

EDITORIAL

UP-HILL WORK OF REACTION.

By DANIEL DE LEON

A J. CARLYLE'S *A History of Medieval Political Theory in the West*, published by G.P. Putnam's Sons, is a contribution to the Social Question that renders steeper and, thereby, more up-hill the work of Reaction.

Socialism holds that property is the creature of society. Against this position Capitalism, through the mouth of its official professors, politicians, press and pulpiteers, seeks to maintain the position that property is a vested and sacrosanct right.

The Socialist position is, of course, the scientific one. It is the position that ethnology settles and all history confirms. The proprietary right in wealth, the product of human effort, has changed from Age to Age, each Age placing upon property, the stamp of its own system of tenure, the latter being, in turn, determined by the prevalent system of production and distribution. Deprived of ground to stand upon, Capitalism has been forced to seek shelter in the mystification of "Sacredness." The manoeuvre is the last resource of Usurpation, everywhere. By wrapping itself in the mantle of "Sacredness" Usurpation has ever sought to identify itself with the deity, and thus to lay the pretext for identifying a blow at itself with a blow at God. On the subject of the source of property that is the present posture of Capitalism.

Mr. Carlyle's work adduces a series of facts showing that the Socialist contention regarding property's being a creation of society is recognized even by the Fathers of the Church, who denied to property the claim of being a "natural institution," or, in the parlance of the modern capitalist pillars of the Church, "God-ordained."

It is a feature of all revolutionary movements which, like Socialism, are planted

on evolution that “the stars themselves fight in their behalf.” Even Lord Salisbury, while seeking to put a spoke in the wheels of Socialism, actually helped it along with the statement that the Socialist concept of property is “nothing new: it is embodied in fundamental principles of the Common Law.” That was hard enough, from such a source, upon the devoted “worshippers of The Law,” who, in the name of The Law oppose Socialism. At least as hard is the blow, surely not intentional, dealt at the same element by Mr. Carlyle. This blow takes them on the side of their alleged worshipfulness of “The Will of God.”

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