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EDITORIAL

THE SOCIAL ST. VITUS'S DANCE.

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THE quotation from Draper¹ that heads this issue of *The People* is the key with which to pick the locks of all the bills proposed, all the laws enacted, all the discussions rendered by the legislatures of the land to-day. That key opens the secret of the inextricable tangle.

A social system, that rests upon the private ownership of the things that man needs to produce the necessaries of life, is a social system that rests upon a banana-peel. Steadiness is impossible with such a slippery foundation. Life becomes a scene of uncertainty. The shopkeeper, who one day imagined his future safe, where sobriety, intelligence and thrift caused him to feel his rear, flanks and front protected, finds himself the next day a heap of ruins. Causes over which he had no control and which were, without his knowledge, undermining his foothold, suddenly, as it seems, pulled him down into ruin. The bigger capitalist who, accepting the theory of his social system, looks upon society as a jungle in which the "fittest" survives, and who, having successfully proved himself the "fittest" by the ruination of less "fit" ones, had come to consider himself as "fit"-proof, unexpectedly finds himself laid prone alongside of those whom he had before out-"fitted," himself now ruined by a combination of circumstances as fortuitous as the weather. The workingman, industrious and attentive to his work, taking his inspiration from the capitalist professors, politicians and pulpiteers, imagines he is himself the architect of his home, toils and moils—and presently finds himself thrown out of work, his home shattered, his family scattered to the four winds. With one and all of these types—and of all the shades between them, through the whole gamut of

¹ [The quotation, presumably from John William Draper was: "So long as life is a scene of uncertainties, the hope of yesterday blighted by the realities of to-day, man is the maker of expedients, but not of laws."—*R.B.*]

society—the evil day comes upon them through no fault of their own, very much like a thunderbolt from a clear sky. The human race, in the days of its utter ignorance regarding natural science, felt simply cowed down by what seemed to it an Omnipotent force. It bowed meekly to what it called “the will of God.” The race has emancipated itself from that thralldom to Ignorance of Nature. Society, however, is not yet emancipated from the savage stage of thralldom to Ignorance of Sociology. At its stage of thralldom to Ignorance of Nature,) Society prostrated itself before a fiend-God of its own creation. At its still prevalent stage of thralldom to Ignorance of Sociology we find the spokesmen of capitalist society resorting to measures which they call “laws,” but which, being emanations of a social state of uncertainty, speedily prove themselves to be but “expedients,” which the relentless course of events speedily bursts through.

Pitiful is the picture presented by our National legislators seeking to harness capitalist society, a social state of uncertainty. The Aldrichs and the Forakers and the La Follettes in Washington with financial and railroad and tariff bills, the Hugheses in Albany with anti-racing {anti-race?} bills, the craft unionists with anti-immigration schemes—all bump their noses at each turn against some special interest, and all, standing on the banana-peel of capitalism, bump their noses against one another.

The Age of Law awaits the advent of Socialism. “Law”-making, to-day, is a social St. Vitus's dance.

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