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EDITORIAL

LYMAN ABBOTT'S SCRAWNY TRINITY.

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THE Rev. Dr. Lyman Abbott spoke to the students of Yale College on the 28th of last month. His subject was Socialism: his object was to demolish Socialism.

The Reverend Doctor's method was correct. Most assailers of Socialism assail the Socialist program in and of itself. Such a method is incorrect. It leaves the mind in confusion. Dr. Abbott aims at more practical results. As a consequence, he finds it necessary to describe things as they are now, and contrast that with things as they would be under Socialism. The method is eminently practical—provided the contrast place(s) Socialism at a disadvantage. But here is where fatality pursues the "advocatus Diaboli" (Devil's advocate). In order to contrast devilry favorably with anti-devilry, the advocate must render cult to Falsehood. That is the fix in which the Reverend Doctor put himself in. In order to contrast the devilry of Capitalism with the anti-devilry of Socialism Dr. Abbott is forced to set up a Scrawny Trinity to which he is burning incense.

The first unit of Dr. Abbott's new Trinity is: "Under existing conditions if a man is dissatisfied with his work he can seek another employer; under Socialism he would have to work under the same employer, the Government." The first part of the thesis is false. The true thesis would be: "Under existing conditions, if a man is dissatisfied with his work he imagines, thanks to the mirage that Capitalism keeps before his eyes, that he can seek and find another employer, when the fact is that, whichever way he turns, the employer is the same, the Capitalist Class, which exploits him in one shop exactly as it does in all others; under Socialism, even though the employer be the Government, and, therefore, the same, in so far as a change of employers is concerned, the worker would be no better off, and no worse. Nevertheless, seeing that, under existing conditions, the ubiquitous capitalist

employer is a private Government in whose election the worker has no hand, whereas, under Socialism, the ubiquitous employer is a popular Government, which rests in the hollow of the workers' hands, it follows that, under existing conditions, the worker is a serf; under Socialism he is a free man working for himself."

The second unit of Dr. Abbott's new Trinity is: "In this country [that is, under existing conditions] one half of the people own their homes." Even if this unit of the Dr.'s new Trinity were correct, then his Trinity must be a sort of Gog and Magog affair, that feeds upon its own children. Why should one half of the people not own their homes in a country where wealth abounds? The fact is this unit also is false. Things are even worse. According to the Census 7,259,362 homes are owned, and 8,365,739 homes are not owned. In other words, there are over a million unowned homes in excess of those that are owned. But not even these facts as yet state the case fully. Of the 7,259,362 homes that are owned more than one half, or 4,761,111 are encumbered. What that means need not be detailed. It is often worse than not to own the home. The usurer is a millstone around the necks of these homes. These homes are a "delusion of property" that crushes the "owners." Accordingly the fact is that, so far from even as few as one half the homes being owned, only 2,498,151 homes out of the 15,625,101 are owned.

Even scrawnier is the third unit of the Rev. Dr. Abbott's new Trinity. He says: "One fifth of our people have bank deposits." If so, then the Gog and Magog feature of capitalism would be exemplified still more crassly than in the instance of the "homes." Only one fifth of our population with reserve funds tells a vicious tale. Fact is the tale is even more vicious. The statement is purely imaginary.

Advocatus Diaboli Rev. Dr. Abbott is worshipping at the shrine of the scrawniest of Trinities.

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