

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 6, NO. 148.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1905.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

THE TARBELL PHILOSOPHY.

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GAGE E. Tarbell, Second Vice-President of the Equitable Life Assurance Society, being on the rack of the investigation stand on the 22nd instant, indulged in flights of philosophy in the effort to explain away the widespread corruption of his associates. People, said Mr. Tarbell, have latterly been afflicted with a disease which he permitted himself to call “money-madness,” a disease which he proceeded to diagnose as “a desire to get rich, perhaps too quickly.”

According to the Tarbell philosophy, the explanation of the frantic wish and effort on the part of the people of Martinique to quit the island, at the time that Mont Pelee was in eruption, was their being seized with a curious disease, the disease of “sea-madness”—“a desire to float on the blue deep, perhaps too quickly.”

According to the Tarbell philosophy, the explanation of men, at the early mining camps, looking like perambulating arsenals, bristling with bowie-knives and revolvers, was their being seized with a curious disease, the disease of “weapon-madness”—“a desire to be fore-armed, perhaps too quickly.”

According to the Tarbell philosophy, the explanation of hunted animals’ adopting the coloring of their environment is their being seized with a curious disease, the disease of “blur-madness”—“a desire to be inconspicuous, perhaps too quickly.”

Such is the Tarbell philosophy. The benighted Socialist philosophy, on the contrary, explains that the people of Martinique, crazed by the death-dealing pitch spewed out of Mont Pelee, took to any log or floating thing on the sea, not because of sudden love for the sea and its perils, but simply because, under existing conditions, THAT gave a chance to life, superior to the chance ashore; it explains that the population of the early mining camps go about encumbered with an arsenal, not because of a mania therefor, but because of the rowdy element gathered at such

places, and that render life unsafe; it explains that the adoption of inconspicuous coloring by wild animals proceeds not from mental aberration, but from the necessity to elude the observation of other animals that prey upon them. In short, all these acts are manifestations, not of internal conditions in man or beast, nor of a diseased mind, but of external and diseased conditions that drive beast and man alike to resort, in self-protection, to whatever will promote existence. It is exactly so with the so-called “money-madness,” or the craving after wealth.

No more than the people of Martinique craved after the floating logs on the high seas, or the population of mining camps after bowie-knives, or birds and beasts after inconspicuous plumage and coat, do our people to-day crave after wealth because of any mental malady. The malady lies, with them as with the folks and beasts referred to, in social conditions. The social conditions, brought about by capitalist society, render existence more and more insecure: only money affords asylum, and the asylum is safe only in the measure that it is money-buttressed. Thus, driven by the prairie fire of wage-slavery, and all the horrors that that implies, people dash headlong toward money and more money, money by hook and crook, never too much being enough, just as the Mont Pelee-driven folks of Martinique dashed headlong toward floating logs, or peaceful populations of mining camps put on the appearance of bristling porcupines, or birds and beasts, that would revel in bright colors, blot out their appearance—all for the sake of saving life. Yet in other words, capitalist society has reached the point of a broken dam, that deluges the fields, and that drives people to the crimes that the insurance investigations are revealing, in the mad scramble to escape the devastation that dogs their heels.

Tarbell philosophy besides being vicious is stupid. It is not only morally, but intellectually also, that the capitalist class is effacing itself.

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Uploaded January 2009

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