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EDITORIAL

THE BRISBANE MENTALITY.

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THE Scranton, Pa., *Truth* of the 4th of this month quotes Arthur Brisbane of the *New York Journal* as saying in that city: "If the entire Socialist programme be put in force to-morrow we would be a nation of drunkards within a twelvemonth."

Mr. Brisbane believes as he says. Could the gentleman's sincerity be suspected his words would not have the significance they carry. As it is, his opinion on the immediate effect of Socialism is nothing short of luminous. It sheds light upon the mind that holds such an opinion. It classifies such a mind as a member of the Ruling Class, so saturated with his Class prejudices that these curb, lame and asphyxiate his good intentions.

Ruling Classes consist of two elements, mentally looked upon. One element is the arrogant. It proposes to keep its station regardless of all reasoning that can be advanced against it. The other element is affected by the reasoning advanced against its rule. It would change things, if it thought it could. But—. It is a part of a Ruling Class psychology to believe exaltedly of itself and poorly of the class it rides. The second element under consideration is thrall to this mental attitude. Hence, much as it wishes to improve things, it is restrained. Whatever it does in a progressive direction it does timidly, in half or quarter measures—always fearful the beneficiaries of its good intentions "are not ready" and will abuse the good things done for them. This is the Brisbane mentality.

The Brisbane mentality was quite conspicuous in the days of the American Revolution. Almost literally in Mr. Brisbane's words the then Brisbanes held that, if the entire revolutionary program against England was put in force, we would be a nation of rioters, and they pointed out with sincere horror at the "excesses of the Barebones."

The Brisbane mentality was quite conspicuous in the days of Anti-Slavery agitation. The present Brisbane words need only slight changes to be an echo of the Brisbanes of the Fifties. Their sincerely expressed apprehensions, in case the entire Abolitionist program was put in force, was that the Negroes would lie in the sun and do nothing else than “sun themselves.”

And so do the Brisbanes of this generation fear. As the fears of the Brisbanes of previous generations, of good yet weak hearts, never materialized, neither will they materialize now.

The ampleness of wealth and leisure—not merely \$5 a day at 8-hours work—, that the enforcement of the full programme of Socialism would bestow upon the people, would result, not in a bacchanalian drunk, but in the sobriety that assured wellbeing alone can bring about. The Brisbane mentality judges of conduct, in changed circumstances, by conduct in present circumstances. Under capitalism, increased wealth might herald a popular drunk. The knowledge that the good times can not last; the fear of the morrow which fear will turn some into hoarding, self-denying misers, will surely turn others into reckless self-indulgers—not under Socialism, when each will be master of his fate, alone responsible for his physical well(-) or ill-being.

The Brisbane element is a sincere, well-meaning element. In this lies their danger to Progress. Their hearts push them to take a hand in the great Movements of their day; their mind causes them to botch up whatever great Movement they dabble in.

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