sore need of water. And they did nothing but to seek after water from morning until night, and many perished because they could not find it.

Howbeit, there were certain men in that land who were more crafty and diligent than the rest, and these had gathered stores of water where others could find none, and the name of these men was called capitalists. And it came to pass that the people of the land came unto the capitalists and prayed them that they would give them of the water they had gathered that they might drink, for their need was sore. But the capitalists answered them and said:

"Go to, ye silly people. Why should we give you of the water which we have gathered, for then we should become even as ye are, and perish with you? But behold what we will do unto you. Be yet our servants and ye shall have water."

And the people said, "Only give to us drink and we will be your servants, we and our children." And it was so.

NOW the capitalists were men of understanding, and wise in their generation. They ordered the people who were their servants in bands with capitalists as officers, and some they put at the springs to dip, and others did they make carry water, and others did they cause to seek for new springs. And all the water was brought together in one place, and there did the capitalists make a great tank for to hold it, and the tank was called the Market, for it was there that the people, even the servants of the capitalists, came to get water. And the capitalists said unto the people:

"For every bucket of water that you bring to us, that we may pour it into the tank, which is the market, behold! we will give you a penny, but for every bucket that we shall draw forth to give unto you that ye may drink of it, ye and your wives and your children, ye shall give to us two pennies, and the difference shall be our profit, seeing that if it were not for
this profit we would not do this thing for you, but ye should all perish."

And it was good in the people's eyes, for they were dull of understanding, and they diligently brought water unto the tank for many days, and for every bucket which they did bring the capitalists gave them every man a penny; but for every bucket that the capitalists drew forth from the tank to give again unto the people, behold! the people rendered to the capitalists two pennies.

And after many days the water tank, which was the Market, overflowed at the top, seeing that for every bucket the people poured in they received so much as would buy again half of a bucket. And because of the excess that was left of every bucket, did the tank overflow, for the people were many, but the capitalists were few, and could drink no more than others. Therefore did the tank overflow.

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AND when the capitalists saw that the water overflowed, they said to the people:

"See ye not the tank, which is the Market, doth overflow? Sit ye down, therefore, and be patient, for ye shall bring us no more water till the tank be empty."

But when the people no more received the pennies of the capitalists for the water they brought, they could buy no more water from the capitalists, having naught wherewith to buy. And when the capitalists saw that they had no more profit because no man bought water of them, they were troubled. And they sent forth men in the highways, the by-ways, and the hedges, crying, "If any thirst let him come to the tank and buy water of us, for it doth overflow." For they said among themselves, "Behold, the times are dull; we must advertise."

But the people answered, saying: "How can we buy unless ye hire us, for how else shall we have wherewithal to buy? Hire ye us, therefore, as before, and we will gladly buy water, for we thirst, and ye will have no need to advertise." But the capitalists said to the people: "Shall we hire you to bring water when the tank, which is the Market, doth already overflow? Buy ye, therefore, first water, and when the tank is empty, through your buying, will we hire you again." And so it was because the capitalists hired them no more to bring water that the people could not buy the water they had brought already, the capitalists no more hired them to bring water. And the saying went abroad: "It is a crisis."
AND the thirst of the people was great for it was not now as it had been in the days of their fathers, when the land was open before them, for every one to seek water for himself, seeing that the capitalists had taken all the springs, and the wells, and the water wheels, and the vessels and the buckets, so that no man might come by water save from the tank, which was the Market. And the people murmured against the capitalists and said: "Behold, the tank runneth over, and we die of thirst. Give us, therefore, of the water, that we perish not."

But the capitalists answered: "Not so. The water is ours. Ye shall not drink thereof unless ye buy it of us with pennies." And they confirmed it with an oath, saying after their manner: "Business is business."

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BUT the capitalists were disquieted that the people bought no more water, whereby they had no more any profits, and they spoke one to another, saying: "It seemeth that our profits have stopped our profits, and by reason of the profits we have made, we can make no more profits. How is it that our profits become unprofitable to us, and our gains do make us poor? Let us, therefore, send for the soothsayers, that they may interpret this thing unto us," and they sent for them.

Now the soothsayers were men learned in dark sayings, who joined themselves to the capitalists by reason of the water of the capitalists, that they might have thereof and live, they and their children. And they spake for the capitalists unto the people, and did their embassies for them, seeing that the capitalists were not a folk quick of understanding, neither ready of speech.

And the capitalists demanded of the soothsayers that they should interpret this thing unto them, wherefore it was that the people bought no more water of them, although the tank was full. And certain of the soothsayers answered and said, "It is by reason of overproduction," and some said, "it is glut," but the signification of the two words is the same, and the others said, "Nay, but this thing is by reason of the spots on the sun." And yet others answered, saying, "It is neither by reason of glut nor yet of spots on the sun that this evil hath come to pass, but because of lack of confidence."

And while the soothsayers contended among themselves, according to their manner, the men of profit did slumber and sleep, and when they awoke they said to the soothsayers: "It is enough. Ye have spoken comfortably unto us. Now go
forth and speak comfortably likewise unto this people so that they rest and leave us also in peace."

But the soothsayers, even the men of the dismal science—for so they were named of some—were loath to go forth to the people lest they should be stoned, for the people loved them not. And they said to the capitalists:

"Masters, it is a mystery of our craft that if men be full and thirst not, but be at rest, then shall they find comfort in our speech, even as ye. Yet if they thirst and be empty, find they no comfort therein, but rather mock us, for it seemeth that unless a man be full our wisdom appeareth unto him but emptiness." But the capitalists said: "Go ye forth. Are ye not our men to do our embassies?"

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AND the soothsayers went forth to the people and expounded to them the mystery of overproduction, and how it was that they must needs perish of thirst because there was overmuch water, and how there could not be enough because there was too much. And likewise spoke they unto the people concerning the sun spots, and also wherefore it was that these things had come upon them by reason of lack of confidence. And it was even as the soothsayers had said, for to the people their wisdom was emptiness. And the people reviled them, saying: "Go up, ye bald-heads! Will ye mock us? Doth plenty breed famine? Doth nothing come out of much?" And they took up stones to stone them.

And when the capitalists saw that the people still murmured, and would not give ear to the soothsayers, and because also they feared lest they should come upon the tank and take of the water by force, they brought forth to them certain holy men (but they were false priests), who spake unto the people that they should be quiet and trouble not the capitalists because they thirsted. And these holy men, who were false priests, testified to the people that this affliction was sent to them of God for the healing of their souls, and that if they should bear it in patience and lust not after the water, neither trouble the capitalists, it would come to pass that after they had given up the ghost they would come to a country where there should be no capitalists, but an abundance of water. Howbeit, there were certain true prophets of God also, and these had compassion on the people and would not prophesy for the capitalists, but rather spake constantly against them,
NOW, when the capitalists saw that the people still murmured and would not be still, neither for the words of the soothsayers nor of the false priests, they came forth themselves unto them and put the ends of their fingers in the water that overflowed in the tank and wet the tips thereof, and they scattered the drops from the tips of their fingers abroad upon the people who thronged the tank, and the name of the drops of water was charity, and they were exceedingly bitter.

And when the capitalists saw yet again that neither for the words of the soothsayers, nor of the holy men who were false priests, nor yet for the drops that were called charity, would the people be still, but raged the more, and crowded upon the tank as if they would take it by force, then they took counsel together and sent men privily forth among the people. And these men sought out the mightiest among the people and all who had skill in war, and took them apart and spake craftily with them, saying:

"Come, now; why cast ye not your lot in with the capitalists? If ye will be their men and serve them against the people that they break not in upon the tank, then shall ye have abundance of water, that ye perish not, ye and your children."

AND the mighty men and they who were skilled in war hearkened unto this speech and suffered themselves to be persuaded, for their thirst constrained them, and they went within unto the capitalists and became their men, and staves and swords were put in their hands and they became a defense unto the capitalists and smote the people when they thronged upon the tank.

And after many days the water was low in the tank, for the capitalists did make fountains and fish ponds of the water thereof, and did bathe therein, they and their wives and their children, and did waste the water for their pleasure.

And when the capitalists saw that the tank was empty, they said, "The crisis is ended"; and they sent forth and hired the people that they should bring water to fill it again. And for the water that the people brought to the tank they received for every bucket a penny, but for the water which the capitalists drew forth from the tank to give again to the people, they received two pennies, that they might have their profit. And after a time did the tank again overflow even as before.

And now, when many times people had filled the tank until it overflowed and had thirsted till the water therein had been
wasted by the capitalists, it came to pass that there arose in
the land certain men who were called agitators, for that they
did stir up the people. And they spake to the people, saying
that they should associate, and then would they have no need
to be servants of the capitalists, and should thirst no more for
water. And in the eyes of the capitalists were the agitators
pestilent fellows, and they would fain have crucified them, but
durst not for fear of the people.

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AND the words of the agitators which they spake to the
people were on this wise:

"Ye foolish people, how long will ye be deceived by a lie
and believe to your hurt that which is not? For behold all
these things that have been said unto you by the capitalists and
by the soothsayers are cunningly devised fables. And likewise
the holy men, who say that it is the will of God that ye shold
always be poor and miserable and athirst, behold! They do
blaspheme God and are liars, whom he will bitterly judge
though he forgive all others. How cometh it that ye may not
come by the water in the tank. It is not because ye have no
money. And why have ye no money? Is it not because ye
receive but one penny for every bucket that ye bring to the
tank, which is the Market, but must render two pennies for
every bucket ye take out so that the capitalists must have their
profit? See you now how by this means the tank must over-
flow, being filled by that ye lack and made to abound out of
your emptiness? See ye not also that the harder ye toil and
the more diligently ye seek and bring the water, the worse and
not the better it shall be for you by reason of the profit, and
that forever?"

After this manner spake the agitators for many days unto
the people, and none heeded them, but it was so that after a
time the people hearkened. And they answered and said unto
the agitators:

"Ye say truth. It is because of the capitalists and of their
profits that we want, seeing that by reason of them and their
profits we may by no means come by the fruit of our labor,
so that our labor is in vain, and the more we toil to fill the tank
the sooner doth it overflow, and we may receive nothing be-
cause there is too much, according to the words of the sooth-
sayers. But behold, the capitalists are hard men and their
tender mercies are cruel. Tell us if ye know any way whereby
we may deliver ourselves out of our bondage unto them. But
if ye know of no certain way of deliverance, we beseech you to hold your peace and let us alone, that we may forget our misery."

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AND the agitators answered and said: "We know a way."
And the people said: "Deceive us not, for this thing hath been from the beginning, and none hath found a way of deliverance until now, though many have sought it carefully with tears. But if ye know a way, speak unto us quickly."

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THEN the agitators spake unto the people of the way. And they said:
"Behold, what need have ye at all of these capitalists, that ye should yield them profits upon your labor? What great thing do they wherefore ye render them tribute? Lo! It is only because they do order you in bands and lead you out and in and set your tasks and afterward give you a little of the water yourselves have brought and not they. Now, behold the way out of this bondage! Do ye for yourselves that which is done for the capitalists—namely, the ordering of your labor, and the marshaling of your bands, and the dividing of your tasks. So shall ye have no need at all of the capitalists and no more yield to them any profit, but all the fruit of your labor shall ye share as brethren, every one having the same; and so shall the tank never overflow until every man is full, and would not wag the tongue for more, and afterward shall ye with the overflow make pleasant fountains and fish ponds to delight yourselves withal, even as did the capitalists; but these shall be for the delight of all."

And the people answered, "How shall we go about to do this thing, for it seemeth good to us?"

And the agitators answered: "Choose ye discreet men to go in and out before you and to marshal your bands and order your labor, and these men shall be as the capitalists were; but, behold, they shall not be your masters as the capitalists are, but your brethren and officers who do your will, and they shall not take the profits, but every man his share like the others, that there may be no more masters and servants among you, but brethren only." And from time to time, as ye see fit, ye shall choose other discreet men in place of the first to order the labor."

And the people hearkened, and the thing was very good
to them. Likewise, seemed it not a hard thing. And with one voice they cried out:

“So let it be as ye have said, for we will do it!”

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AND the capitalists heard the noise of the shouting and what the people said, and the soothsayers heard it also, and likewise the false priests and the mighty men of war, who were a defense unto the capitalists; and when they heard they trembled exceedingly, so that their knees smote together, and they said to one another: “It is the end of us!”

Howbeit, there were certain true priests of the living God who would not prophesy for the capitalists, but had compassion on the people; and when they heard the shouting of the people and what they said, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy, and gave thanks to God because of the deliverance.

And the people went and did all the things that were told them of the agitators to do. And it came to pass as the agitators had said, even according to all their words. And there was no more any thirst in that land, neither any that was ahungered, nor naked, nor cold, nor in any manner of want; and every man said unto his fellow, “My brother,” and every woman said unto her companion: “My sister,” and so were they with one another as brethren and sisters which do dwell together in unity. And the blessing of God rested upon that land forever.
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