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EDITORIAL

HUMAN NATURE AND HUMAN MIND.

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FROM the sublime heights, or perhaps it was from the sublime depths, of his wisdom President Eliot of Harvard has either descended or risen to enlighten the Socialists upon their real task. "The Socialists," said President Eliot, "think their task is only to reform society, whereas it is really to reform human nature."

President Eliot errs.

Human nature need not be changed. What is more, if human nature could be changed the Socialist would brace himself against the operation. It is upon human nature that Socialism is planted; it is with human nature that Socialism counts.

Let President Eliot take any belle at random, with a flea on her chin. Let her be told that the black spot on her face is a beauty-spot; let the lie be repeated until it sinks well in her mind; let learned doctors examine the spot and learnedly pronounce it a "beauty-spot"; let professors lecture upon the same and expatiate on the alleged beauty-spot; let the press print the lectures with flaming head-lines; let pulpiteers sermonize on that particular gift of God to that particular belle; let all this be done, and then let President Eliot observe what happens. What happens will be that the said belle, taking the flea for a beauty-spot, will nurse it lovingly: she will protect it against accidents: she will be angry at any who would say ill of it: she will scratch the face of any who would remove it. Obedient to what would the belle so demean herself? Obedient to human nature. Human nature prompts her to look attractive. Human nature, accordingly, causes her to love the thing.

But now, let a ray of light enter the belle's mind; let that ray be backed up by certain experiences, say the sensation of a bite and a sting, proceeding from the alleged beauty-spot; in short, let her discover that what she took for and was made to believe was a beauty-spot is in fact a blood-sucking parasite that undermines her

health, and throws suspicion upon her cleanliness. Let this happen, and then let President Eliot again take observations. What will he see? The belle, who previously cherished the alleged beauty-spot, now finding it to be a dirty parasite, will take it between her nails and nip out its life.

Did her human nature change? Not in the slightest. It was the identical human nature actively at work. The identical motives that first caused her to nurse the thing, subsequently caused her to destroy it. It was not her human nature that changed but her intellect.

Identically with the working class, the people in general. So long as they believe the capitalist flea {is} on their necks to promote happiness they will cultivate it; the moment their minds are clarified they will cast off the nuisance.

It is not human nature that needs changing, it is the human mind that needs clarification. Nor are the Presidents Eliot in the dark upon this head. If the impossible task of changing human nature were a prerequisite for Socialism, then the Presidents Eliot would save their breath, and feel secure in the robber burg of capitalism. Knowing, however, full well that human nature need and can not be changed, but that its impulse will be enlisted for progress the moment the human mind is enlightened—knowing that, we see them hustling to prevent enlightenment, lest human nature take the flea of capitalism between its nails and off-hand nip out its existence.

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