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EDITORIAL

## INCOME AND INHERITANCE TAXES.

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“**G**OVERNMENT” is not improperly called the “head.” As with the head, which acts as the center of sensitiveness, so with Government. In it are gathered the senses of the body social. What the body social feels is speedily reflected in Government. The action of Government reflects the state of the body. Judging by these principles, the utterances that are falling fast and thick from Government circles justify the conclusion that the body social is in more critical condition than even surface appearances indicate.

The Presidential recommendation for an income and inheritance tax, not with the end in view of raising revenue, but with the end in view of clipping the crest of swollen fortunes, coming together with the address of the then Secretary of the Treasury Shaw recommending his audience of banqueters to get down on their knees and pray to God to save the country from its prosperity, are supplementary symptoms of first magnitude. The prosperity, that can be felt to be a danger that one must be saved from, that is felt to be such by the very elements who alone taste it, and the clipping of which by law is recommended from that very camp—such a prosperity needs definition, and such warnings define the warners.

All the praises of work notwithstanding, every enlightened man knows that the trend of civilization is not to increase work but reduce it. Leisure is the goddess of civilization. Man works to live, he does not live to work. The exercise needed for health is not the toil that cripples the body and stunts the mind. The noblest physiques, accompanied withal by the cleverest intellects the world has yet produced, have been reared by a people that did not work. The lofty forms of those physiques and the graceful lines of their forms, preserved in marble, have been the admiration of all succeeding ages; the products of their minds, preserved in books, have been the stimulant of the human intellect ever since. The larger the amount of

wealth, "Prosperity", attainable all the fuller should be the cup of bliss. Why, then, does "Prosperity" alarm the governmental watchers on the tower?

The alarm that fills the Shaws of to-day have {has?} periodically filled their forerunners in ages gone by; the remedies suggested by the Roosevelts of to-day have been preached and applied before now, they are as old as the Mosaic laws of the Jubilees, echoes of which were heard in this very State as late as the early twenties of the last century when the Skidmore Movement was on foot. The Shaw-alarm and the Roosevelt-remedy are inseparable; they are births of the identical cause—Class Rule, which means economic inequality.

A pyramid cannot stand on its apex. Economic inequality broadens the basis of the social pyramid and whittles down its apex. No social system can long endure upon that apex. The pyramid may be propped up by artificial means—bayonets and superstition—but even these props will not stand for long. The top-heavy structure, growing ever more top-heavy, is bound eventually to fall together over the ears of the apex. What to-day is called "Prosperity" means the utterly disproportionate congestion of wealth in the apex of the upside-down social pyramid, and a relative increase in the area of poverty. Hence "Prosperity" ever arrives, as we now see it has again arrived, at a point when it alarms its beneficiaries. It is the breaking point.

Arrived at this point the remedy that most readily suggests itself is the remedy to which Nature resorts. The electrically surcharged atmosphere breaks out into a storm. The equilibrium is restored—for a while. Soon as restored it begins over again to gather the forces that eventually repeat the process. Social crashes are of this nature. The first recorded attempt to prevent the social storms which, it was recognized, were bound ever to regather strength was the Mosaic law of periodical redistribution of goods. The Roosevelt scheme is a weak application of the same remedy.

The clumsy social remedies pardonable in the days of Moses, or even in those of Skidmore, are not pardonable to-day. Those remedies left the cause of the recurring storms untouched. It was not touchable when Moses legislated; social conditions were not yet ripe for any but clumsy methods. To-day social conditions not only are ripe for wiser methods, they DEMAND the methods that will put an end to the

social defects from which the periodical storms gather strength. Indeed, to-day, the clumsy methods of yore have become wholly ineffective. No more than a plaster on a wooden leg could bring about relief, can inheritance, or income taxes cope with the issue. Even if enforceable such methods will be ineffective—the broadening area of popular poverty will render untenable the posture of the social pyramid on its apex. Moreover, the very nature of the evil will render the method unenforceable.

The Age in which society now moves demands not plasters, or “contrivances,” but the removal of the cause from which society has been suffering since the days of the overthrow of the mother-right, or the establishment of private property in the necessities of production. Not schemes to check the evil will now stand, but the return to the communal status upon that higher plane that modern methods of production make possible. Not capitalism amended, but Socialism can now restore the equilibrium to society and keep it in equilibrium.

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