GOD'S CHILDREN

A MODERN ALLEGORY

BY

JAMES ALLMAN

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God's Children

CHAPTER I

IN WHICH I INTRODUCE MY GOD

I think I wrote and spoke to you about my definition of God, which I would now give in answer to the question, What is God? God is that All, that infinite All of which I am conscious of being a part, and therefore all in me is encompassed by God, and I feel him in everything.—*Thoughts on God:* LEO TOLSTOI.

Having selected "God's Children" as the title of this allegory, I find myself urged in consequence to a very curious quest. I am in search of a god. I must have one to be a father to the children. My position is awkward. Probably you have heard of Ponce de Leon in search of the fountain of eternal youth, or Jason in search of the golden fleece, but I have no doubt this is the first time you have ever met a man in search of a god. There are plenty to select from, it is true, in fact the supply of divinities is much in

excess of the demand, and the religious market is simply glutted with gods.

There is the Jehovah of Judaism, the Christ of Christianity, the Zeus or Jupiter of Greece and Rome, the Vishnu and Brahma of India, not to mention Apollo, Mars, and Venus (the young lady will excuse me I hope for not giving her precedence) and the little pantsless, graceless god of love, Cupid. Besides these there are the thousand and one gods and goddesses of India, Siam, Burmah, and China, with their grotesque and funny faces, and their many heads and arms.

I have sampled these goods,—I beg their pardons I mean gods,—and find them not to my liking.

There is that sombre, harsh and erratic deity which Christianity has inherited from its parent creed Judaism. A divinity who could not make manifest unto men such simple and self-evident rules of conduct as, Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal and thou shalt not commit adultery, without creating an

unpleasant atmospheric disturbance and compelling an extremely aged Jew called Moses to stay for three days and three nights on the top of a very high mountain without food or protection from the inclemencies of the weather. A God who foolishly came down unto this particular planet called the Earth and allowed its denizens who are themselves but the creation of his will and alive by his sufferance, to put him to death. This God will not suit my purpose, I do not like him and will not have him.

I next turn to the principal god of the religions that were accepted by civilization prior to Christianity—him who was known to the Greeks as Zeus and to the Latins as Jupiter, and I must say I prefer him to the Christian God because he was such a jolly good fellow. He was so like to erring mortals that I like him all the more for it. When he came on earth it was not to die for men; Jupiter knew too much for that, he came down to have a good time. He enjoyed himself

immensely with such young ladies as Leda and Europa in a manner that would furnish a splendid theme for a modern farce or a realistic novel, and when he returned to Olympus, Juno, his wife, tendered him very much the same reception as an earthly spouse would give to an erring husband. I turn with sorrow from this humane and jovial divinity because I cannot accept him on account of the shockingly low standard of his morals.

Shelley in his notes to Queen Mab says:—"God is an hypothesis," and if God be merely an imagination I do not see why I should not be entitled to imagine my own god if I am too fastidious about my divinities to accept the crude conceptions of others. I shall therefore proceed to imagine my own god as follows:—

God is kind, benign and beautiful; urbane in manner, almighty in will, but merciful in disposition. Eternal, never born and never dying, he existed from ages which had no beginning; alone in

terrible and majestic solitude, until he became weary of his loneliness (I cannot imagine a god who has not certain human attributes — it is beyond man's mental power to do so) and in order to relieve himself of his fit of divine ennui he created certain semi-divine beings as attendants and companions, and put them in a place called heaven. These companions amused him for a time, but again he became weary and he tired of them and their company and it occurred to his divine mind that it would be very amusing to construct some sort of a toy or contrivance to please himself with and he made the universe. He brought into existence a number of ever revolving and moving bodies of substance, and he kept them in form and place and proper circuit by means of force or energy. This grand far-reaching cosmos of matter and motion continually counterbalancing each on the other, this beautiful aggregation of brilliant suns with their many hued attendant planets circling around them, these

strange, gorgeous, and erratically moving comets all extending into the farthest limits of space, myriads and myriads of miles in length and breadth and height, is spoken of in awesome reverence by mortals as the universe. In heaven, though, they do not consider this universe so seriously. Its many revolutions and changes and phases amuse God and his angels even as the revolving of a top or the changing of forms and colors in a kaleidoscope will please a child. The universe is God's plaything.

God studied and watched this universe, his toy, in its entirety and fullness and vastness. It pleased him to perceive its many forms and motions. He considered it in its details and peered into its smallest aspect, and laughed to see how many millions of minute forms of animal life one small drop of water could contain and then he became tired of his toy and neglected it again for a very long period.

After a very long time had elapsed he suddenly thought of it again and in a

passing whim of divine humor, for God appreciates humor, it occurred to him that it would be a very interesting experiment if he should take an infinitesimal fraction or atom of his *mens divinior*, his divine soul and essence, and instill it into the brains of certain beings on the different planets and thus endow them with reason just to find out what ridiculous uses they would make of it.

He passed through the universe rapidly, for it does not take God long to do so, and he placed a very small amount of the *mens divinior* in one distinct species of animal inhabiting each planet.

In due time he reached the earth and for a while he hesitated among the different living beings upon its surface, wondering upon which he should bestow his great gift of reason. He thought at first of the graceful gazelle, swift-footed and slender, careering at lightning speed over the boundless wilds of South Africa. He thought of the powerful, majestic lion with his tawny-crested calm-faced head

upreared, and shoulders flowing with a mane of tangled locks.

But it so happened, just as he was about to bestow this great gift upon some noble beast or beautiful bird, that God caught sight of a man. God laughed pityingly and exclaimed:

"Poor misshapen beast, how extremely hideous you appear. Surely I must have been very careless when I made you, for your limbs are not of uniform length like those of the more graceful monkey or most of the other animals, and the hair upon your body appears only in patches, while in other places you are so comically bald; you are slow and shambling of movement, and I am sure you cannot run away from fleeter beasts of prey, and when caught by them you must be very defenseless for you have not long keen horns, neither have you teeth nor claws, therefore, poor misshapen man, to you will I give the gift of reason, in order that you may be able through the intelligence of your mind to fashion artificial

clothing for that body which I have neglected to clothe properly, and that you may be able to make for yourself out of stone or iron sharp and heavy weapons to supply the place of teeth and claws, and in order that you may build houses and go into them when the night is dark and thus be safe from the other more powerful beasts. Unto you, man, do I give that essence divine called mind and adopt you from among all the beasts of the earth to be God's Children."

CHAPTER II

GOD SENDS MERCURY TO INVESTIGATE THE CONDITION OF HIS CHILDREN

A station like the herald Mercury.—*Hamlet:* SHAKESPEARE.

After God had selected men to be his children, he passed away through the universe visiting other planets, and eventually having completed his work returned to heaven, and from thence for a short time he amused himself studying his children on the different planets, sometimes thinking of them on one and sometimes on another, but he forgot or neglected the earth.

After a short time God wearied of this diversion also and he lazily ignored the doings of his children, except occasionally when he would become casually desirous about them, and then having found them too uninteresting for his immediate divine attention he would call for his

heavenly messenger and send him on to investigate them. The name of this heavenly messenger is unknown to me for he is semi-divine and I am merely mortal, but as I shall be compelled often to refer to him I shall call him Mercury, the name by which heaven's messenger was known to the ancients.

God was reclining gracefully and carelessly upon a couch of opalescent-colored clouds when he suddenly thought he would like to be amused and he fixed his eyes upon his toy, the universe. He thought of his children who inhabited many of its different planets. His eyes wandered over many of them and at length by chance rested upon the earth. This was merely an accident.

God lifted his voice and he called aloud for the heavenly messenger, Mercury. He did not exclaim aloud, majestically, "Come thou hither, oh, my fleet and obedient messenger!" Only the pompous overbearing divinities, imagined by foolish mortals, talk that way. Earthly kings

sometimes speak that way too, and imagine it is dignified and majestic. Majesty is simply the quintessence of ridiculous self-conceit. God is unassuming and plain in manner, simple and direct in talk. He simply said, "Mercury come here."

And Mercury, like all the other beings in heaven, did not approach in fear and dread as God's attendants are usually supposed to, he did not prostrate himself at God's feet and humbly implore his will for God, not being of a despotic disposition does not wish his attendants to be servile and cringing. Mercury simply walked up to God and looking him frankly in the face remarked in unconcerned but still respectful manner "Well, God, what do you want with me?"

God replied, "Well, Mercury, I feel I would like to amuse myself with the doings of my children. Go down to one of those planets" — here God's gaze wandered over the universe and by the merest chance rested upon the earth,—"go

to that far-away dim-looking planet and tell me when you return how my children are progressing."

Mercury hurried away very happy, for these commissions usually meant to him very pleasant and happy vacations. Before going, however, he did what an earthly tourist does when he starts out upon a journey. The tourist usually gathers information about the land where he is going to visit and oftentimes carries that information with him in the form of a guide-book. In the same manner Mercury hurried away to seek some information about the place he was going to visit, and in order to obtain it he sought the office of the recording angel.

This heavenly official is supposed to keep a classified record of the universe, its manifestations and movements, and of the children of God who inhabit it and their habits, their works, inclinations, governments, etc.,—but he does not. Like many a mortal official he has turned his position into a sinecure, he has

neglected the book of records, and God, being a kindly and indulgent master, does not bother much about what the recording angel does, or rather does not.

When Mercury entered the office of this official the recording angel was in a deep slumber. He awoke and inquired, yawningly, and with that disturbed and petulant air peculiar to all officials, when expected to perform the functions of their office, what Mercury wanted.

Mercury replied in a good humored manner: "Well, my friend, I have been ordered by God to investigate the condition of his children on the earth, and I thought I would come to you before I started out in order to get some information."

The recording angel quickly recovered his equanimity—for the heavenly people are polite to each other—and remarked: "I fear, Mercury, that you are going to a very unpleasant place. That Earth is one of the most peculiar and puzzling of all the planets; in fact it seems to me there is something very wrong there."

This said, the recording angel began to search among the books of record exclaiming dreamily: "The earth, the earth, where did I leave the volume in which it is described. I fear it is lost. Oh yes, here it is!"

He pulled down from his shelves a very dusty-looking volume, and twitching one of his wings around he cleared the many cobwebs off the book.

"God's children on the earth," he said, "have a strange habit of congregating closely, and I should think unhealthily, together in large aggregations which they call cities, and I think if you are sent to inquire into their institutions and manners you had better seek the largest of these cities. I think it is called Nineveh or Babylon. No, that was some time ago, they have drifted farther westward now. I think," he said, turning over another page, "it is Rome. No, that is not it; I made another entry only recently, I think—yes—here it is, London. You will find this to be the largest city to-day

on the earth. It is situated upon a small island called England, and you had better go to that city, for there you will find concentrated all the enterprises, hopes and ambitions of God's Children centered in one great focus, and you will thus be saved the trouble of much traveling and long investigation."

"England, the country in which this city is situated, is a small island on the northeast corner of a large sheet of water called the Atlantic Ocean and on the northwest corner of a large continent of land."

"Very well," exclaimed Mercury, "that is all I wish to know," and he hurried away.

The recording angel sauntered back into his office and resumed his slumber.

Mercury went rapidly to the golden gates of heaven and passed without them. For one moment he poised himself and then spreading his wings began to pass through space with a rapidity that exceeds mortal ken.

Solar systems and planets rushed past him, and in a few seconds the earth became larger and nearer. Its continents and oceans spread before him. He directed his course toward the point described and arrived in the center of London at Charing Cross.

CHAPTER III

MERCURY BEGINS TO INVESTIGATE THE CONDITION OF GOD'S CHILDREN AND MEETS WITH STRANGE EXPERIENCES

If we could conceive a visitor from another planet coming among us and being set down in the midst of our western civilization at the present day there is one feature of our life, which we might imagine could not fail to excite his interest and curiosity. . . . He would notice at every turn in our cities great buildings—churches, temples, cathedrals—and he would have seen also that wherever men lived together in small groups they erected these buildings. . . . If at this stage he were to ask his guide for some explanation of these phenomena he would not improbably begin to feel somewhat puzzled.

—*Social Evolution, Chap. IV:* BENJAMIN KIDD.

When Mercury arrived in Charing Cross, which is in the center of London, he hovered for a time above in spiritual form invisible to mortal eyes. But it soon occurred to him that he had better take tangible shape, assume mortal form, if he would discover anything about

God's Children, and accordingly he looked around him and observed the different people who were passing. Just at that moment an exquisite dandy, fresh from a morning call, passed by and Mercury resolved to assume his form, cut of clothing and other very necessary appurtenances, such as cigar, eye-glass and gold-headed cane. He quickly threw away the cigar, for the dandy who had been smoking the similar one did not have a very fastidious perception of the gentle flavor of the weed, he being one of those who smoke only for appearance and not from a sense of enjoyment, and hence his cigar had a vile flavor. The eye-glass Mercury rapidly dropped from his face for although he had assumed the external appearance of a dude it was beyond his patience and endurance to perform the most laborious and painful function of that genus.

He walked westward from Charing Cross and passing through Trafalgar Square he admired the statues, fountains

and buildings and he became very well impressed with the residences of God's Children and the buildings in their city. He looked at the people who were passing and remarked to himself:

"Well, they appear to be clean and comfortable although their faces are not very intelligent and their clothing appears to be of very strange shape and of very dull colors." The tall silk hats, the straight black garments of the men, for there were few women abroad at that early hour on Sunday morning in Pall Mall, did not appear to Mercury to be very beautiful.

Suddenly he saw something which caused him to hold his breath in astonishment. It was a lady—nay something more important than that, a lady's maid—aye it was even worse still, a spring hat plus a lady's maid. Mercury felt himself compelled to admit that if the men wore only dark and sombre hues the women made ample amends for it. That hat was fearfully and wonderfully made. It

was surmounted with birds, beasts, flowers, ferns and ribbons, and the hues of this hat and those of the rest of the raiment of the maid combined all the colors of the rainbow plus many others. Mercury became so intensely interested in the polychromatically garbed damsel that he even violated the proprieties by staring rudely and blankly at her, a proceeding which she did not seem to object to, indeed, she expected such treatment in Pall Mall. As she approached nearer, the heavenly messenger perceived that she was carrying something under her arm. It was a book with gilt edges. Mercury's curiosity overcoming him he boldly inquired of her:

"What is that you are carrying?"

She replied, "That is the Bible."

"What is the Bible?" he again inquired.

"It is God's word," she replied.

"Dear me," exclaimed Mercury, "I did not think he ever spoke to you. And pray where are you going with it?"

"To church," she replied.

"What is church?"

"It is God's house."

"Why, he does not live here," ejaculated Mercury.

The female, who was not at all surprised at being accosted by an entire stranger, for it was in Pall Mall, ogled Mercury and appeared to court a flirtation, but Mercury, feeling too much astonished at what he had heard, ended the conversation as abruptly as he had begun it, much to the chagrin of the lady's maid. Mercury did not feel much inclined for a flirtation, he being too much puzzled at what he had heard. "This is truly strange," he thought, "God's house and God's word; I must follow her and find out what it is and where it is." With this intent, he walked at a respectful distance behind her through Pall Mall and then followed her into Whitehall, and as he went he noticed several others going in the same direction, many of whom carried Bibles and prayer-books.

But his attention was suddenly diverted by the most curious and untoward sights and sounds. He heard the blaring of trumpets and the beating of drums and he saw a large body of men all wearing the same red coats and carrying long sharp steel implements upon their shoulders. They marched along with a steady and rhythmic movement and looked like a stream of blood flowing down the street, while the pale white glitter of their bayonets appeared like a crest of foam upon its surface. Above them waved and floated a flag of gaudy hues upon which was designed a lion, some leopards, a harp, a crown and some other things. Mercury looked in astonishment at this strange sight and he turned to an old gentleman of upright carriage who happened to be walking near, and who was a retired army officer on half pay, and inquired:

"What are those and why do they wear the same kind of clothing? What will they do with those murderous-looking

sharp things they are carrying, and where are they going to ?"

To which the retired army officer replied:

"That is a regiment of the glorious British army, and they are going to South Central Africa to slaughter some of those beggarly Boers who have dared to rebel against the glorious British empire."

"What!" exclaimed Mercury. "Slaughter their fellow men? Why should they do so? Are not God's Children happy, contented and peaceful? Why should they kill each other? Why, the very thought is brutal and barbarous!"

The old gentleman to whom he spoke, bridled up and replied:

"Sir, you are a dangerous socialist," and then hurried away in high dudgeon.

Mercury gazed wonderingly after him, and then remarked:

"There must be something wrong with God's Children that they should kill each other in this manner," and he thought deeply about this problem as he followed

the throng of people who were going to God's house. At the end of Whitehall he turned with the crowd in the direction of Westminster Abbey and was much surprised when he beheld its many trefoiled and quaintly-carved façades and looked up at its delicate Gothic spires reaching upward toward heaven and losing their graceful forms in the dim and misty sky of London.

"Is that God's house?" he inquired of a passer-by.

"Yes it is," came back the answer.

Mercury gazed with awe and wonder upon the beautiful structure and then remarked:

"It is grand and beautiful. Truly it is worthy of being called God's house."

He entered and he admired the lofty nave, the shadowy high-groined roof, and when he reached Henry the Seventh's Chapel he was pleased with that perfect specimen of later Gothic architecture and admired much the intricate and lace-like tracery of its wonderfully carven stone

ceiling, but he passed from thence to that part of the Abbey where St. Edward the Confessor and many other English kings are buried, and he noticed in particular a tomb above which was suspended a tarnished helmet, a long rusty sword and a shield. Two youths were standing reverently before this tomb gazing upon it in deep veneration, and one whispered unto the other:

"It is the tomb of Henry the Fifth, the hero of Agincourt."

Mercury turned to the youth and asked him:

"What noble deed did this hero perform that he should be honored with burial in God's beautiful house?"

The boy replied:

"Oh, he was brave. He went to war, and killed many Frenchmen."

"Do they bury butchers in the house of God?" sternly inquired Mercury.

"Sir, you are a vandal," indignantly rejoined the boy.

Mercury's astonishment at this curt

answer was checked by a verger who approached him and informed him that the service of God was about to begin, and that he must stop walking about looking at the sights.

"I wonder how God's Children serve him," murmured Mercury, as he walked toward the nave and took his seat among the congregation.

He perceived a portly, florid-faced being, attired in feminine costume, consisting of a long black petticoat and a curious garment over it, which looked like a shirt to which were attached sleeves so voluminous that ten poor children might have found material for clean body linen in them, ascend the pulpit.

The large fat man thus fantastically dressed like a woman, excited Mercury's risibility and he began to laugh, whereupon a pious young lady, who sat near him, turned toward him and eyed him scornfully. The action drew Mercury's attention to her and he noticed that her sleeves too were most unnecessarily large.

Prompted by an ungovernable curiosity he inquired of her:

"Why does that man dress himself like a woman? Why does he wear long petticoats and tremendous sleeves the same as yours?"

To which the pious female replied sourly:

"Young man, if you do not behave yourself, I will call a verger and have you put out."

One of those officials had noticed Mercury smiling and had seen him talk to the female, and approaching the heavenly messenger, he addressed him thus:

"Keep quiet, sir, or I will expel you."

Mercury remained quiet for a time, but something so ridiculous occurred shortly, that he felt himself compelled to laugh outright.

The tall fat man in female garb began to talk aloud with a most abominable Oxford drawl, as follows:

"Oh, Laud, we haughtily beseech thee that thou willst deign to assist os, and we

do ask of thee in the most haughty mannah," etc.

"I wonder what he is talking so haughtily to God about," said Mercury.

"How God will laugh when I tell him about this."

"Oh, Laud," continued the minister, "who didst come down upon this earth to die for thy children——"

"What!" exclaimed Mercury. "God came down upon this earth to die for his children? Why, what a fantastic idea! Are God's Children so stupid that they think he would commit suicide for such a trivial cause?"

The thought was so extremely ridiculous that Mercury began to laugh aloud. The verger approached him again and said to him:

"Now, behave yourself; this is the last warning I will give you," and in company with another verger he remained standing threateningly near Mercury.

Again Mercury became very quiet, and again he listened to the minister, but this

time he heard words which excited not his ridicule but his wrath.

"Oh Laud," exclaimed the minister, "bless our army in Africa. May our glorious British regiments be victorious over those vile Boers. May they, in righteous anger, oh Laud, slaughter those rebels who have dared to resist the onward march of progress and civilization."

This was more than Mercury could tolerate. Rising angrily, he cried in threatening tones: "That is an abominable blasphemy; God is kind and merciful and you insult his name when you invoke his assistance in perpetrating wholesale murder. Your foolish talk about his dying for you may be harmless, but when you seek his aid for the doing of bloody deeds, then"—but Mercury got no further with his protest, for the two vergers seized him by the collar of his coat, and that part of his clothing, which on account of its looseness afforded an ample grasp, and they then threw him out of the Abbey.

Thus was God's messenger thrown out of God's house by God's Children because he objected to the blasphemy of God's name.

CHAPTER IV

MERCURY CONTINUES HIS INQUIRY INTO THE CONDITION OF GOD'S CHILDREN AND MEETS WITH MORE SURPRISES

In any case there are two cities, hostile to one another—the city of the poor and the city of the rich: and each of these contains many cities; and if you deal with them as one you will find yourself thoroughly mistaken; but if you treat them as two and give to one class in the community the power and persons of the other you will have many allies and few enemies.—*Plato's Republic, Book IV.*

A large crowd of idlers, prompted by curiosity, gathered around Mercury when he was expelled from God's house and gazed anxiously upon him, eagerly expecting him to fight with one of the vergers, and thus enable them to enjoy that prettiest of London street scenes, "a row." When Mercury walked away they were much chagrined and had to content themselves with answering the anxious questionings of other idlers who had

arrived too late, and who were eagerly asking, "What's up?"

Mercury had not proceeded far from the scene of the disturbance when he was overtaken by a politely disposed, but very aristocratic-looking old gentleman whose features were of the clean-cut Norman order and whose habiliments evidenced the height of sartorial art. In a condescending and patronizing manner he began to bestow upon Mercury that which men are always willing to give gratuitously because it costs nothing to acquire—advice. Those who give the most advice usually need it most.

"Sir," began the old gentleman, "I hope you will pardon my familiarity, but my intentions are gentlemanly and for your welfare. My dear young sir, you evidently imbibed so much champagne last night that you are still in a slightly after-dinner condition. Pray don't be offended; remember, I speak for your welfare. I perceived you this morning in Pall Mall, and although you are a stranger to me, I

became convinced by your distinguished bearing, that you were a gentleman, and when I afterward saw you attempting to strike up a flirtation with a young lady in the Abbey, laughing at the minister, and fighting with the vergers, I became convinced that my first impression concerning you must be correct.

"I would kindly advise you to retire to your chambers. I have much sympathy with a young gentleman sowing his wild oats, for I am reaping mine now, and my advice is tendered to you out of a gentlemanly regard for your good."

He continued much further in a similar strain, and Mercury, although not quite comprehending what he meant, tolerated him because the heavenly beings are naturally polite, and the advice, although slightly blasé and wearisome, was offered with a good intention.

Suddenly, however, the old aristocrat's admonitions were rudely interrupted by the appearance of a man of extremely unprepossessing exterior. With a pallid

and hunger-marked face, attired in squallid and tattered garb, a beggar approached them. Extending a toil-worn knotty hand, he beseeched alms in pleading tones, telling meanwhile of hunger and cold and suffering. Prompted by that most heavenly instinct, mercy, Mercury bestowed upon the suppliant a small sum of money, but was much surprised to hear the old gentleman, who had been talking in such kind and paternal tones, refuse in a harsh and brutal manner.

Turning to him, Mercury asked in surprise:

"Why is that man so miserable and destitute while so many are comfortable, well-clad and well-fed, and why, my friend, do you refuse to relieve his urgent needs in such harsh and brutal manner?"

"Because he is a vagabond, a loafer, who is too lazy to work, and I do not believe in encouraging pauperism," replied the gentleman.

"Had I known that I would not have encouraged him neither," remarked Mer-

cury, "for in a clean comfortable land like this there can be no excuse for such abject want, and I consider the condition of that man a fitting punishment for his idleness. These palatial buildings could not be raised without labor; your clothing could not be made without labor; the food which has made you so sleek and healthy could not be provided and prepared without labor, and such people as that idle and dirty man (I hope they are not numerous, in fact, I am sure they are not, for this is the first I have seen) should not be encouraged in their filthy indolence by the nice clean members of the community, who do work, such for instance as yourself."

"Sir," hastily queried the aristocrat, "do I understand you to insinuate that you take me for a workingman? Are my manners, sir, suggestive of the toiling, sweating multitude?"

"What!" exclaimed Mercury, "don't you work?"

"Of course I do not," replied the other.

"I am a gentleman — it is beneath my dignity to do so."

"Then, if you do not work, and he does not work," asked Mercury, pointing in the direction of the beggar, "how comes it that you are a gentleman and he is a loafer? How is it that you are fat, well-dressed and happy, and he is lean, ragged and miserable? Why do you speak contemptuously of work and then blame the man because he will not do that which you despise?"

Furiously the old aristocrat replied: "Sir, your clothing and manners led me to mistake you for a gentleman, but I now see my error. You are a leveller, a revolutionist, sir, and I now believe your object in Pall Mall was not a lawful one. By Jove, how hard it is to distinguish between a gentleman and a commoner these days." Thus rapidly speaking, he hurried away, purple in the face with anger.

Mercury looked thoughtfully in the direction of the retreating gentleman and remarked:

"These children of God are really a problem. Idleness is a curse and is despised in one set of men; it is a blessing and is rewarded with honors and riches in another. This is the first problem which I do not understand. The next one is, if none of these people work, who builds all the palaces and mansions and who keeps them and the roadway in repair? These are rather puzzling questions, and then the astonishing absurdity of that ridiculous proceeding which they call the service of God and their willful and reckless slaughter of other people which they term war and which they appear to glory in. These subjects I must find out about." Lowly he bent his head and began to ponder on these strange questions. He retraced his steps the same way as he had come, following the custom of wanderers in strange places who usually go back the same way as they come. Passing back up Whitehall he reached Trafalgar Square and then instead of going westward, as in

the morning, he turned east and entered the Strand. Still wrapped in thought he wandered on. Once when passing Temple Bar, that spot rendered sacred by so many classic memories, haunted by the shades of Shakespeare, Jonson, Dryden, Goldmith, Johnson and Boswell, he lifted his head and noticed as he entered Fleet Street that the people were garbed in plainer, more careless, and in a few instances rather shabby, attire, and he remarked:

"Ah! they do not appear to be as well clothed here," but he added, critically examining a few faces of those that passed, "they appear to be more thoughtful and intellectual."

Mercury was passing through Fleet Street, and the people he remarked were journalists, some of them hack writers who certainly would be intelligent if they had time to be so—but they have not.

Still he proceeded eastward when suddenly the noise of traffic seemed to cease. Mercury had entered into a city of empty buildings and depopulated streets where

everything seemed to be so dreadfully and ominously still that the abomination of desolation seemed to be upon the place. He found himself surrounded by an oppressive stillness and silence. High majestic buildings, palatial in their aspects and proportions, rose in grim and sombre majesty on either side, but there were no curtains in their windows, and these windows were inscribed with many names. No smoke arose from their chimneys and although these houses were so large and impressive, it appeared as though they were all deserted. It was not only so with a few, but every street appeared to be full of such houses, silent, still and empty.

"What can this mean?" mused Mercury. "Here is a deserted city. Here are large palaces apparently entirely empty. Are God's Children so foolish that they build houses and do not live in them?" And he looked around in vain to find a mortal from whom to inquire the cause of this remarkable phenomenon.

A watchman, whose unpleasant and monotonous duty it was to take care of some building nearby, at length appeared, and Mercury thus addressed him:

"My friend, what are all these buildings, and why are they all so dreary, void and uninhabited?"

To which the watchman replied:

"These are banks, insurance offices and other large commercial establishments, and this is called the city, that part of London which is devoted to business and commerce. Nobody lives here and although many are to be found here on workdays, this place is deserted on Sundays."

"And why is it deserted on Sunday?" asked Mercury.

"Because," replied the watchman, "on this day in the week they serve God; on the other six Mammon."

"Oh, then," remarked Mercury, "they have two gods whom they serve?"

"Yes," replied the watchman, who like many of his occupation was something of a cynic, "and they do so very effectually."

CHAPTER V

MERCURY IN WHITECHAPEL

O, Dii immortales! Ubinam gentium sumus? Quam rem publicam habemus? In qua urbe vivimus?

Cicero.

Each strove by hearty blows and knocks
To prove his theory orthodox.

—*Butler's Hudibras.*

Musing deeply about the strange habits of God's Children, Mercury proceeded on his way eastward through St. Paul's Churchyard, Cheapside, Poultry, Cornhill and Leadenhall Street, still surrounded by tall stately buildings, and the chilly silence of streets and structures made him meditate more deeply.

With head bent down and hands joined behind his back he walked along mechanically, thinking earnestly and profoundly over these problems. While thus abstracted he passed from Leadenhall Street through Aldgate into a noisy, foul-

smelling, busy thoroughfare; but he was so preoccupied that he heard not the din and saw not the motley throng of people. Suddenly he was rudely awakened from his ponderings by somebody jostling against him. Mercury looked up and shuddered, for a drunken woman had staggered against him. This degraded creature, who carried a sickly-looking infant in her arms, was so repulsively intoxicated that she reeled. Her face was bloated and bestial, her clothing soiled, tattered and awry, and she turned toward Mercury and uttered such a revolting flood of vulgarities and obscenities that even the passers-by, accustomed as they were to such parlance, stopped in surprise. Mercury stood looking at her in astonishment and disgust until a large crowd had assembled. He gazed into her debauched face and upon her bedraggled clothing and then upon those who pressed around him, and in deep astonishment he exclaimed: "Are these God's Children? Why, that cannot be!" And then he

quickly jostled his way out of the crowd. Proceeding along the street he noticed that all whom he met were attired in the same garb, some of them ragged and some in tawdry, cheap clothing, which was at best but a ridiculous imitation, a tawdry caricature of the fine clothing worn by those whom he had seen at the West End.

He looked up at the buildings, and instead of the palatial residences and clubs or grand gloomy bank buildings which he had seen in other parts of the city, he was astonished to perceive unstable, tottering, antique structures, some of them centuries old, each story of which leaned over the other toward the street as though looking down to see where it would fall, sooner or later, while some others leaned against each other, in a dangerously oblique manner, as if they were as intoxicated as many of their occupants were.

The gin palaces were filled to overflowing with ribald, vulgar, drunken

crowds, and from the open doors of these showy dens of iniquity issued forth snatches of coarse music, hall ditties, blent with hoarse, hilarious laughter, filthy jokes, brutal jeers, savage quarrelings and thick, foul-smelling tobacco smoke.

A girl, young in years, but old in vice, whose form was still that of a child, but whose face, with its bold eyes, painted cheeks and thick sensual mouth proclaimed a soul long steeped in filth, and whose ragged clothing was rendered repulsive by bright cheap ribbons and sham jewelry, approached Mercury and, leering at him, whispered something.

The messenger from heaven, where all are pure, turned away pale and shuddering.

"Can this be the earth? Are these God's Children?" exclaimed Mercury. "It may be that while in my recent abstraction I left the earth and passed to some strange repulsive place that God knows not of. Where are those beautiful, well-

dressed people, those fine buildings that I saw but recently? Here everything is so different. I must inquire."

He looked about for some one to speak to, but was afraid to address the vile wretches who thronged the street. At length he saw a man who appeared to be cleaner and stouter than the others and who wore a blue costume with brass buttons on it and who carried suspended at his side a baton. Mercury resolved to ask him, not because he looked more intelligent than the common people, but because he appeared as if he were an animated sign-post, a living street directory. This man was really of that character, for he belonged to that body of men who incidentally and accidentally sometimes arrest a petty and inexperienced criminal, but who are occupied principally in answering questions concerning the way about town, and who, apart from this, seldom do aught else save lifting glasses of beer to their lips or a club to break the head of a striker—he

was a policeman. Approaching him Mercury inquired:

"My friend, is this the earth, and if it is not, where am I?"

The limb of the law gazed disdainfully upon his questioner, and scornfully ejaculated:

"Get out yer bloomin' toff, d'ye want ter make a monkey out o' me?"

To which Mercury replied:

"Well, my friend, you tell me to get out, and I assure you I certainly would like to do so, for I do not like my surroundings, and as to making a monkey of you, the power to do so belongs to God alone. I certainly would make that necessary improvement in you if it lay in my power. However, I beg of you to tell me where I am, for I am a stranger in a very strange land."

The policeman looked in sullen surprise at Mercury and laconically replied:

"You are in High Street, Whitechapel."

Mercury thanked him and continued on his way down the unwholesome and

noisy street. He saw the barefoot beggar, the haggard-faced workingman, the shabbily-attired woman, the pallid little children and he wondered, pitied and sympathized at and with all.

Suddenly he heard again the stirring sound of martial music which he had before heard in Whitehall, the beating of drum, the blaring of trumpets, accompanied by the measured tread of many marching feet. He saw the red-coated soldiers passing along with mechanical regularity and stern symmetry. The crowd gazed sullenly and darkly upon the troops as they passed, and Mercury, who happened at the time to be standing near a cadaverous-faced workingman, remarked to him in order to find out something further about the barbarous custom of war:

"So that is a part of the glorious British army marching off to Africa to maintain the glory of the British Empire?"

But the workman turned upon him with a scowl and fiercely rejoined:

"You talk to me about the glory of the British Empire. Glory, indeed! They say the sun never sets upon it but that same sun rises every morning upon my misery, for I am unemployed and destitute, and to-morrow it will rise upon sorrow for my only son, the one hope of my life, the solace of my age, marches to the war with that regiment. Get from me, you damned patriotic liar, or I will take you by the throat." And he supplemented his remarks with such a threatening gesture that Mercury hurried away, wondering why God's Children differed so in their views. He passed down High Street and through Whitechapel Road, which is a continuation of it, until he reached Mile End Waste. The latter street, which is situated at the eastern extremity of Whitechapel, is so extremely wide that it provides ample space for open-air meetings, several of which are held there every Sunday. When Mercury arrived thither and perceived these meetings he became much interested.

His attention was first attracted by a strange aggregation of fantastically-dressed folk, the men wearing red guernseys and the women huge coal-scoop bonnets. They were kicking, dancing, screaming and praying, several banged tambourines most discordantly, while one huge fellow belabored a bass drum. All at once they all ceased their uproar and one stepped into the center of the circle which they formed, and by means of his very powerful jaws began to make a louder and harsher noise than all the others put together plus drum and tambourines had made before. This shockingly stentorious dissonance was presumed to be a sermon and it ran as follows:

"The cause of all the misery which exists is the sin of man. It is the punishment of the Almighty upon his children and cannot be avoided. Submit in patience and fortitude to your toils and wants and shames here below, and God will give you rest and wealth and glory in heaven. Envy not the rich, condemn not

the powerful even though they oppress you. Leave them to the justice of God if they are wrong. Simply set your eyes and minds upon the heavenly hereafter; no matter what befalls you here, an eternal salvation will be yours. To cavil, to question and to struggle is in vain for God wills that these things should be and weak men cannot alter and should not question the inscrutable manifestations of God's divine will and providence.

Mercury turned from him with a look of disgust and remarked:

"It is well for you that God does not hear you, for if he heard you blame him for this widespread misery which appears to be the result of ignorance among men, and telling these poor people to tolerate their suffering in expectation of a reward which will never be realized, he would make short work of you."

One of the strangely dressed girls who belonged to the curious assemblage and who wore a huge bonnet upon which was inscribed the name "Salvation Army,"

observing the serious aspect of Mercury, approached him and asked:

"Young man, do you belong to God?"

Mercury, surprised, replied:

"Yes, I do. But why do you ask?"

"Because," replied the girl, "we are fighting the battle of God."

"Fighting for God!" ejaculated Mercury, in astonishment. "Allow me to tell you in behalf of a powerful God who does not need your services, that you had better fight for man."

Mercury then proceeded on his way. He had not gone far when he perceived another meeting. This assemblage appeared to be more quiet and orderly than the other, and many plainly garbed people of both sexes were listening to a discourse on temperance delivered by a gentleman whose pale, sickly countenance was rudely contrasted with a very rubicund nasal organ. In fact it appeared as if the whole of the orator's complexion was concentrated in his nose. Mercury overheard one old lady in the

audience telling another that the color of the dear gentleman's nose was due to indigestion and when the dear gentleman extracted a flask from his pocket the old lady remarked that it contained medicine for indigestion, but Mercury, who had by this time approached very close to the speaker, noticed an extremely pungent odor exhaling from the flask. The teetotaler spoke as follows:

"This question is not one that can be called entirely a matter concerning God; it is not merely a religious, it is a social and political question, for it also concerns men and governments as well. If men and governments would only exert themselves in the proper way they could eradicate much of the want and vice which prevails in society. Drunkenness is the cause of poverty and all vices and crime originate from the same cause. Temperance and thrift are all that is necessary to make men happy, contented and prosperous." The speaker then drew such a vivid word picture of the degradation

and suffering which are the results of drink and proved by statistics how much wealth was squandered in intoxication, that Mercury became of the opinion that the orator was right.

"This man," he thought, "at least is right in that he is not expecting heaven to do anything for humanity, but is trying to urge God's Children to do something for themselves."

He then walked away and peered into several of the rum-shops, and when he saw the vile, degraded throngs within, he exclaimed:

"Yes, that speaker was right, here is the cause." Mercury walked a little farther until he came to another meeting which was peculiar in this respect—there was no speaker. A vacant platform stood in the center and around it gathered in many groups were earnest looking men discussing the evils of society and the remedy thereof, and Mercury was much puzzled at their intense aggressiveness and peculiar terminology.

He heard such expressions as "land value," "intrinsic value," "labor value," and "exchange value"; "ground rent," "economic rent," and "no rent"; "proletariat," "production," "distribution," "commodities," and "supply and demand"; "exploit," "capitalist system," etc., and he began to wonder who these strange earnest workingmen were who appeared to have a phraseology entirely *sui generis*. He turned to a workingman who stood waiting near him and asked:

"By whom is this meeting called?"

"Can't you see by the mere fact that the speaker has not arrived yet that it is a socialist meeting?" replied the other.

Mercury approached one of the groups of debaters and heard a man who did not believe in government and who was trying to explain a very incomprehensible condition of society under which all would coöperate together for the production and distribution of wealth without any government or regulation by superintendents of the common efforts of

the community. This man loudly protested a passionate attachment to and love for humanity while at the same time he expressed a bitter hatred for all forms of government.

Thereupon another in the group began to disagree with the hater of governments. This second man began by saying that he agreed with the former in his detestations of government, but thought the best way to bring about an ideal condition of absolute liberty would be by imposing a single tax on land values. This gentleman went on to explain that the value of land at the present was largely due to monopoly and that the single tax would, by abolishing monopoly, make land much cheaper and thus give freedom to all.

The first speaker here interjected that he could not see how one could object to governmental control and at the same time be anxious to make the government the sole landlord.

He further inquired, If the value of

land arises from monopoly and the single tax would abolish monopoly, what would the single taxers have left to tax?

Thereupon his opponent said unpleasant things in a forcible strain which were promptly replied to in a similar strain by the first speaker. Eventually both speakers rushed at each other and embraced, and Mercury having heard them express such love for humanity, thought it a friendly embrace, but was rudely astonished to see each uncurl his right arm from the other's neck and punch most vigorously. Both yelling, biting, kicking and punching most vigorously, reeled to and fro with their arms around each other with a movement that resembled clumsy waltzing, until having reached the curbstone both tumbled into the gutter.

"Why do they act in that brutal manner? Why do they profess to love humanity so much, yet love each other so little? Who are they and what are they?" asked Mercury.

"Oh, they are only an anarchist and a single-taxer settling an argument in their usual manner," replied a bystander. Mercury was about to go away when a sudden movement in the crowd attracted his attention. The speaker had at length arrived.

CHAPTER VI

WHAT THE SOCIALIST SAID

This need not be; ye might arise and will
That gold should lose its power, and thrones their glory;
That love, which none may bind, be free to fill
The world like light, and evil faith grown hoary
With crime be quenched and die. Yon promontory
Even now eclipses the descending moon:—
Dungeons and palaces are transitory—
High temples fade like vapor—Man alone
Remains whose will has power when all beside are gone.

—*Revolt of Islam, Canto VII:*
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

The chairman called the meeting to order in the name of the Social Democratic Federation, and after a few hesitating remarks introduced the speaker of the day. The speaker was pale-faced and carelessly dressed and there was something earnest, yet cynical, about his keen intellectual features almost Voltairian in their sharpness which impressed Mercury who listened carefully to the following address:

"Mr. Chairman and Friends:—There are people who tell us that all the want and misery which we see around us is sent by heaven, inflicted by God upon his children in order to test their fortitude and prepare them by trials and sufferings here below for a brighter life in the hereafter. These people blaspheme the name of the God in whom they profess to believe when they make him *particeps criminis* in the brutality and ignorance of man. And then after having given their God such an extremely bad reputation they ask us to tolerate our wrongs here below and trust in him.

"It is often said that God helps those who help themselves, and I may add that he trusts those who trust in themselves. They who would be free themselves must strike the blow. Men have often fought for God, but God has never fought for man and never will.

"There is another set of reformers who tell us that drunkenness and improvidence are the causes of want and misery,

and that if we would become temperate and thrifty the condition of the working class would be much improved. These people mistake a cause for an effect. Drunkenness is not the cause of poverty; it is simply one of the effects thereof. Poverty is the cause of drunkenness and for all other evils and crimes. Given better conditions and you will have a better creature, but as long as the conditions that surround the worker are the grime and dirt of the factory during the day and the squalor and meanness of a proletarian's few rooms at night, so long will you have men compelled by disgust with their surroundings to seek oblivion in intoxication and comfort and conviviality in the gilded gin palace—the poor man's parlor.

"As far as thrift is concerned, I think it a mockery to tell those who have nothing in the present that they should save something for the future, or to tell those who are receiving a bare subsistance wage that they should, by laying aside a

few pennies per week, save enough in ten or twenty years to purchase a country seat similar to that of the Duke of Westminster or of Waldorf Astor. The people who preach thrift to unemployed or underpaid workers, are ignorant of elementary arithmetic.

"Neither the deity nor drunkenness, neither the providence of heaven nor the improvident man are the causes of the evils which afflict human society. There is one sole and only cause and that is the private ownership or monopoly by a few, of those essentials which are necessary for the welfare of the many, viz.: land and capital. There is but one cure and that is the public ownership and manipulation of capital and land. Monopoly is the evil; socialism is the cure. Private ownership is the one great wrong; public ownership and control is the one great remedy.

"Land, the first of these essentials, is at present monopolized by the few and debarred to the many, unless they, the

many, pay tribute in the form of rent. Land is undoubtedly nature's free gift to humanity collectively, not a present made to a few landlords, and hence we socialists claim that land, the passive factor, should be nationalized, i.e., should belong to the many, not to the few. There are many reasons in favor of this proposition and the first is that without land we cannot live or even exist, for everything we eat, wear and use comes originally from the land. The national ownership of the land, then, is the first of our demands.

"Next we believe that labor being the active force or potency which when exercised upon land creates all wealth, should be employed by national governments alone. Labor is the skill of the mind, the strength in the muscles and bodies of strong, rough laborers and the mixture of strength and skill in the mechanic. This labor cannot be utilized unless it is applied to land or raw material and these being monopolized, the laborer is com-

pelled to go to the monopolists and work for them at their terms and when they want him to. When these monopolists of the passive factor, land, do not allow the workmen to exercise the active factor, labor, upon the land and its products, then the laborer does not receive wages and he starves. Hence in order to prevent the prospects of starvation among those willing to perform such a function as labor, we socialists believe that all able to work should be employed by a government which should be elected by the suffrages of all, and that the workers should not be dependent upon the whim or avarice of a few as they are at present.

"But even should the workers be given access to the land and the raw material, they even then would need something more in this age of invention and mechanical ingenuity. The worker needs not only the things to work on, but the things to work with, not merely land and raw materials but tools. Furthermore, the

tools he would need would not merely be the crude implements used by his ancestors, but the complicated tools, the vast and expensive machinery, of modern times. These tools, these machines, factories and railroads are capital, the auxiliary factor so necessary to assist labor in conjunction with land and raw material to create the wealth of the community. These factories, railroads and these machines are at present monopolized by capitalists, as they are called.

"We have reached the point where we perceive that there are three factors which are necessary for the production and distribution of all wealth, and these three factors are land, labor and capital. Land is called by socialists the passive factor, because it must be worked upon before wealth can be produced; labor, the active factor, because it acts upon or fructifies the earth, and capital is defined as the auxiliary factor because it helps labor to produce wealth from the earth and its products.

"Now, my good friends, we socialists simply claim that capital should be taken by the people from the capitalists and should be owned and used by the government in the interest of all the people. When we make a demand so daring and revolutionary in its nature, we are compelled of course to prove its equity. I propose, as a socialist, to deal with this question of capital both from an economical and ethical point of view and to prove from both these standpoints that capital should not belong to the capitalists as it does at present, but that it should be owned by the government in behalf of all. Let us consider it in its economic aspect first and inquire: 'What is capital?'

"David Ricardo tells us that 'Capital is that part of wealth which is used to produce more wealth.' The same author defines wealth as 'All articles of use or luxury which are produced by useful human labor.' Now, if wealth consists of articles produced by useful human labor, and if capital is but a part of wealth, does

it not logically follow that the laborers who produced the whole must have produced the part capital. How, then, is it that you, the laboring class who perform this useful labor, own and control no capital? Let us, however, go into this matter in a more elaborate manner. Let us take up the questions of wealth, capital and labor and, by inquiring into the nature and explaining the functions of each prove that the capitalist has no right to the capital which he owns.

"First, labor has already been defined as strength and skill usefully applied. Karl Marx, in *Capital*, Part III, Chapter VII, thus describes labor: 'Labor is, in the first place, a process in which both man and nature participate, and in which man of his own accord, starts, regulates and controls the material reactions between himself and nature. He opposes himself to nature as one of her own forces setting in motion arms and legs, head and hands, the natural forces of his body in order to appropriate nature's

productions in a form adapted to his own wants." It is only by the exercise of labor that wealth can be created. In his *Wealth of Nations*, Chapter V, Adam Smith says: 'Useful human labor applied to land and raw material creates all wealth and makes all value.'

"Now, there is a period in the life of a thing, a form of its matter, when it is not wealth or an object of use or luxury, and that is before labor has been applied to it to cause its value.

"Let us take an object of wealth, a commodity which has some value and by inquiring into the genesis of its value make plain the proposition that labor creates all wealth. Let us take this platform upon which I am standing. It is now an article of use; it has value, therefore it is so much wealth. Now, let us trace it from its useless beginning to its useful finish. There was a time when the wood which forms this platform was the trunk of a tree, and that tree, probably grew in the dark recesses of some dense

forest. While the wood formed part of that tree it was not wealth because it had no value. It had no exchange value because nobody would or could exchange a useful thing like a coat for a useless, unknown thing like a tree which nobody had ever seen or knew of. While this wood formed part of the tree, it could not be used for a platform and hence it had no use value, and before work had been extended upon it, it could have no labor value.

"A lumberman entered the forest one day, and by the use of an axe, guided by his strength, he lowered the tree. The moment he did so the tree began to have value; it became worth something simply because labor had been applied to and exercised upon it. Other laborers lopped off the branches and again its value was increased further, for the tree became of greater value as a branchless trunk than it was in its previous form, and this increase of value was simply due to the fact that more labor had been expended

upon it. So far we see that labor applied to a product of the land has created wealth. Now let us continue.

"Another kind of labor was then used upon the tree and this kind of labor was not productive labor, or labor which alters the form of natural raw material, making it to be artificial raw material, but it was distributive labor, or labor which increases the worth of an object by distributing, carrying or conveying it from a place at which it is of no value, or of small value, to another place at which it is desired and where it becomes of value, or of greater value. The trunk was conveyed by the labor of railroaders on a flat car; the brakesmen put on and off the brakes; the conductors superintended the condition and direction of the cars and the engineer, assisted by his fireman, directed and controlled the locomotive, and as a result of their distributive labor the tree was eventually brought to some saw-mills where other productive labor, that of the sawyers, increased its

value by putting more labor into it, by sawing it up into planks. Again the labor of turners, varnishers, polishers and carpenters was applied to the planks and eventually you had this article of use, this object of wealth—a platform. It is simply so much natural raw material upon which the strength, skill and ingenuity of lumbermen, teamsters, railroaders, sawyers, joiners, carpenters, turners and polishers has been exerted, and as a result you have an article of use. Now, apply the same reasoning to any object of use or luxury you see around you or that you use or wear—to your clothes, to your tobacco, to your shoes or to those houses yonder—in fact, to every artificial thing you can see. All, all, is the product of useful human labor.

"Yes, so far so good, you may be thinking; but something else entered into the formation of this wealth. What about your third factor, capital? Could the sawyer work without the saw-mill, the railroader distribute without the railroad,

and are not saw-mills and railroads capital, and therefore is not the capitalist who owns this capital entitled to some return for allowing the laborer the use of it in order to create value and produce wealth? Stop there, my friend. The mere ownership in the first place does not mean right to possession, for the thief owns the watch he has stolen, but nobody will claim that he has a right to it. The only ethical rights to ownership are production and use. Now, did the capitalist produce or make the capital which he owns or does he use it? Right here let me make two other definitions.

"Henry Fawcett, in his *Manual of Political Economy*, Book I, Chapter II, stated that: 'Capital represents all that has been set aside from the results of past labor to assist present or future production.'

"David Ricardo, in his *Principles of Political Economy*, Chapter V, defines capital thus: 'Capital is that part of the wealth of a country which is employed in

production, and consists of food, clothing, tools, raw materials, machinery, etc., necessary to give effect to labor.' Now, we have just seen how wealth, i.e., all articles of use or luxury, is made. Any article of use or luxury which is being consumed is wealth, according to political economists, but if it is not being used or consumed, but is applied to making more, then it is classed as capital. The clothing you are wearing out, that is, consuming, is wealth, but if instead of consuming but one suit, you had some thousands of suits for sale in a store, then those suits would be your capital, because you would be using them to make more wealth in the form of profits upon them. If capital then is simply a portion of wealth used to create more wealth, does it not logically follow that the portion, capital, must have been produced by those who made the whole, wealth, by the labor of the workers and that it cannot have been produced by the capitalists who never produce anything but an infernal disturb-

ance on the stock exchange? But capital, as capital alone, cannot produce anything. Labor must be applied in conjunction with it, or in plain words labor must use capital in order to create more wealth. Therefore, as labor makes and uses capital, to the makers and the users should belong the more wealth which is the result, and not to a non-making, non-using class who do nothing but control. Permit me, however, to elaborate this argument in order to make it plain, and point out to you not merely what capital is, but also what it is not. Money is not capital; it is a mere means of exchange, a measure of value. Stocks and shares in large commercial concerns are not capital, although often taken for it. Money, stocks and shares are the mere means of controlling capital, not capital itself; they are to capital what title deeds and leases are to land, and as you cannot build a house upon a piece of paper upon which a lease is drawn up, nor cultivate potatoes upon a freehold document made

of parchment, neither can you, by merely signing and exchanging pieces of paper produce wealth, nor construct railroads, but you may wreck them sometimes though. These papers and documents are mere means of controlling capital but are not capital itself any more than the string which is used to hold the dog is the dog.

"Let us consider some very plain and obvious manifestation of capital—say a railroad. Now, a railroad consists of many articles of use and a few of luxury, in the form of ties, rails, bridges, culverts, embankments, locomotives, cars, seats, cushions, etc., used to create more wealth in the form of fares charged to passengers, for freight dues charged for carrying goods. Let us take this form of capital—a railroad—and go into its economic analysis. How are the ties, rails and locomotives made? By the strength and skill of the worker, i.e., by useful designing labor applied to so much raw material in the same way as this platform was

made from the tree. How were the bridges constructed, the embankment raised, the tunnels bored? By useful and intellectual labor exercised upon the land, and the result of all is the capital—the railroad.

"Yet, strange to say, although the workers made it, the non-workers own it. How is this possible? Is a capitalist a huge octopus-like monster with his head thrust into the middle of the stock exchange shouting there, and with thousands of other heads and arms at the ends of long tentacles working, superintending and designing in thousands of different mines, factories, workshops, railroad stations, offices and studies? If such a mighty monster took the products of the strength and skill of the many, I should certainly consider him entitled to them.

"But the laborers not only make capital, they use it or work with it and by it to make more wealth, not for themselves, who have made and produced the capital,

but for idlers who have not made and who do not use but simply own and control both capital and laborers.

"Even after the railroad, the cars, the locomotives, etc., are made, they do not bring in fares unless certain men—brakesmen, porters, conductors, engineers and laborers—work on and in them in order to produce wealth in the form of fares and freight dues, and even these could not work long were it not for the labor of track layers, section hands and laborers who continually keep cars and road in good repair. Now, did you ever see a capitalist working in the manner above mentioned? To return to the simile of the octopus. Is a capitalist a monster with one pair of eyes gazing upon an indecent dance at the Moulin Rouge in Paris and with myriads of other eyes watching his far-reaching railroad in all its length of miles and its hundreds of stations? Has he one pair of hands used by him to lift champagne glasses and dainty viands at some luxurious banquet and myriads of

other tentacle-like hands busy in thousands of other places collecting fares, putting on brakes, firing up engines or guiding by the lever the rate of their speed? If such an abnormal monster had been placed by nature above me and it took millions of dollars worth of value to my one, I should certainly be compelled to admit its right to them. But it not being so, it becomes manifestly unjust that one non-producer should take from the toil and ingenuity of many useful workers the result of their labor.

"The points which I have been trying to make plain are these: That land is nature's free gift to humanity collectively, that the community is injured when a few monopolize land; therefore, for the good of the community at large, land should become the collective property of the people and should be nationalized.

"That capital is made by labor, that capital is afterward worked by labor, therefore, capital should be owned by the laborers who make and use it.

"That labor, being the fructifying force which is essential for the creation of wealth, should be employed by a national government and should not remain, as at present, dependent upon non-workers and monopolists for its employment.

"That all wealth is produced by useful human labor applied to land or the products of the land, and that the producers should enjoy the full benefit of their products, and hence that all able-bodied adults should labor and should receive the full product of their labor.

"Upon this method of reasoning the socialists base their demands, which are as follows: The nationalization of land and capital and the government employment of all labor, said government to regulate, control and superintend labor, and manipulate the use of capital, and decide the distribution of all wealth. These demands may sound startling, revolutionary and desperate to those who hear them for the first time, but society is desperately diseased and desperate

diseases need desperate remedies. Consider the affluence and wealth of the plutocratic few; consider the penury and want of the industrious many; listen to the groans of the workless, homeless toilers, the sighs of down-trodden and defiled women; heed, oh, heed, ye fathers, the tears of the helpless little children and arise in the majesty of your numbers and assert your right to live as men should live. Rebel against the gradual death of capitalistic slavery. You have but to will it and you may be free, for you, the workers, are in the majority and the will of the majority is greater than all laws and institutions and is in fact the only valid government. Strive with strength, intelligence and energy to abolish these mighty evils which press you down. Strive by peaceable and constitutional means, by speaking, organizing, agitating and voting, but if these means are rendered of no avail by the wiles of capitalist possessors, then let them take the terrible alternative. Go

to them with words of peace, persuasion and reasoning, but if these methods be of no avail forget not that sacred spirit of revolt which has so often in the past crushed despotism and dethroned oppression.

"Turn your faces toward the capitalists and address to them the words of the poet, William Morris:

> " 'Wish ye peace? Then be ye with us; let our hope be your desire.
> Will ye war? Then shall ye perish like the dry wood in the fire.' "

CHAPTER VII

A POLITICAL ECONOMIST HAS NO SOUL

Hell is a city much like London—
A populous and a smoky city.
There are all sorts of people undone,
And there is little or no fun done;
Small justice shown, and still less pity.

There is great talk of Revolution—
And a great chance of despotism;
Marching soldiers—camps—confusion
Politics—meetings—rage—delusion
Gin—suicide—and Methodism.

And this is Hell—and in this smother
Are all damnable and damned;
Each one damning, damns the other;
They are damned by one another,
By none other are they damned.

—*Peter Bell the Third:* P. B. SHELLEY.

You have a sly equivocating vein that suits me not.

—*The Cenci:* P. B. SHELLEY.

. . The soul that he got from God he has bartered clean away;
We have threshed a stock of print and book, and winnowed a chattering wind;
And many a soul wherefrom he stole, but his we cannot find.

We have handled him and dandled him, we have seared
him to the bone;
And sure if tooth and nail show truth he has no soul of
his own.

—*Tomlinson:* RUDYARD KIPLING.

Upon the conclusion of his discourse the socialist descended the platform and Mercury approached him and remarked: "Young man, you have given me much valuable information. You have explained to me what was before incomprehensible; you have boldly uttered simple truths where others have told me willful or ignorant lies. I came from heaven to this earth which God has plentifully endowed with an ample sufficiency for the welfare of all his children, and yet I saw selfish luxury cheek by jowl with abject want. I saw palaces large enough to house twenty families occupied by but one at the West End; I saw structures, grand, massive and roomy in the city, yet they were completely empty, and here in these foul purlieus I see hovels barely large enough to accommodate two families overcrowded by twenty and thirty.

Where there should be nothing but songs and sounds of peace and happiness I hear the blare of the trumpets of war and the sound of the marching tread of thousands of warriors about to slaughter at the bidding of their government thousands of their fellow men; I hear the sad plaints of little hungry children, the sighs of fallen and debauched women and the groans of despairing fathers and mothers, hopeless, soulless toilers. Some have blasphemed God's name saying that he wills things so; others have given other and trivial causes, but you alone by a few simple truths have made plain to me that the one great cause of all this is avarice, greed and monopoly, and that the one great cure is intelligence, equality and coöperation. Your socialism, I believe in as the only hope of God's Children; and I, as a messenger from heaven, give in the name of God his sanction to it and tender heaven's thanks to such as you who fearlessly dare to advocate such noble truths."

The socialist speaker looked with an air of surprised amusement upon the aristocratic dandy who called himself a messenger from heaven and came to the conclusion that the heaven of his interlocutor was Belgravia, his god, pleasure and that he had been worshiping that divinity in the form of a champagne bottle so earnestly that morning that he had drifted accidentally into Whitechapel, the *terra incognita* of his class, and was now speaking under some kindly emotion inspired by wine which had obliterated his class prejudices. With that polite urbanity which he had acquired from dealing with men and audiences the socialist replied:

"You say you come from heaven, my friend, but I am afraid you will find your way back thither difficult. It is a long way from Whitechapel to heaven. You say that you agree with what we teach, but you say so in such an emotional manner that I fear your feelings speak and not your reason. We socialists place

little confidence in such sudden conversions; the Salvation Army further down the street do that sort of thing. We do not wish to convert you; we would rather convince you. We do not appeal to sentiment, but to sense. Weigh well what I have said, then hear what those who oppose us say, draw your own conclusion, and if convinced of the truth, become a socialist and work with us for the betterment of the condition of mankind. Conversions are the result of some passing emotion and are not lasting, but when a man's reason convinces him he must act up to the truth or live a lie."

"Who are your opponents?" asked Mercury.

"They are," replied the socialist, "the professors and teachers of political economy."

"What is political economy?" asked Mercury.

"It is called the dismal science," replied the socialist. "It deals with commerce, shops, factories, trade, rent, interest and

profit, and it teaches that the object God had in view when he put people on this earth was that they should produce wealth for a few idlers."

"How singular," exclaimed Mercury. "Where could I find one of its exponents?"

"Go and interview Ananias Average, Professor of Economics in Assford University, who resides at 449 Westbourne Crescent, Regent's Park," replied the socialist.

With an affectionate embrace and much gratitude Mercury took leave of the socialist. "It may be," mused the heavenly messenger, "that this socialist is wrong, nevertheless he is so anxious that I should study the matter for myself that I think he is not. The religious speaker blamed God for the misery of his children; he of course I knew to be wrong. The orator who condemned strong drink almost convinced me, but I found him to be mistaken when I heard the socialist speaker, and may not the socialist prove

to be incorrect when I hear from those who differ from him? I will see the political economist to-morrow."

Black night had spread itself over Whitechapel and the faint gleam of the street lamps and more gorgeous effulgence of the brilliantly-lighted gin palaces served but to render the vices and shames of the metropolitan Inferno more repulsive and terrible. The little pallid-featured child, whose father she would tell you in her own little slangy patois was "on the booze," sat shivering upon the doorstep of a squalid home; the haggard-visaged mendicant beseeched in piteous tones from indifferent passers for that which society denied to him; the modern Magdalenes wearing their forced artificial smiles upon painted lips, but showing in the depths of their sunken eyes the unutterable woes of degraded womanhood, jostled, beseeched and enticed, and the thieves and pickpockets swaggered along, some seeking with keen-eyed alertness for prey, others

revelling in flashy new clothes and tipsy hilarity over some successful coup. The heavenly messenger shrank from some, shuddered at others, but in the large-souled kindliness of his celestial compassion, wept in commiseration for all. Black midnight fell over all this wretchedness. Chaste mother Nature veiled her pure eyes, the stars, with clouds, as though she would not contemplate such scenes.

Mercury stopped before a large building which was capped with a towering conically-shaped spire the point of which was concealed in the mist overhead. The high Gothic door was open and Mercury entered and stood in a richly-decorated building filled with seats, at the farther end of which was what looked like a table covered with a linen cloth upon which were candles, flowers and some massive golden ornaments. An oppressive and chilly solitude and stillness filled the vast place. Mercury started, for somebody touched him upon the shoulder, and asked

him what he was doing there. The heavenly messenger started and looked with that expression of disdain which even the most considerate cannot conceal when confronted with the coarse and vulgar.

The features of the other were fat, coarse and pig-like, his brow ape-like and angular, his neck, broad and fat as that of a Yorkshire bull, was tightly encircled by a thin band of white starched linen and his capacious paunch was covered by a long tightly-buttoned frock-coat.

Mercury replied, "I came in here out of curiosity because this house is so large and stately when compared with its surrounding hovels. What is this place?"

"It is the house of God," replied the other.

"It is truly singular that God should have an empty house while many of his children are homeless," rejoined Mercury.

The fat minister, ignoring this last remark, went on to ask: "As you appear by clothing and manners to be a gentle-

man, I presume you are a stranger in this locality and came hither, I suppose, slumming, that is, studying the condition of the poor."

"Yes, I did," replied Mercury, with meaning emphasis.

"Would you like to see our church? It is one of the most beautiful and costly in the city, even if it is in Whitechapel, and we have a very grand oil painting here which people often come miles to see." He then proceeded to draw attention to the many attractions of his church, pointing them out where the vague half light allowed them to be seen.

At length they stopped before a vivid and life-like oil painting representing Christ sitting in the garden on Mt. Olivet and weeping over the city of Jerusalem. It was a wonderful picture. The artist had conveyed into the face of the Christ-God an ineffable look of divine sadness.

"Who was that beautiful sad-faced man?" asked Mercury.

"That is God," replied the minister.

"Why does he weep?"

"On account of the vices of his children," rejoined the parson.

"He looks poor," remarked Mercury. "He is bare-footed and bare-headed; He need not have gone so. A god should be great and strong."

"Yes, he was strong in his humility, great in his suffering and poverty," replied the minister, "for," he added, unctiously turning up his eyes and joining his hands together over his fat paunch, "he knew not where to lay his head."

Just then a sound of somebody moving and heaving a deep sigh attracted the attention of the parson to a bench in a dark corner of the church. Quickly he rushed in the direction of the sounds and perceived a wretched outcast sleeping on the bench.

"What are you doing there, you dirty vagabond?" angrily demanded the parson.

"I found the door open and came in to rest," timidly replied the pallid-faced

outcast, "for I am homeless and have no place to lay my head."

As he uttered these words a look of suffering, so strangely similar to that on the face of the picture overspread his countenance that Mercury was struck by the coincidence of the words and the look.

The parson, too brutal to notice either, loudly exclaimed: "Get out you filthy blackguard," and, seizing the unfortunate by the collar, began to push him rudely toward the door.

Mercury looked on in profound disgust.

"What lying hypocrisy," he cried, "to build palaces for a God who knew not where to lay his head and who never now sleeps in them, and to hurl out like a mangy dog one of God's Children who stands in need of that which their God sought in vain when he was on earth."

With a bound he reached the fat parson just as the latter was about to push the outcast down the steps; Mercury fixed his strong white fingers in the flabby throat of the hypocrite and dashed

him through the doorway to the pavement.

The parson immediately began to wield the weapon of priests and women—his tongue:

"Police! Police! Murder!" he cried, and when a policeman appeared, Mercury not being in sight, the minister vented his wrath by having the homeless outcast arrested.

Down the street they went, the fat, excited parson, a crowd of night owls attracted by his cries, and a tall strong policeman at the head, dragging along a ragged, pallid-faced, sad-eyed workman whose head was bowed in shame and fear upon his breast.

In the silent solitude of the rich church, where none could see, the beautiful Christ-God shed real tears. He was weeping for the vices of modern Jerusalem.

Next morning, Mercury, anxious to discover the truth and to find out whether there could be any reason why so much

suffering should prevail among men, went to see the political economist.

Upon reaching the comfortable residence of the professor, which was situated in Westbourne Crescent, Regent's Park, Mercury was met at the door by a servant who demanded his business. Mercury tendered his card which was carried up to the study.

The professor read with a puzzled look the name "Mercury Deomissit," inscribed upon the card.

"Hum," he remarked, "looks classical. Probably one of those German professors who still cling to the mediæval custom of Latinizing their names. Show him up."

Mercury entered, and saluting the professor of the dismal science, remarked:

"Sir, I have been referred to you as one of the greatest professors of political economy and would like, if you have time and convenience, to consult you concerning that science and the precepts it lays down as governing modern society. I have traveled a great distance to investi-

gate the condition of men here and was sent only yesterday to you by a socialist who proposed a very revolutionary, but apparently very necessary remedy, for the terrible want and suffering which at present afflicts the majority of the people."

"A socialist," exclaimed the professor, looking in surprise upon his aristocratic-looking visitor. "You have been pursuing your inquiries in a strange and unreliable quarter. Those socialists are ignorant and discontented men who assemble in the market-place and who, in their illogical denunciations of the rightful possessors of wealth, are guided merely by malice and envy."

"Envy," rejoined Mercury, "is unlawful when entertained for that which is not rightfully ours, yet it seems to me that those working people are entitled by all the canons of justice to the wealth which their labor creates. What you term illogical denunciation appeared to me to be a very logical demand, for the socialist proved that wealth and capital are both

produced by the labor of the working class, and land I know to be God's free gift to all his children. You speak of rightful possessors. What right, may I ask of you, have the rich to that which they own?"

"Well," replied the professor, "as far as the land is concerned, the right of the present owners consists in the fact that they and their ancestors have held it, some of them, from the time when William of Normandy came and conquered this country in 1066, and such a lengthy occupation certainly confers a right."

"But if the followers of the conqueror stole the land nine centuries ago, that does not entitle the present holders to it. The length of time stolen property is kept does not lessen but rather aggravates the heinousness of the theft; particularly is this so in the case of land, the monopoly of which operates so much to the detriment of the mass of the people. What are their claims to the possession of capital?"

"By dint of thrift and economy the present holders who have acquired are certainly entitled to their property," replied Ananias Average.

"Thrift and economy are terms almost synonymous with saving," replied Mercury, "and I fail to see how by saving a thing you can increase its quantity; and furthermore, if that socialist spoke truly about these wealthy ones called capitalists, they must be more noted for extravagance and luxury than for the qualities which you specify as distinguishing them and entitling them to what they hold."

"Capital is certainly entitled to some return," tartly remarked the economist.

"Capital, though," answered the visitor, "is not the capitalist; the former is a means of production, the latter the man who controls it, and can a controller claim a greater right than a maker?"

"Is not profit the wages of superintendence, and interest the reward of risk?" questioned the professor.

"To say that risk should be rewarded is

to encourage gambling and taking risks with wealth that is created does not create more wealth in the aggregate," replied Mercury. "As to the wages of superintendence," he continued, "they who usually really superintend are foremen and overseers, and their reward is wages truly, but the capitalist does not and cannot superintend the vast concerns which he owns filled with those huge complicated tools called machines and in which the operators are too manifold, numerous and stupendous to be superintended by one man. It is simply impossible under such conditions for one man to superintend or regulate, and when you base their demand for their disproportionately large incomes upon the fulfilment of an unachievable task you make it plain that your premises are too ridiculous to support your conclusion."

"Sir!" angrily retorted the economist, "if you consider my opinion ridiculous I think your presence undesirable. Leave my office immediately!"

Mercury turned pale with contempt and wrath. "Leave! yes, but you shall leave with me. I have seen suffering and vice among the ignorant, and here I see lying and deceit where truth should be found. I met in Whitechapel the prostitutes of their bodies; here I meet a man of intelligence who prostitutes that which is more sacred, his reason."

The professor sprang from his seat with a threatening gesture, but Mercury, powerful in his superhuman strength, towered above him, and seizing him by the throat, threw him out of the window. With a loud shriek the professor fell three stories to the pavement and ere he expired found sufficient time to inform a policeman that he had been thrown from his office by a dangerous and violent revolutionist. The officer dashed upstairs, but he found the office empty.

Mercury had disappeared. In disgust he had left the earth. He could laugh at the conceit of the aristocrat and the ridiculous credulity of the religious

fanatic; he could sympathize with the wretchedness of the poor and even sorrow for the vices of the dissolute; but he could not tolerate the lies and hypocrisy of political economy. The dismal science was too much even for his celestial patience. Upon leaving the earth and assuming again his spirit, Mercury soared upward but he did not go far. His spirit hovered in vindictive and terrible rage above the earth. He was waiting for the soul of that political economist. But he waited long and in vain and eventually relinquished his expectation of vengeance with regret. He had discovered what all discriminating children of earth know — that a political economist has no soul.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WRATH OF GOD

Dies irae, dies illa,
Solvet saeclum in favilla;
Teste David cum Sibilla.

—*Dies Irae:* OLD CATHOLIC HYMN

Mercury hurriedly entered the heavenly domain in such deep dejection that many of its denizens turned to look upon him with surprise. His face usually so calm and joyous, bore a sad and pained expression, and his brow was marked with anguish and suffering. God looked with genial amusement upon the downcast mien of his volatile messenger and inquired in astonishment:

"Why, Mercury, it appears that your experiences have not pleased you."

Mercury, with a sigh, replied:

"Ah, God, your poor children down on that earth are in a most degraded condition. There is want, misery and suffering

among them; they are debauched and unclean; they war and kill and slaughter."

"Mercury," replied God, in a gentle tone of reproof, "I fear you are mistaken. Has your contact with those lower beings caused you to forget that I am God and that God does not make mistakes? When I made that planet I placed an ample sufficiency upon it to support the needs of all my children. Why then should there be want and misery there? For every male I produced a female. Why then should there be vice and uncleanness? I gave to my children the gift of reason by means of which they might discriminate, arrange and settle peacefully their affairs. Why then should they war like the lower brutes?"

"You may have made well, but you have neglected them since, and among them there has arisen an avaricious and ambitious few who have appropriated all the wealth, beauty and power, leaving to the many nothing but want, hideousness and servitude," replied Mercury.

"That is strange," replied God, beginning to be interested. "Pray, Mercury, give me your experiences in detail."

God carelessly reclined upon a couch of opalescent-colored clouds and listened intently while his messenger related what he had seen and heard.

In the beginning of the recital God was much amused. He laughed aloud when Mercury told him what the theologian said, but as the story progressed he became first serious, then sad and at length angry.

The Great Ruler of the Universe is seldom angry and does not become so from trivial causes, but when he does his wrath is terrible to behold.

A heavy ominous silence reigned throughout his golden realm and his happy and smiling companions hurried from his presence and hid their faces. He turned to Mercury, who stood shuddering in the presence of the Almighty ire, and said:

"Leave me, messenger, I will myself

look and listen whether what you tell me of is true."

God leaned his head upon his hand and turned his eyes in the direction of the earth. By a slight effort, his almighty mind sweeping through intervening space, he contemplated the condition of his children.

God looked and he saw dainty ladies with pink-white faces and sensual lips sipping rich wines and casting sensual looks upon the richly-dressed men who drank and sang and smiled with them. He saw stern, hard-faced plutocrats frowning from club windows upon the passing multitude; he saw luxury; he saw pride; he saw war; he saw lust, blood, ambition and arrogance.

God looked and he saw the pallid wife of the workless laborer putting a cup of cold water to the lips of her starving child; he saw her squalid hovel and her want-pinched face; he saw her despairing husband struggling with thousands of others as sallow-faced as himself at the

dock-yard gates for the work which would provide bread for his wife and little ones, and God saw him turn away workless and desperate.

God looked and he was angry.

God listened and he heard soft sensuous songs of pleasure; he heard laughter, light but heartless; he heard sneers and contempt expressed for the poor and lowly, and hatred uttered in bitter words by the wealth-insolvent few for the suffering and toiling many.

God listened. He heard the deafening roar and whirr of the mighty machinery in thousands of factories, but rising loudly and plainly above it the cries and groans of the little child-slaves who tended the machines. He heard the unuttered prayer of woe from the soul of the fallen woman compelled to sell herself in order to exist; he heard the desperate blasphemous *De Profundis* hurled at heaven by the hopeless, starving wage-slave and he heard it in magnanimous forgiveness, for he is a merciful God.

God listened and was angry.

His broad, smooth, placid brow became furrowed with a terrible minatory frown. He arose, and his lofty stature, thousands of cubits high, threw a lengthy shadow athwart the bright and peaceful scene of heavenly beauty. His eyes, so soft and smiling, flashed like two blazing beacons; his mouth, usually wreathed in indulgent and careless smiles, curved down at the corners as does that of the monarch of the desert when, hungry, he seeks his prey in the Lybian wilderness, and his long flowing locks, which, falling about his brow and shoulders form a golden frame for his beautiful face arose and curled around his head like the serpent curls of ancient Medusa. Threateningly he reached forth an arm, mighty as that of a giant, graceful as that of a Grecian athlete, toward the earth and thus he spoke in his wrath:

"Oh, my children, misguided, sinful, wretched and sad. Oh, my children, avaricious, arrogant and selfish. Unto

you I gave plenty and of it you have produced poverty; unto you I gave purity and peace and you have made impurity and war; unto you I gave reason and you have abused it so that you live in a worse way than the beasts to whom I gave it not.

"But I am God and I shall so will it in the near future that those among you who live in idleness and work not, shall not live upon the blood and sweat of the many who toil. For I will encourage with my omnipotent will the spread of that creed of hope for my children called 'socialism' and the desperate many shall arise against the despoiling few; they shall hurl the mighty from their high places; they shall despoil the despoilers and take unto themselves the just reward of their labor—the wealth of the earth.

"And then when in the place of want and misery there shall be peace and plenty; when in the place of sighs of slaves and cries of starving children there shall be laughter, song and joy and peace;

when equality shall succeed despotism and justice supplant partial and venal law; when men shall work each for all, and all for each, then will you not blaspheme my name when you call yourselves GOD'S CHILDREN.

THE END

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