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EDITORIAL

## FORTUNATELY, TOO LATE.

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**E**UROPE enjoys the distinction of harboring a gentleman by the name of Paul Leroy-Beaulieu. Mr. Leroy-Beaulieu is a sort of American Carroll D. Wright—he enjoys perpetrating tart sayings regarding economic subjects, and periodically, every time Socialist thought takes a leap, to come forward with some bit of alleged science to discountenance the move, and darken counsel. The present admirably revolutionary attitude of the mujik delegation in the Duma could not fail to invite Mr. Leroy-Beaulieu to step into the arena in his usual role. The invitation was, of course, accepted. Mr. Leroy-Beaulieu condemns the peasants' program. If put through, the public is informed, it will "fix the feebleness of Russia's agricultural production and of her rural population". The reason and conclusion are in Mr. Leroy-Beaulieu's choicest vein—a little sociologic knowledge, and a mass of sociologic ignorance.

The small commune is the cradle of the human race. The bulk of Russia, still agricultural, is mainly at that stage. The feature of the small commune stage was and is small production, with implements to match. Civilization broke through these trammels. Its trend being to increase production so plentifully that an abundance can be raised without arduous toil, social evolution introduced the large establishment, that necessitated the large implements of production. The one and the other destroyed the commune. Superficial thinkers of the Leroy-Beaulieu and Carroll D. Wright stamp have concluded from this evolution that progress demanded the smash-up of the commune, as commune. They are unable to see below the surface and grasp the fact that the smash-up of the commune is only a temporary incident of the development, and not a finality, nor the goal that society aims at, but far otherwise. The fact is that what social development aimed at bringing about permanently was the large establishment—farm or industrial

plant—without which production would remain stunted. In the course of this development the commune, or collective system, had to be abandoned—but not for all time. The plan of social development is not from the commune to the individual system of production, but to furnish the commune system with a broader basis. This consummation has required the transit over the individual system. Soon, however, as the individual system accomplished its task—the furnishing of a broader basis for the commune to stand on—the whole trend of social evolution has been to restore the commune upon its new and sounder pedestal. How compulsory this trend has been may be judged from the circumstance that the individual system is itself semi-collective. It is individual only in the system of ownership of the necessaries for production; it is collective, infinitely more so than the old small commune system could be, in the system of production. A system so contradictory—collective in production, individual in ownership—can obviously be transitory only. The evils, increasingly shocking and inherent in the contradiction, have urged on the development. The Russian Revolution is the most potent manifestation of the travail of society to remove the contradiction and establish social harmony.

These facts being a closed book to the Leroy-Beaulieus, the gentlemen are now coming forward with their half truths to the effect that the restoration of the commune will “fix the feebleness of Russia’s agricultural production”, etc. There is no danger of this. Peasant proprietorship means neither the partitioning of the land into small individual holdings, nor into small communes. If that were the case, then there would be reaction. Peasant proprietorship means the dispossessing of the robber landlords who owned and did not work, and the placing of the land into the collective ownership of the workers. The breath of Socialism animates the Russian uprising—peasant as well as industrial. Not the dividing up of the fields, any more than the dividing up of the machines in the shop; not the return, or confirming, now impossible, to the old small commune, but the marching forward and stepping upon the broad basis of national co-operation is the program of Socialism. Not retrogression but progress will follow the Russian peasant demand: the feebleness that will be “fixed” will be the feebleness not of the worker, but of the dispossessed shirker.

The lance, that Leroy-Beaulieu has shivered for the class of the Usurper, now falls upon mail of too strong a temper even to indent it. Even his former lances only served to encourage Socialism. The present one is wholly without effect. 'Tis but a waste of energy that can only entertain admiring nincompoop intellectuals in the camp of capitalism.

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