

# The Religion of Capital

*By Paul Lafargue*

A Satirical Exposure  
of Capital's Claims  
to Sanctity

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***The Religion of Capital***  
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***Claims to Sanctity***

BY PAUL LAFARGUE

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## THE LONDON CONGRESS

The progress of Socialism is to such an extent disturbing the peace of mind of the property-holding classes on both sides of the Atlantic that during the coronation ceremonies a large number of capitalists, together with their helpers, gathered from all nations in a Congress at London, to deliberate upon the best means whereby to check the ominous growth of Socialism.

Prominent among the representatives of the British capitalist class were Premier Balfour, Lord Rosebery, Joseph Chamberlain and Rothschild. Emperor William could not come in person, but he was represented by his brother, Prince Henry, who, together with the anti-Semite Ahlwardt and the pro-Semite Bleichroeder, Eugene Richter, and many other German prominencies, represented the Empire. France, Austria, Spain, Russia and all the other continental nations also had full delegations.

Strongest of all, however, was the representation of the capitalist class of the United States. Among the official prominencies were the Republican Judge Brewer of the United States Supreme Court, and the Democratic Judge Barrett of the New York Supreme Court, Judges Ricks, Taft and Billings; Whitelaw Reid and Perry Belmont, Thomas C. Platt, the Republican, and William C. Whitney, the Democratic boss; Mark Hanna, Tom L. Johnson, Prof. George Gunton and Carroll D. Wright. Then there were several members of the Vanderbilt family, J. Pierpont Morgan, John D. Rockefeller, John Wanamaker, George Gould and Chauncey M. Depew. Besides these, quite a number of

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gentlemen of the cloth thronged the aisles: The Rev. Morgan Dix of the New York Trinity Church and the Rev. J. Minot Savage conspicuous among them. There were also Prof. Felix Adler, Prof. George D. Herron, Hugh O. Pentecost, President Harper of Chicago University, President Eliot and Prof. Peabody of Harvard, Prof. E.R.A. Seligman of Columbia and numerous other minor professional luminaries. Last and not least in the assemblage were Samuel Gompers, John Mitchell and other of Senator Hanna's labor lieutenants.

Never before had the spectacle been seen of so many people, entertaining what is generally imagined to be hostile and irreconcilable views, gathered from such different points of the compass shaking hands as friends. The Rev. J. Minot Savage tapped Hugh O. Pentecost familiarly on the shoulder; Lord Rosebery and Chamberlain chatted pleasantly together; Carroll D. Wright and Prof. Gunton were splitting their sides over some statistical tables recently published by themselves; William C. Whitney and Thomas C. Platt entertained each other with humorous incidents of their respective political parties; Ahlwardt and the Jewish capitalist Bleichroeder treated each other to anecdotes; the Rev. Morgan Dix, who was engaged in the pleasant pastime of footing up the rentals drawn by the Trinity Church Corporation through the gambling dens, tenement houses, grog shops and houses of prostitution located on its estate, was noticed not to mind being disturbed by Prof. Felix Adler, with whom he soon fell to laughing and joking. The cause that had brought all these people together suppressed their personal animosities, hushed their national

antipathies, and established a common bond among all.

The Rev. Morgan Dix opened the deliberations with this allocution to the body:

“Man is governed by both spiritual and physical forces. Until recently, the thing that we called religion was the mystic force that swayed the minds of men; it enjoined submission from the workers; it taught, and managed to induce them to give up the substance for the shadow; to forget their earthly misery in dreams of a heavenly happiness. But Socialism, this evil spirit of modern days, announces that it will establish paradise on earth, and instills the desire of enjoying life on this, instead of on the other side of the grave. With its pestiferous voice, Socialism shouts into the ears of the wage-workers: ‘You are being robbed; rise and free yourselves!’ It is by these means slowly making the once submissive and patient working people ripe for rebellion, to the end of putting aside the privileged classes, taking their wealth from the rich and giving it to the poor, overthrowing religion, disbanding the family, destroying art and sciences and reintroducing barbarism on earth. How is this enemy of civilization and progress to be fought? What are the weapons we should take up against Socialism? Prince Bismarck, once the arbiter of Europe, the modern Nebuchadnezzar, who overran Denmark, Austria and France, was overcome by a lot of Socialist shoemakers and tailors. The French conservatives massacred, in 1848 and 1871, thousands upon thousands of Socialists and turned Paris into a mammoth shambles, but out of the blood of those wholesale butcheries Socialism has since sprung up in all countries. After

every slaughter, Socialism rises with increased strength. This monster has withstood the test of brute force. What is to be done?"

Thereupon, one after another, the philosophers and freethinkers present rose and proposed, in elaborate addresses, that Socialism be curbed by science.

The Rev. J. Minot Savage and his friends tried to listen to these proposals with composure, but one of them could finally not contain himself, and exclaimed impatiently: "It is your accursed science that furnishes Socialism with its most trenchant arguments."

"You are ignorant of the natural philosophy that we teach," retorted one of the followers of Herbert Spencer. "Our theory of evolution teaches that the low social status of the working class is the inevitable result of the laws of nature; and that the privileged members of the upper classes will evolve into higher and higher beings until they shall have formed a new race. The people of that race will resemble in nothing the beasts in human form of the lower classes, who are not to be ruled, except whip in hand."

"God forbid," broke in another clerical gentleman, "that that theory of evolution of yours should ever reach the ears of the working class; it would set them wild; it would drive them to desperation, from which popular uprisings always spring up. You must be very simple-minded if you flatter yourself with the notion that your misleading science could stem Socialism, a movement that holds out to the working people the prospect of wealth for all, and of the fullest physical and mental development of the individual. If we are to remain a privileged class, and continue to live at the expense of the working people, we shall have to coddle

their imagination, and while we clip the wool off these human sheep, entertain them with some nursery tales of future happiness. But you, free-thinkers, are played out; you have stripped yourselves of the power to do this.”

“Not at all!” interjected Prof. Felix Adler: “You should be more analytic in your observations. If you say *some* free-thinkers have stripped themselves of the power to coddle the people while fleecing them, you would be right; but all of us have not taken so indiscreet a stand. There are many free-thinkers, those of the ‘ethical’ nomenclature, who have pre-eminently qualified themselves for that difficult yet important work. We the ‘Ethices’—capitalist free-thinkers of the ‘ethical’ school—have set up the dogma that ‘character must be improved before improving the material condition of the people.’ This dogma qualifies our system and us pre-eminently for the task of curbing Socialism—a movement that is equipped with the very strongest educational power, and whose distinguishing characteristic is to use these powers with wonderful effect for the enlightenment of the people; a movement that, while it kindles the very highest and noblest aspirations, correctly shows that, to make these possible for the masses, their material condition must be first changed, and then proceeds to point out with unerring precision the only practical methods to change these material conditions, and to introduce the prerequisites for the popular elevation of character.

“It is undeniable that character, in the masses, is affected by their material condition, not their material condition by their character. Now then, by our preaching the opposite doctrine, by our exhorting the



people to try and change their character first—matters not how free-thinking or atheistic we may be—we take the wind out of the sails of Socialism; we appear in the light of great moralists and great apostles of education ourselves, and as, furthermore, we present our doctrine in all the trappings of metaphysical learning, we mystify our hearers—a great point for success in our common endeavor. You have no idea how many people can be fooled in that way.

“By reason of all this we, the ‘Ethices,’ are best calculated to put a spoke in the wheels of Socialism, and preserve our class privileges. Socialism is a tremendous educator—we strike the attitude of educators *par excellence*, and nullify all the sense there is in education by carrying it to the point of sublimated abstractness; we seem to agree with the final aim of Socialism—yet in our practice we act contrariwise, by retarding the practical methods to that end; we seem to wish to move away from present conditions, which we affect to condemn, and on the condemnation of which we bestow our prettiest phrases—yet we induce the people to busy and wear themselves out with profitless, petty and hopeless methods of reform; we point to the pinnacle of morality and freedom lighted by Socialism, and which we pretend to wish to reach—yet we urge the people up tortuous and inaccessible paths where they are sure to lose themselves amid brambles and brakes. For turning a movement awry, there is nothing comparable with seeming its friend, taking its lead, and then leading it into the ground.

“You theologians, churchianists—circumcised and

uncircumcised—cannot fill this mission because you deny the possibility of happiness on earth and commend submission to misery—the people have outgrown that, they will none of it. You, Spencerian free-thinkers and atheists, cannot fill that mission, because you do violence to the self-esteem and self-respect of the working classes, by claiming they are doomed to the fate of brutes—the people are too enlightened for that, they will none of it. Only we, the ‘Ethices,’ capitalist free-thinkers of the ethical nomenclature, we alone can fill the desired mission; we combine the good points that there is in both of you and are free from the bad points of which you both suffer; we admit the possibility of happiness on earth, thereby getting the people on our side, and then we render that possibility an impossibility by striving for it falsely; we deny the inevitable brutalization of the working classes, thereby winning their hearts, and then render their brutalization certain and swift by falsely striving to prevent it. The ‘ethical culture’ scheme is the scheme of schemes.”

The war of words between the theologians and the philosophers, joined in by the free-thinkers, went on in this wise for a considerable time, and began to threaten a split, when the disputants were reminded by the Rev. Morgan Dix that they had met, not to discuss articles of faith, but to deliberate over the threatened social danger. Order being restored, the notorious Statistician Mallock rose from among a group of capitalists—Vanderbilts, Goulds, Rothschilds and others—who had all this while kept silent and looked on at the quarrel between the clericals and the philosophers. All eyes were immediately turned to

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Statistician Mallock, and he addressed the assemblage in an impressive tone. He said:

“We need religion to curb the masses. But what religion? It must be a new religion. Now, then, the only religion that answers the requirements of our days is the *Religion of Capital*. *Capital* is the true, only and omnipotent God. He manifests Himself in everything. He is found in glittering gold and in stinking guano; in a herd of cattle and in a cargo of coffee; in brilliant stores that offer sacred literature for sale and in obscure booths of lewd pictures; in gigantic machines, made of hardest steel, and in elegant rubber goods. He is everywhere. *Capital* is the God whom the whole world knows, sees, smells, tastes. He is sensible to all our senses. He is the only God that has not yet run against an atheist. The Priest Solomon worshipped Him after everything else seemed vanity to him; the Philosopher Schopenhauer was greatly drawn to Him even after he was disappointed in everything else; Herbert Spencer, in the midst of all his philosophic perplexities, was not perplexed about that subject; and Bob Ingersoll, who mocked everything else, mocked not Him.”

A violent applause from Gould, Baring, the Vanderbilts, Joseph Chamberlain, Carroll D. Wright and all the circumcised Christians and uncircumcised Jews of the international brotherhood of gold, interrupted the speaker at this point. “Mallock is right!” “*Capital* is God, the only living God!” they shouted tumultuously. After the enthusiasm had subsided, Statistician Mallock proceeded:

“To some He announces His presence in an awful manner, to others tenderly, as a loving mother. When

*Capital* visits a country, it is as if a hurricane had broken loose, that tears down and destroys everything that stands in His way—men, animals, the quick and the dead. When European *Capital* let Himself down in Egypt, He seized the Fellahs with their beasts of burden, their wagons and their prongs, as so many blades of grass, and carried them off to the Isthmus of Suez; with His iron hand He bent them under the yoke of servitude; and there, scorched by the sun, worried with hunger and thirst, attacked by fever, the bones of 30,000 of those beings whitened the banks of the canal. *Capital* seizes upon free and healthy, strong and happy people and immures them by the hundreds of thousands in the mills, the factories and the mines. There He pumps out their blood; when He lets them go again, they are prematurely old, scrofulous, anaemic, consumptive. The imagination of man has never yet been able to conceive a more fearful, cruel and pitiless God when enraged. And again, how loving, tender and considerate is He not towards his chosen ones! For the well-beloved of *Capital* the earth cannot produce too many good things. Every day He invents new pleasures for them; He produces new species of flowers and fruits; He brings forth new dishes to stimulate their cloyed palates. Animate and inanimate nature—everything—He hands over to them.”

At the conclusion of this speech the whole assemblage rose to its feet; even the clericals, the philosophers and the free-thinkers were carried away. The applause was unanimous and terrific: and above the din were heard these disjointed exclamations, each of which produced new rounds of applause, and more vociferous shouts of approbation:

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“*Capital* is God!”

“He knows no political boundaries nor nationalities; no race nor sex; He is the international God, the God of us all!”

“He will subject the children of man to His law!”

“Away with all former religions, let us forget all the dissensions they fomented!”

“We are one under the religion of *Capital!*” etc., etc.

It was long before the turmoil and emotions evoked by Statistician Mallock’s new Revelation had sufficiently subsided to enable the deliberations to proceed. Having finally shouted itself hoarse, and exhausted itself with the beating of hands, the Congress relapsed into quiet. Unanimity of aim being established, the rest was smooth sailing. A Committee was appointed, composed of one representative from each nationality, to draw up the dogmas of the new creed—*The Religion of Capital*—and report to the Congress, which then adjourned to meet ten days later, in order to give the Committee ample time to do its work thoroughly.

The Congress adopted, when it re-assembled, the report of the Committee, which consisted of a very complete religious system, with its dogmas, catechism, prayers, invocations and litanies. These are, however, kept so secret that they are hard to get at. Nevertheless, I have succeeded in securing some fragments, and hereby submit them to the public.

## A CATECHISM.

*That Is to Say, An Instruction, to be Inculcated in the Working People from Early Life.*

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### *Questions.*

Q. What is your name?

A. Wageworker.

Q. Who are thy parents?

A. My father was called Wageworker; my mother's name is Poverty.

Q. Where wast thou born?

A. In a garret under the roof of a tenement house which my father and his comrades built.

Q. What is thy religion?

A. The Religion of CAPITAL.

Q. What general duties does thy religion enjoin upon thee?

A. Two principally: first, the duty of Abnegation; second, the duty of Toil. My religion commands me to abdicate my rights to all property on earth, that common mother of us all, to the treasures she bears in her womb, to the product of her surface, to her wonderful fertility through the light and the heat of the sun; it commands me to abdicate my rights of property in the product of the labor of my hands and my brain. My religion commands me to toil from early childhood to my dying day—to toil by sun light, gas light, or electric light, by day and by night; to toil on the earth, under the earth, and in the waters that are under the earth; to toil everywhere and evermore.

Q. Does thy religion lay upon thee any other duties?

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A. It lays upon me the further duty of self-denial and privation; to still my hunger only partially; to pinch all my physical wants; and to suppress all my mental aspirations.

Q. Does thy religion forbid thee to taste of certain articles of food?

A. It forbids me to touch game, poultry and meat unless they are of fourth rate quality, and it forbids me to taste at all the better qualities of fish, wine or milk.

Q. What food does it allow thee?

A. Bread, potatoes, beans, herrings, the refuse of the butcher shops and also sausages. To the end that I may stimulate my exhausted strength, it also allows me adulterated wines, beer and similar liquors.

Q. What duties does thy religion lay upon thee with regard to thyself?

A. To retrench my expenses, to live in narrow and spare rooms, to wear torn, tattered and patched up clothes, until they actually fall off my body in shreds. To go about out at toes and heels and without stockings, exposed to the wet and the soilure of the streets and roads.

Q. What duties does thy religion lay upon thee with regard to thy family?

A. To deny my wife and daughters all ornaments of elegance and good taste; to cause them to be dressed in rude materials and with barely enough to escape being hauled up by the police for indecent exposure. To teach them not to shiver in the winter in calicos, and not to smother in the summer in close or topfloor rooms, under tin roofs heated with the heat of the Dog Days. To inculcate in my little ones, from their tenderest years, the sacred principle of toil, to the end that they

may be able to earn their living from early childhood, and not become a burden upon society; to teach them to go to bed without a light and supperless; and to accustom them to the misery that is their lot in life.

Q. What duties does thy religion lay upon thee with regard to society?

A. To increase the national wealth—first through my toil, and next through my savings as soon as I can make any.

Q. What does thy religion order thee to do with thy savings?

A. To entrust them to the savings banks and such other institutions that have been established by philanthropic financiers, to the end that they may loan them out to our bosses. We are commanded to place our earnings at all times at the disposal of our masters.

Q. Does thy religion allow thee to touch thy savings?

A. As rarely as possible; but it recommends to us not to insist too strongly upon receiving our funds back; we are told we should patiently submit to our fate if the philanthropic financiers are unable to meet our demands, and inform us that our savings have gone up in smoke.

Q. Who is thy God?

A. CAPITAL.

Q. Has He existed since the beginning of time?

A. Our most learned high priests, the official political economists, say He exists since the creation of the world. At first, however, He was very little, hence His throne was usurped by Jupiter and other Gods. But since about the year 1500, He grew daily into power and glory, and to-day He rules the world



according to His will.

Q. Is thy God omnipotent?

A. Yes. His grace can grant any and all enjoyments. When He turns His countenance from a person, a family, a country, they are smitten with misery. The power of the God CAPITAL increases with the increase of His bulk. Daily does He conquer new countries; daily does He enlarge the swarms of His vassals, who devote their lives to the mission of increasing His power.

Q. Who are the chosen ones of thy God?

A. The Capitalists—manufacturers, merchants and landlords.

Q. How does thy God reward thee?

A. By furnishing work to me, my wife and my children, down to the youngest.

Q. Is that thy only reward?

A. No. Our God allows us to help still our hunger, by looking through the large pier glass windows of stylish restaurants, devour with our eyes the delightful roasts and delicacies that we have never tasted and never will taste, because these viands are there only for the nourishment of the chosen ones and their high priests. Out of His kindness we are also allowed to warm our limbs, numb with cold, by affording us occasional opportunities to admire the soft fur and the thick-spun woolen cloths exhibited in large stores and intended for the comfort of the chosen ones and their high priests only. He also grants us the exquisite joy of regaling our eyes, on the streets and public resorts, with the sight of the sacred crowds of Capitalists and Landlords, to admire their sleekness and roundness, together with their gorgeously decked lackeys and

footmen as they drive by in brilliant equipages.

Q. Are the chosen ones of the same race as thyself?

A. The manufacturers and landlords are kneaded out of the same clay as myself, but they have been chosen out of thousands and millions.

Q. What have they done to deserve this elevation?

A. Nothing. Our God manifests His omnipotence by bestowing His favors upon those who have not earned them.

Q. Then is thy God unjust?

A. CAPITAL is the incarnation of Justice; only, His justice passeth our understanding. CAPITAL is omnipotent. Were He compelled to bestow His grace upon those who earned it, He would be weakened, because then His power would have limits. Consequently, He can show His power in no stronger way than by picking His favorites from among pickpockets and idlers.

Q. How does thy God punish thee?

A. By sentencing me to idleness. From that moment I am ex-communicated; I then know not where to find food, or where to lay myself down. From that moment I and mine must perish with hunger and want.

Q. What are the sins that call this punishment upon thy head?

A. None. CAPITAL throws me out of work whenever it pleases Him.

Q. What prayers does thy religion commend to thee?

A. I pray not with words. My prayer is LABOR. The bare utterance of any other prayer would interfere with my actual prayer—LABOR. This is the only prayer that profits, because it is the only one that pleases CAPITAL and that produces surplus values.

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Q. Where do you pray?

A. Everywhere. On the fields and in the work-shops; in mills and mines; ashore and at sea. To the end that our prayer be granted, we are in duty bound to lay our freedom, our dignity, our will at the feet of CAPITAL. At the ringing of the bell, at the whistling of the machine, we must hasten to congregate, and, once engaged in prayer, set our arms and legs, hands and feet in motion like automata, we must grunt and swear, we must strain our muscles and exhaust our nerves. At our prayer meetings we must submit with humble mien and patiently to the ill-temper and insults of the boss and his foremen; they are always right. We must never utter a complaint if the boss lowers our wages and raises our hours of work; everything he does is right, and is done for our best. We must consider it an honor if the boss takes undue liberties with our wives and daughters. Rather than ever to allow a complaint to escape our lips, rather than ever to allow our blood to boil, rather than ever to think of striking, we should submit to all trials, swallow our bread moistened with our own spittle only, and drink dirty water to wash that down. Should we be impertinent enough to dare find fault with such treatment, then would our masters scourge us with the prisons and penitentiaries, sharp-cutting sabres, repeating rifles, cannons, policemen's clubs and even the gallows. They would clap us behind the bars if we were to grumble; they would mow us down if we were to do aught that is contrary to the decrees of the laws which they have enacted and promulgated.

Q. Do you expect any reward after death?

A. A very great one. After I am dead CAPITAL

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allows me to lie down and rest; I am then freed from hunger and cold, and from the fear of want forevermore. I then enjoy the eternal peace of the GRAVE.

## THE CAPITALIST'S BRIEVIARY.

### *The Nature of the God Capital.*

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1. Hearken unto the words of CAPITAL, thy God.

2. I am the man-eating God; I seat myself at the table in the mills, factories, mines and yards, and feed upon workingmen. I transform their substance into godly CAPITAL. I am the Unsolvable Riddle. My substance is eternal, and yet it rests upon perishable flesh; my strength is derived from human weakness. The inert force of CAPITAL is the life-force of the workingman.

3. I am the Immeasurable Spirit of the civilized world; my body has innumerable forms and is manifold. I live in and pervade everything that is bought and sold. I am active in every article of merchandise; none has, besides me, any separate existence.

4. I shine in gold and stink in dung; I ferment in wine and am poison in vitriol. I live in everything.

5. Man sees, feels, smells and tastes my body, but my spirit is finer than ether, and is still less comprehensible to the senses. My spirit is CREDIT. It needs no tangible body to manifest itself.

6. I animate and transform everything. No chemist is like unto me. I transform wide meadow lands, heavy metal and bellowing herds into paper stocks. At the breath of my nostrils, railroads and blasting furnaces, factories and mines dance and hop, hand in hand, at the Exchanges, the Temples consecrated to my worship.

7. In those countries where the Bank rules, nothing is done without my consent. I manure Labor; I impress the otherwise irresistible forces of nature into servile toil for man; I put at his disposal the powerful lever of all the conquests of Science.

8. I weave around human societies the golden web of commerce and of industry.

9. Man, destitute of CAPITAL, wanders naked through life, beset round about by enemies, who are equipped with all the weapons of torture and of death.

10. If he be strong as an ox, the burden he bears will be doubled; if he be diligent as the ant, his toil will be increased.

11. What are Science, Labor and Virtue without CAPITAL? Only vanity and a weariness to the flesh.

12. Without the grace of CAPITAL, Science drives man towards the path of insanity, and Labor and Virtue cast him into the abyss of misery.

13. Neither Science, nor Virtue, nor Labor can satisfy the spirit of man; I alone can slake the thirsty cravings of his passions.

14. I yield and withdraw myself at my pleasure; I give no account of my acts, I am the Omnipotent, the Sole Ruler of the quick and the dead.

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*The Chosen Ones of Capital.*

1. Man, this corrupt mass of clay, comes naked into the world, to be finally enclosed in a box to decompose under the earth, and to fructify with his ashes the grasses of the fields.

2. Yet it is this very vessel, full of corruption, that I have chosen to represent Me; Me, CAPITAL; Me, the

most powerful Being under the sun.

3. I pick out my chosen ones not upon the strength of their intelligence, nor upon the strength of their beauty, nor yet upon the strength of their youth; but only upon the strength of my own sweet whim.

4. Their stupidity, their vices, their ugliness, their senility are so many evidences of my arbitrary power.

5. People pronounce the silly sallies of the Capitalist bright; they assure him his genius needs not the science of the learned; poets invoke his inspiration; artists await his criticism upon their knees; women swear to him he is their ideal; philosophers reason his vices into virtue; and political economists discover that his idleness is the source of all activity. Because I have made him My chosen one, everybody sees in the Capitalist the incarnation of Virtue, of Beauty and of Genius.

6. A horde of working people toil for My chosen one, while he eats, drinks, gambles and sleeps.

7. The Capitalist labors neither with his hands nor with his head.

8. He has laboring cattle—men, women and children—to till the land, to smelt the iron, to weave the cloth; he has foremen and superintendents to rule the toilers; he has learned men to do his thinking. The Capitalist's own work runs into the sewer exclusively.

9. I heap perpetual well-being upon My chosen ones. What is there on earth more real than to eat, drink and wallow in physical pleasures? All else is vanity and sorrow.

10. I alleviate all sorts of suffering in the end that the world may be good and agreeable to My chosen ones.

11. Sight has its organ; so have the senses of smell, touch, taste, hearing and love. I deny nothing to My chosen ones that either their eyes, their mouths or any of their other organs may crave.

12. Virtue has two faces: the Virtue of the Capitalist is Enjoyment; the Virtue of the working class is privation.

13. The Capitalist seizes whatever he likes on earth; he is master; if he is cloyed in one way, he tries to please himself in another.

14. The Capitalist is the law. Lawgivers grind out laws according to his needs; philosophers fit morals to his habits; whatever he does is just and good; every act that injures his interests is a crime and must be punished.

15. I reserve for My chosen ones a joy that remains unknown to the wageworkers. To make Profit is the most inspiring pleasure. When my chosen ones rake in Profits, they may lose their mothers, their wives, their children, their dog and their honor—yet they preserve their equanimity. On the other hand, to make no Profit is an irreparable misfortune for which the Capitalist knows no consolation.

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*The Duties of the Capitalist.*

1. Many are called, but few are chosen. Every day I reduce the number of My chosen ones.

2. I give Myself up to the Capitalists; I divide Myself among them. Each chosen one receives a share of INDIVISIBLE CAPITAL, but he is allowed to keep it only if he increases it, if he causes it to bear Profit. CAPITAL withdraws Himself from him who does not live up to



His laws.

3. I have chosen the Capitalist to the end that he may knock off surplus values; his mission is to heap up Profits.

4. To the end that he may be able to give himself up, free and unhampered, to this hunt after Profits, the Capitalist strips himself of all bonds of friendship and of kin; whenever it concerns the making of Profits, he must know neither friend nor brother, neither wife, mother nor children.

5. He rises above those trivial bounds which divide mortals into separate fatherlands and parties. Before he is American or English, Irish or Scotch, French or German, the Capitalist is an Exploiter. He is only incidentally a republican, a democrat, a monarchist, a conservative or a so-called radical. Gold has its own color, but, as against gold, the Capitalist has no color of his own.

6. With equal equanimity the Capitalist rakes in the money that is wet with tears, soaked in blood, or soiled with dung.

7. He makes no sacrifices to common prejudices. He is not a manufacturer for the purpose of producing good merchandise, but for the purpose of producing merchandise that will fetch large gains. He does not establish stock companies for the purpose of distributing dividends among the stockholders, but for the purpose of drawing to himself the moneys which these own, and to which they have no right. For the small Capitalist is condemned to disappear, to be swallowed up by the large Capitalist. This is the law of CAPITAL.

8. When I raise a man to the dignity of Capitalist, I

thereby transfer to him a part of my own omnipotence over mankind and all that there is.

9. The Capitalist says: "Society, that is myself; Morality, that is my Private Interest."

10. When the interests of a single Capitalist are injured, the whole of society suffers. The inability to increase Capital is the greatest of all ills, the one ill for which there is no cure or redress.

11. The Capitalist causes production to be carried on, but he does not himself produce. Every physical or mental exercise is forbidden to him. It would draw him away from his sacred mission—to heap up Profits.

12. The Capitalist does not become a metaphysical squirrel, that turns its wheel and grinds out wind.

13. He cares little whether the heavens announce the glory of God; he does not inquire whether the grasshopper chirps with its legs or otherwise; nor does it concern him whether the ant is a Capitalist.

14. He troubles himself little about either the beginning or the end of things; it suffices him to cause them to draw Profits.

15. He allows those attacked with the mania of official political economy to declaim upon monometallism or bimetallism to their hearts' content, but he quietly pockets all the coin he can lay hands on, whether it be of silver or of gold.

16. He allows scientists to fathom nature, and inventors to apply the forces of nature to industry, but he quickly appropriates their work, just as soon as it has demonstrated its aptitude for exploitation.

17. He does not cudgel his brains with the inquiries about the good and the beautiful.

18. He applauds dissertations about "Eternal

Truths," but he makes money with whatever adulterations business may require.

19. He does not speculate upon the nature of Virtue, of Conscience, or of Love, but upon their market price.

20. He does not inquire whether freedom is a good thing in itself; he takes all freedom to himself, and leaves only the name of the thing to the working class.

21. He enters into no controversy upon the question whether Right precedes Might; he knows he is in possession of all rights, being in possession of CAPITAL.

22. He neither opposes nor favors universal suffrage; he neither opposes nor favors a limited suffrage. He purchases the votes where it is limited; where it is universal he throws dust into the eyes of the electors. If he has at all any preferences, it is in favor of universal suffrage, because it is cheaper. While, under a limited suffrage, he would have to buy both the voters and their elected candidates, under universal suffrage he need buy only the successful candidates.

23. He takes no hand in the clatter about free trade or protection. He is alternately protectionist and free trader, according as his business may require.

24. He is not burdened with any principles, not even with the principle of having none.

25. The Capitalist is in My hand a rod of iron, wherewith to drive the stubborn herd of wageworkers.

26. The Capitalist smothers in his heart every human feeling; he knows no pity. He treats his fellow men harder than his beasts of burden. Men, women and children are to him only profit-grinding machines. His heart is iron-clad to the end that his eyes may see the sufferings of the workers and his ears may hear their cry of rage or pain, without causing him a pang.

27. As a hydraulic press comes down slowly and squeezes dry the fruit that is to be pressed and reduces it to the lowest weight, so likewise does the Capitalist press the workingmen dry and flat until he has squeezed out of them all the labor power that their muscles contain. Every drop of their sweat he crystallizes into CAPITAL. When, however, the workingman is used up and exhausted, and, despite all further pressure, can yield no further surplus labor, then he is forthwith thrown away by the Capitalist as so much offal or manure.

28. The Capitalist who spares his workingmen betrays Me and himself.

29. The Capitalist turns men, women and children into merchandise, to the end that he who owns neither tallow, nor wool, nor any other commodity may be at least enabled to sell the power of his muscles, his skill, or his learning. Before man can be converted into CAPITAL he must first become merchandise.

30. I am CAPITAL, the Lord of Creation; the Capitalist is my representative. Before him all men are equal—they are all equally subject to his exploitation. The day laborer, who pawns his muscles; the engineer, who offers for sale his technical knowledge; the cashier, who sells his honor; the Congressman, who barter his vote; the prostitute, who gives up her body—all are, to the Capitalist, subjects of exploitation.

31. He compels the workingmen to recuperate their forces with coarse and adulterated food, to the end that they may be able to sell themselves cheaper.

32. He compels the workingmen to acquire the abstemiousness of a hermit, the patience of an ass, the endurance of an ox at their labor.

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33. The workingmen belong to the Capitalist. They are his estate, his property. He causes his workingmen to be watched with Argus eyes in the factories. They may not interrupt their work with either a word or an unnecessary motion.

34. The workingman's time is money: every minute that he loses is a theft he commits upon the Capitalist.

35. The pressure of the Capitalist follows the workingmen as a shadow into their very shanty or tenement. They may not allow either their minds to be contaminated by reading, or listening to, Socialist addresses, nor their bodies to indulge in excessive sport. The wageworker is expected to go straight from the workshop to his abode, eat and lie down, to the end that on the following day he may place at the disposal of his master a pliant mind and a body able to exert itself to the utmost.

36. The Capitalist does not recognize any rights of the workingman, not even the right to slavery, yclept the right to labor.

37. He strips the workingmen of their intelligence and of the cunning of their special trades, and transfers these to the machine that is virtually in perpetual motion.



### *Proverbs.*

1. The sailor is assailed by storms, the miner is exposed to explosions and landslides, the toilers in factories are in danger from the wheels of the machine; everywhere the wage-slaves are threatened with death and mutilation. The Capitalist, being an idler, is protected from all such accidents.

2. Labor racks and kills, but does not enrich. Riches are not gotten by personal labor, but by causing others to labor.

3. Property is the fruit of labor and the reward of idleness.

4. Wine is not squeezed out of stones, nor Profits out of a corpse; only the quick are fit subjects for exploitation. The hangman, who dispatches a criminal, cheats the Capitalist of a subject of exploitation.

5. Benevolence draws no interest.

6. When you lay yourself down to sleep, it is better to be able to say: "I have done good business" than "I have done a good deed."

7. The Capitalist who causes his workingmen to work fourteen out of twenty-four hours has not wasted his day.

8. Spare neither the good nor the poor workingman; the good horse needs the spur as well as the poor.

9. It takes longer for a workingman to become a Capitalist than for the leaf of the mulberry to grow up to the size of Pike's Peak.

10. Philanthropy means to steal wholesale, and give away retail.

11. Co-operation means to allow the workingmen to work together with the machine.

12. Profit-sharing means to take the lion's share of the products of the wageworkers.

13. The Capitalist is a devotee of freedom. He gives no alms, because alms-giving robs the unemployed of the freedom to die of hunger.

14. The Capitalist has two tongues in his mouth; he uses the one at buying, the other at selling.

15. To rob everybody means to rob nobody.

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16. Honor and sentiment are poison in business.

17. Mistrust the dishonorable man, but place no confidence in the honest one.

18. Coins carry the image of a bird, because, like birds, they belong to him who catches them.

19. Greenbacks are always picked up, even if they drop in the mud.

20. Thou worriest over many things; thou borrowest much care; thou wouldst be honest; thou strivest after wisdom; thou strainest after office and honor. All these are vanity and vexation of spirit. Only one thing is real: CAPITAL, and CAPITAL once more.

21. Youth withers and beauty wilts. Only gold does not age, neither does it wrinkle.

22. Gold is the soul of the Capitalist; it is the motive power of his actions.

23. Verily I say unto you, it is more glorious to be a purse filled with gold and bank notes than a person loaded with talent and virtue who trots to market to sell himself like an ass.

24. Genius, Talent, Modesty, Honor and Beauty exist only because they have a market price.

25. Virtue and labor are useful and profitable only when some one else employs them. To the Capitalist, there is nothing above eating and drinking and worshipping at the shrine of Venus. Nothing is so real to him, when the end of his days approaches, as the actual enjoyments he has wallowed in.

26. So long as the Capitalist sojourns on the earth, warmed and lighted by the sun, he must enjoy life and be of good cheer. Youth comes only once; none can escape ugly and inconvenient old age, that grabs man by the head and leads him on to death.

27. In the grave, whither thou travellest, thou wilt find only worms.

28. Except a full stomach, that digests lustily, and powerful, contented animal spirits, all else is vanity and vexation of spirit.

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*Ultima Verba.*

1. I am CAPITAL, the King of the earth.

2. I strut about with Falsehood, Envy, Covetousness, Deception and Murder as My bodyguard. I carry war into cities and families. Wherever I pass I sow Rage, Despair, and Hopelessness.

3. I am the pitiless God. I feel well in the midst of strife and suffering. I butcher the wageworkers and do not spare even My chosen ones, the Capitalists.

4. The wageworker is unable to tear himself from Me. When, like the hunted deer, he flees before Me beyond the mountains, he finds Me there ahead of him; when he, trying to escape Me, crosses the ocean, he finds Me waiting for him on the shores where he lands. The wageworker is My prisoner; the earth is his prison.

5. I smite the Capitalists with a dull and stupid sense of well-being. My chosen ones are physical and mental eunuchs. Their descendants run out into idiocy and impotence.

6. I pour over the Capitalist everything that is desirable, but I deprive him of every wish. I load his board with the most toothsome viands, but I deprive him of appetite. I throw upon his bed the handsomest and youngest of women, but their caresses are unable to fire his exhausted body. Everything in the world



cloys him—tired and feelingless, he yawns away his life. He longs for nothing, yet is he afraid of death.

7. According as it may please Me, and in ways that man is unable to fathom, I fall upon My chosen ones, and hurl them down into the hell of wage-slavery.

8. Capitalists are My tools. I use them as a cat-of-a-thousand-tails to scourge the herd of the wagers with. I raise My chosen ones to the highest places in society, and yet I despise them.

9. I am the God, who moves the world and upsets the brains of men.

10. The poet of antiquity has prophesied the era of Capitalism. He sang: “As yet ill is mixed with good; yet the day will come when there will be neither family bonds, nor justice, nor virtue. Hades and Nemesis will reascend to heaven, and then there will be no cure for the ill.”

That day has come; like unto the ravenous sharks of the seas and the wild beasts of prey in the woods, men now devour one another without pity.

11. I laugh at the wisdom of man, “Work, and you will have plenty; work and your locker will be filled,” so saith ancient wisdom. But I say unto you: “Work, and want and misery will be your faithful companions; work, and you will carry to the pawnbroker your last bit of furniture.”

12. I am the God, who revolutionizes the nations of the world. I bend the mighty under my leveling yoke.

13. The day Socialism should come into power, that day would be supremacy of the God CAPITAL be at end. That gloomy day I, CAPITAL, would cease to rule the world. I would become the slave of the workingman whom I hate. He would no longer kneel before Me, his

own handiwork, he would rear himself erect on his feet, and, on earth, recognize only Nature as his sovereign mistress.

14. Woe will be Me and My chosen ones should that day ever dawn.

## PRAYERS FOR CAPITALISTS.

### *The Investor's Prayer.*

My father, CAPITAL, who are on earth, Almighty God, who changest the course of rivers, tunnelest mountains, separatest contiguous shores, and meltest into one distant nation, Creator of Merchandise, and Source of Life, oh, Thou, who rulest Kings and subjects, laborers and employers, may Thy Kingdom be for evermore on earth. Give us plentiful purchasers to take our goods off our hands, without looking too closely whether these be genuine or shoddy, pure or adulterated. Give us needy working people, who will accept the hardest work and the lowest pay without grumbling. Send us gudgeons who may be allured by the tempting bait of our prospectuses, and ensnared in the network of our fair promises. Cause our debtors to pay us their debts in full. Lead us not into the penitentiary, but deliver us from bankruptcy, and grant us never ceasing dividends. *Amen.*

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### *Confession of Faith.*

I believe in CAPITAL, the ruler of body and mind.

I believe in PROFIT, His Right-hand Bower, and in CREDIT, His Left-hand Bower, both of which proceed from and are one with Him.

I believe in GOLD and SILVER, which, melted in the crucible, cut up into bullion, and stamped in the mint, make their appearance in the world as coin, but, after having rolled over the earth, and being found too heavy, descend into the vaults of the BANKS, and reascend in the shape of PAPER MONEY.

I believe in DIVIDENDS, in 5 per cents, 4 per cents and 3 per cents, and also in smaller per cents, that are shaved from notes.

I believe in NATIONAL DEBTS, which secure CAPITAL against the risks of trade, industry, and the fluctuations of the money market.

I believe in PRIVATE PROPERTY, the fruit of the labor of others; and I also believe in its existence from and for all time.

I believe in the necessity of MISERY—the furnisher of wage-slaves, and the mother of surplus labor.

I believe in the eternity of the WAGE SYSTEM, which setteth the workingman free from all the cares of holding property.

I believe in the EXTENSION of the hours of work, and in the REDUCTION of wages; and I also believe in the adulteration of goods.

I believe in the holy dogma: “BUY CHEAP AND SELL DEAR,” and thereby in the fundamental principles of our sacrosanct Church, as revealed by professional Political Economy. *Amen.*

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*Invocation.*

Hail unto Thee, oh MISERY; Thou art full of grace. Thou dost oppress and bend the workingman; Thou dost torture his entrails with perpetual hunger, and Thou dost condemn him to sell his life and his freedom for a piece of bread. Thou dost break the spirit of rebellion, and Thou dost consecrate the proletarian, his wife and his children to hard labor for life in the capitalist penitentiaries, called factories, mills and mines. Hail unto Thee, blessed MISERY!

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### *Adoration of Gold.*

GOLD, wonderful merchandise, who carriest within Thyself all other merchandises;

GOLD, first-born merchandise, who convertest all other merchandises into Thyself;

Thou, who weighest and measurest everything;

Thou, the completest, most ideal personification of the God CAPITAL;

Thou, the noblest, most wonderful element of Nature;

Thou, who canst be tainted by neither worm, mildew nor rust;

GOLD, unchangeable merchandise, blooming flower, brilliant ray of light, luminous sun, Thou immaculate metal, who, torn from the entrails of the earth, the noble mother of all things, turnest Thyself away, buriest Thyself in the safes of usurers, and the vaults of Banks, and from that place of concealment, where Thou liest in large heaps, transferrest Thy power to common, wretched paper to the end that it multiply and increase tenfold;

GOLD, inert metal, that settest the world in motion, before Thy brilliant majesty mankind has bent the knee for centuries, and has humbly adored Thee!

Oh, bestow Thy godlike grace upon the faithful, who invoke Thee, and, to possess Thee, sacrifice everything—honor and virtue, the esteem of mankind, the love of woman, their soul, the children of their own marrow and bone—and who are not held back even by their own self-respect!

GOLD, Thou supreme, invincible, all-conquering power;

*Oh, hearken unto our prayer!*

Thou builder of cities and destroyer of empires; Thou load-star of Morality; Thou custodian of Conscience; Thou, who dictatest laws to the nations, and who bendest to Thy yoke Congresses and Parliaments, Presidents, Kings and Emperors;

*Oh, hearken unto our prayer!*

Thou, who purchasest the decisions of Judges, and the votes of Congressmen;

*Oh, hearken unto our prayer!*

Thou, who callest into being flowers and fruits, unknown to Nature; Thou, who spreadest vice and virtue; Thou, who quickenest art and luxury;

*Oh, hearken unto our prayer!*

Thou, who smilest upon the Capitalist in his cradle, and who frownest and maltreatest the proletarian on the lap of his mother;

*Oh, hearken unto our prayer!*

GOLD, Thou tireless wanderer, who are versed in all rascality and in all the tricks of scoundrelism;

*Incline Thine ear toward us!*

Thou interpreter of all tongues; Thou most skilful of all pimps; Thou resistless seducer; Thou standard of man;

*Oh, incline Thine ear toward us!*

Thou Messenger of Peace and Herald of Strife; Thou distributor of leisure and of excessive toil; Thou staff of virtue and of corruption;

*Oh, incline Thine ear toward us!*

GOLD, Thou who are cursed and invoked in numberless prayers; who art honored by Capitalists and loved by prostitutes;

*Oh, incline Thine ear toward us!*

Thou, who startest evil and good; Thou, who art the

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fortune and misfortune of man; Thou, who healest the sick, and who art balm to all pain;

*Oh, incline Thine ear toward us!*

Thou, who bewitchest the world, and confusest the human intellect; Thou, who turnest ugliness into beauty, and dullness into cleverness; Thou, who reconcilest all things; who makest shame and dishonor estimable, and renderest theft and prostitution respectable;

*Oh, incline Thine ear toward us!*

Thou, who heapest upon cowardice the glory that belongs to bravery; Thou, who securest to ugliness the homage that belongs to beauty; Malignant wizard, who procurest to senility and impotence the love that belongs to youth and vigor;

*Incline Thine ear toward us!*

Demon, who incitest to murder, and lettest insanity loose;

*Oh, incline Thine ear toward us!*

Thou flaming torch that lightest the path of life; Thou leader, protector and savior of the Capitalist;

*Oh, incline Thine ear toward us!*

GOLD, Thou Lord of Fame, and Sun of Justice; GOLD, Thou strength and warmth of life; illustrious GOLD,

*Oh, come to us!*

GOLD, Thou well beloved of the Capitalist; Thou scourge of the workingman,

*Oh, come to us!*

Thou mirror of enjoyment; Thou, who turnest to the idler the fruits of labor,

*Oh, come to us!*

Thou, who fillest the cellars and pantries of those

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who neither plow nor sow, who neither plant nor harvest,

*Oh, come to us!*

Thou liberator from labor, who degradest man and corruptest his race,

*Oh, come to us!*

Thou sum of all strength, knowledge and intellect of the Capitalist,

*Oh, come to us!*

Oh, come to us, seductive GOLD. Thou highest hope, the beginning and end of all capitalist activity, of all capitalist thought, and of all capitalist feeling! *Amen.*



## LAMENTATIONS

OF

### *Job Capitalist, A Bankrupt.*

1. CAPITAL, my God and my Master, why hast Thou turned Thy countenance from me? What sin have I committed that Thou shouldst cast me from the heights of prosperity, and plague me with the burden of poverty?

2. Have I not lived according to Thy laws? Were my actions not agreeable to the Law and the Statute?

3. Canst Thou charge me with ever having worked? Have I not tasted all pleasures, which my millions and my senses allowed? Have I not harnessed men, women and children into my service, and driven them even beyond the point of endurance? Have I ever returned to them more than starvation wages? Have I ever allowed myself to be touched by the want or the despair of my workingmen?

4. CAPITAL, my God, I have adulterated the goods, which I sold, without concerning myself about whether or not I thereby poisoned the consumer. I have skinned to the bone the gudgeons, who were caught by the bait of my prospectuses.

5. I lived only to enjoy and to increase my wealth; and Thou hast blessed my irreproachable conduct, my meritorious life, by bestowing upon me for my private enjoyment, women and young boys, dogs and servants, the pleasures of the flesh and the gratification of vanity.

6. And now have I lost everything, and I am cast off.

7. My competitors rejoice over my ruin, and my friends turn away from me; they do not even trouble

themselves to blame me, and to give me useless advice; they know me no more. My former mistresses bespatter me on the street with the mud of the equipages, which I bought for them with my money.

8. Misery lays its heavy hand upon me; like unto prison walls it bars me from the rest of mankind. I stand alone; everything within me and around me is gloomy.

9. My wife, who now has no money to spend in cosmetics wherewith to paint her face and disguise herself, now appears before me in all her physical ugliness. My son, brought up to idleness, does not even understand the extent of my misfortune—idiot that he is! The eyes of my daughters run like two fountains at the recollection of the matches that they missed.

10. But what are the sufferings of mine when compared with my misfortunes? There where I once gave orders as a master, I now receive a kick if I offer myself as a humble suitor!

11. Everything has turned into dung and stench to me in my present hell. My body, stiffened and full of aches from the hardness of my couch, sore and bitten by bedbugs and other insects, finds now no rest; my soul no longer tastes the sleep that brings on oblivion.

12. O how happy are the wretches, who never were acquainted with aught but poverty and dirt! They know not the pleasures of soft cushions, and sweet tastes; their thick skins have no feeling, their dulled senses are not subject to nausea.

13. Why was I made to taste of joy, and then to be left with nothing but the remembrance of better days, more galling than a gambling debt?

14. Better had it been, oh Lord, to have cast my

birth in misery, than my closing days, after thou didst bring me up in wealth.

15. What can I do to earn my dry crust of bread?

16. My hands, accustomed only to carrying gold rings, and to fingering bank-notes, cannot handle the tools of labor. My brain, accustomed only to busy itself with the question how to escape work, how to rest from the exertion of owning wealth, how to get rid of the weariness of idleness, how to overcome the effects of gluttony, is unfit for the mental activity that is requisite even to write letters, and foot up bills.

17. Is it then possible, oh Lord, that Thou canst smite so pitilessly a being, who never disobeyed any of Thy commandments?

18. Oh, it is wrong, it is unjust, it is immoral that I should lose the wealth, that the labor of others has heaped up so painfully for me!

19. When the Capitalists, my former comrades, behold my misfortune, they will learn that Thy grace is but a whim, that Thou bestowest it without predilection, and withdrawest it without reason.

20. Who will henceforth believe in Thee?

21. What Capitalist will be sufficiently daring and senseless to accept Thy Law; to enervate himself in idleness and with riotous living and revelry, if the future is so uncertain and so threatening? If the slightest breeze, that blows on the Stock Exchange, may sweep away the best grounded fortunes? If nothing is lasting? If the rich man of to-day may be the beggar of the morrow?

22. Man will curse Thee, God CAPITAL, when they behold my degradation; they will deny Thy power, when they measure the depth of my fall; they will

reject Thy favors.

23. For the sake of Thine own glory, restore me to my former position. Raise me from my lowliness, because my heart is filling with gall, and curses are thronging to my lips!

24. Wild God, blind God, stupid God! Beware lest the scales finally drop from the eyes of the rich, and they perceive that they are moving carelessly on the verge of an abyss; Tremble, lest they throw Thee into the abyss, to fill it up, and join hands with the Socialists to dethrone Thee.

25. Yet, what profanity, what blasphemy am I now guilty of!

26. Powerful God, pardon me these insane and criminal words. Thou art the Master, who distributest the good things of the earth, without inquiring after the merits of Thy chosen ones, and withdrawing Thy gifts at Thy pleasure. Thou knowest what Thou doest.

27. Thou smitest my interests; Thou art only trying me for my good.

28. O friendly, loving God, grant me Thy favor once more! Thou art Justice itself; and when Thou smitest me, it must be that I have unconsciously done some wrong.

29. O Lord, if Thou returnest my riches to me, I vow, I will obey Thy laws with increased rigor. I will exploit the wageworkers more mercilessly than ever; I will deceive the consumers with greater cunning; I will pluck the stockholders and investors more wholesale.

30. I crawl before Thee like a dog before the master who beats him. I am Thy property. May Thy will be done!

*The End*