

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 11, NO. 287.

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, APRIL 13, 1911.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

FATHER GASSONIANA.

By DANIEL DE LEON

VII.

“As long as men and women are constituted as they are there must be evils.”

THIS general principle, stated by Father Thomas I. Gasson in his Boston address on February 6 as a general principle that makes against Socialism, has, in a way, been grazed by the fourth article of this series. The specific point involved in this specific sentence is another phrasing for the argument of “human nature”—“you will have to change human nature before it will accept Socialism.”

What is “human nature”?

A simple example will illustrate the article.

Take a young lady on whose velvety chin a flea has alighted. How will “human nature” conduct itself in such a case?

That depends.

If the “molders” of the young lady’s opinion—press, pulpit, professors and political orators—promulgate a theory to the effect that the black spot on her chin is a beauty spot; if her professors of natural science learnedly discourse upon the difference between that “beauty spot” and cancer spots, whereas the latter, drawing their existence from a pre-disposition to disease, lead straight to death, the former, being the external manifestation of internal attractiveness, adds to her charms, hence, promotes her happiness; if the political orators, whom to hear the inducement is offered her of private boxes at Carnegie Halls, dispense eloquent orations upon the pre-eminence of the “American Girl,” and, pointedly alluding to her, sing her praises, upon the strength of that “beauty spot,” as the type of “American Beauty”; if from the pulpit, set up in the church whither she takes on exhibition the latest marvels of the millinery art, the parson, looking straight at her, adds to the rosary of beatitudes a new one: “Blessed are the bearers of beauty

spots, for they shall be greatly admired”; if the morning and evening editions of the papers that she is inveigled into reading publish stenographic reports, of the above learned lectures, eloquent orations and pious sermons, and supplement them with numberless others which she has no chance to hear, but all of which are pivoted upon the purpose of causing her to believe that the flea on her chin is a spot of dazzling beauty;—in such a case, “human nature” will, in all likelihood, cause the young lady to nurse the black spot and carefully to guard it against harm. “Human nature,” in such a case, will probably go further. It will cause the young lady to spurn as “unscientific”; indignantly to reject as “unpatriotic”; piously to condemn as “un-Godly” whomsoever would utter anything however remotely suggestive of the idea that the alleged beauty spot was nothing of the kind. According to the young lady’s temperament and length of nails the dissenters from the theory pounded into her would fare more or less ill. None would fare well; and their tracts would be consigned to the stove.—Such, under such circumstances, would be the conduct of “human nature.”

Now, watch the identical young lady the instant she discovers that the supposed “beauty spot” is a miserable parasite, which, so far from adding to, only undermines her charms by feeding on her blood. That instant she will take the unclean insect between two nails and nip out its harmful existence.—Such also would be conduct of “human nature.”

Are there, then, two “human natures”? No; there is but one. In both instances it is the identical human nature, the identical motive force in action. The identical motive force of wishing to charm, and which, under the belief that the flea was a beauty spot, endeared the parasite to the young lady,—that identical motive force, once enlightened upon the facts, aroused the young lady’s deadly hatred against the formerly cherished “beauty spot.” The “human nature” remained the same. The difference lay in the Intellect—dethroned by false teachings in the former, enthroned by correct teachings in the latter instance.

Satirizing the canting Puritanism of his generation, the author of *Hudibras* summed up its theories with the distich—it acted

As if theology had caught
The itch on purpose to be scratched.

The biologico-sociologic concept embodied in the seventh general principle taken from Father Gasson’s Boston address is that of a human race, crippled in

perpetuity, on purpose to justify the existence of evils.

Men and women need not be reconstituted in order to prevent the evils that now afflict society. What needs to be done is to enthrone the Intellect, dethroned by false teachings, and lying prone with the majority of the men and women.

The “human nature” argument in support of things as they are, and in refutation of Socialism, is a plain case of begging the question. How plain the case is may be gathered from the nervous activity of the Fathers Gasson. Human nature is unalterable. If Human Nature blocks the path of Socialism, why not leave the job to Human Nature?

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

Uploaded April 2006