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EDITORIAL

## FATHER GASSONIANA.

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VIII.

**“N**O capitalist should fail to give the toilers a wage which would enable the toiler to live in decent circumstances,” is a passage, quoted by Father Thomas I. Gasson in his Boston anti-Socialist address, from an encyclical letter issued by Pope Leo XIII. And Father Gasson introduces the quotation with his own opinion, “dwelt upon with force,” that labor should not be allowed to be treated as a “bale of merchandise.”

The opinion and the quotation are in the nature of a further general principle to prove that Socialism is in error when it demands the overthrow of Capitalism. The general principle is that the evils complained of in Capitalism are not inherent, but remediable.

Let Capitalism speak for itself:—

Without exception the capitalist authorities on Capitalism emphasize the economic mission and virtue of their social system to be the cheapening of goods. It matters not at this stage of the discussion that these authorities suppress the fact that the “cheapening” redounds to the benefit of the capitalist, not of Labor. The capitalists’ contention regarding the “cheapening” achievements is true. They demonstrate the fact with proof innumerable, unnecessary. Without exception the capitalist authorities on Capitalism pronounce the biologic principle of the survival of the fittest a vital principle latent in their social system. Construing these two features together the conclusion is that the fittest is he who can produce cheapest, and that only he survives—and proud are the capitalist authorities thereat.

Among the factors, used by the capitalist in production, is labor-power. Again construing this fact, together with the conclusion just arrived at, the further conclusion is that only that capitalist is fittest, only he can survive, who pays the lowest price, that is wage, for his labor-power.

That is Capitalism. To say, as Pope Leo XIII. does, “capitalist” and “wage,” and, in the same breath, to say the toiler should be given enough “to live in decent

circumstances” is a contradictory thought. The social system, under which “the toiler is given a share of his product on which to enable him to live in decent circumstances,” would be substantially the social system which Jesuit Fathers attempted, about two hundred years ago, to set up in Paraguay, in their benevolent attempt to practice the Republic of Plato in that country; it would be a repetition of the equally benevolent Protestant community of Rappites on the Wabash. These systems may, or may not, be superior to Socialism. That is not now the question. Capitalism they are not—from bottom up, and from top down, they are non-capitalist, they are anti-capitalist. Their introduction means the overthrow of Capitalism.

Taking another order of capitalist authorities on Capitalism—without exception they use the term “Labor Market.” By all the canons of philology such a term implies the merchandise feature of the thing that designates the market. On the identical principle that the term “Cattle-Market” indicates that cattle is a merchandise; on the identical principle that the term “Money Market” indicates that money is a merchandise; on the identical principle that the term “Hay-Market” indicates that bales of hay are merchandise;—on that identical principle the term “Labor-Market” indicates that Labor is a merchandise, either “on the hoof,” like cattle; or in bales, like hay.

Such are the facts, not the fancies. To do, as Father Gasson does, take the stump for Capitalism, and, in the same act, “dwell with force” on “not allowing Labor to be treated as a bale of merchandise” is to kick to pieces the very platform on which he takes his stand.

Whosoever advocates Capitalism, and yet demands that the workingman be well paid and be not allowed to be treated as a bale of merchandise, cuts, on the field of sociology, a figure no less ridiculous, not to say suspicious, than he would cut on the field of zoology if he praised a tiger, and yet sought to make people believe that the beast could be made to bleat like a lamb, and to delight in sugared water, instead of in red hot blood fresh from the gashes it inflicts.

On page 31, G.P. Putnam’s Sons’ edition, of that, on its field, modern epoch-making pronouncement, *The Programme of Modernism*, issued by the brightest intellects among the Roman Catholic prelates, and the most pious, withal, in criticism and condemnation, of the reactionary and anti-democratic posture of the papacy, these good and learned men demonstrate the “philological and critical incompetence” of the ruling cardinals, their “unscientific conception of the Bible,”

and the “depths of ignorance” that they exhibit in the utterances that issue from the Vatican on clerical matters. If the princes of the Roman Catholic hierarchy have so declined in the scale of knowledge on matters directly within their own province, small wonder that, on economics, a province foreign to them, from Father Gasson up their incompetence exhibits itself so shockingly; their lack of scientific grasp is so glaring; and the depths of their ignorance so unfathomable.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
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