A FOOl'S TALK.

BY "TOUCHSTONE."

REPRINTED FROM "THE WORKER."

AN ESSAY IN SIMPLICITY.

"I give the men who come to my camp Socialist leaflets to read, but they can't under-
stand them. With me I explain them in simple language, when they see things clear enough,
that why the brothers can't it work that way? They say."

I have been shown a letter from a very intelligent fellow in the West.

He has a grievance, as all intelli-
gent fellows have in this unsatis-
factory world.

He is anxious in the cause of
Reform. He talks on political and
economic subjects to the men who
come to his camp. He distributes
Socialistic literature among them.

But, he says, OUR SOCIALIST
WRITERS DON'T WRITE
SIMPLE ENOUGH.

They are brilliant, they are
logical, they are learned. Their
facts are indisputable; their de-
ductions irrefutable; their argu-
ments convincing in the extreme.

He admits all that. They have
only one fault, he says. YOU
CAN'T UNDERSTAND THEM.
That is to say, the Ordinary Man
in the Crowd who reads their
leaflets wonders what the "blas-
ces" they are driving at.

They discourse eloquently and
carmine enough, but the unformed
mind finds their meaning hard to
grasp.

If this is so, it is a vital defect.

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SOCIALISM IS A GOSPEL
FOR THE MULTITUDE.

It is not a cut for educated
minds only. It is not an intel-
lectual Fad For Pascifistic
People. It is not something to
slide away the time with, or to
show off with in company, like the
boarding school girl who sits down at the
table and bangs out "The Maiden's
Prayer" in chromatic variations
and cooing scherzos. Ever-

It is an earnest message to all
who toil and are sore oppressed.
And it is one which the simplest
mind ought to imbibe as readily as
an infant sucks its mother's milk.

* * *

But I have a notion that our
Socialist writers are not so much
to blame as this correspondent
imagines.

It may be that the men to whom
he refers are bewildered, not so
much by the language used, as by
the unaccustomed ideas presented,
perhaps for the first time.
It may be that it seems incomprehensible to them merely because it is new, and they have not been trained up in it.

WE WANT SOME LEAFLETS FOR BEGINNERS.

That's what's the matter.

It would be a gross mistake to write always as if all men were beginners, but undoubtedly we need a SOCIALIST PRIMER I.

If we started our children at school in the third or fourth class we should only confuse them. But when they have been taken through the lower classes it is easy enough.

I am a Socialist. I believe in Socialism with every fibre of my being. I eat it and drink it, and sleep with it. It is one of my last thoughts at night and first thoughts in the morning.

I want to persuade all men of it, because it is good for all men. And it is as simple in its essence principle, that stated clearly, and stripped of all circumstantial detail, it seems to me the truths should be self-evident to the intelligence of a child.

It is just like this. SOCIALISM MEANS WORKING ALL TOGETHER, AND SHARING ALL TOGETHER. Nothing more, nothing less.

Surely that is not hard to understand.

Under present conditions we fight and struggle for a living, and many are killed and wounded in the struggle, and the strong and skillful get more than is good for them or for us, and the rest have to be thankful for hard graft and poor returns.

Socialism means that instead of proceeding on these insanious lines WE SHOULD FORM OURSELVES INTO ONE CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY, and work and share together in peace and friendship.

That is easy to grasp, is it not?

Anyone can see that there is something wrong now. Why do some people roll in luxury, while millions don't get half enough to eat? Why do millions DIE OF HUNGER every year?

God is not to blame. The Earth is a well-stored larder. There is nothing we require that it does not contain in plenty. If some of our children get at the butter and jam, and others cannot get even dry bread, it is clearly not the fault of the Good Provider. IT IS NOBODY'S FAULT BUT OUR OWN.

We behave like a mob of wild pigs in a wood. There is plenty of meat and fruit for all. The wild pigs are stupid and greedy. Instead of each taking enough, and no more than enough, and making existence a pleasant, pleasant, as they could do, the senseless brutes rush fiercely upon one another, wrestle, hang, and goring, and the food that their tails are red with blood, and many are slain and the food of the wise.

There is too much of the wild pig about Society today.

Suppose a handful of pigs were cast loose in a sea, and the island was fertile, and yielded to labour everything that was required—food and drink, and shelter and clothing, and the finer things that make life worth living.
And suppose these men went each his own way, guiltyly and selfishly working for himself only, or in little civil groups. And suppose they spent a considerable part of their time in quarrelling, in chasing and robbing, and in shooting and killing, one another.

Would you not say they were a pack of rascals and idots, and unworthy of the bounty of Nature?

Of course you would, and you would feel like thinking somebody big enough to come along and boot the whole booking of them into the sea.

Well, the World is just a great island in the Ocean of Eternity, and we men are passengers upon it.

It is a good place to live in. It is thrifty in the point of productivity; its stores of wealth are inexhaustible. There is not only enough for us, and to spare, but for all the countless generations of men to come after us.

If any man here, one would say, it is a useful and a disgrace, and a crime the guilt of which few can escape.

Yet so it is. Not one, but millions, starve! Why is it so?

I will tell you.

To begin with, THE WORLD IS NO LONGER OURS. It belongs to a number of people who call themselves Landlords. They have seized all the advice part of it, and nobody can work on them unless they give up to the Landlord the greater part of what they produce.

And a number of other people, calling themselves Capitalists, are in possession of the machinery and modes by which the raw materials are got out of the earth and turned into finished goods, and they won't let us use them unless we are content with only a small portion of the products of our industry.

And other people again have formed themselves into Privileged Classes, and have persuaded us that they are beings of a superior clay, too fine for labor, and we are silly enough to believe them, and maintain them by the sweat of our brows in idleness and luxury.

And as these people are anxious only about themselves, and care little what happens so long as there are enough labours to supply their wants, and as there is no order or method in industry as at present conducted, but only blind rivalry and ferocious competition, it follows that there is always a large number of unemployed.

The landlord has no use for them except to squeeze them for rent.

The Aristocrat is too engrossed in his pleasures to take any notice of them, unless they offend by getting between the wind and his nobility.

The Capitalist's only use for them is to play them off against the workers in employ, and make them to keep down wages and suppress industrial revolts.

And the result is destitution and misery, famine, senior diseased and violent, and, in consequence, all prostitution, all robbery and theft, and degrading caste distinctions, and servility and hypocrisy.

And the World, instead of being a good place for everybody, is "a Paradise for the Rich, and a Hell for the Poor."
Now the Socialist comes in, and he says to the people, "TAKE THAT LAND! It is yours!"
And to the Capitalist he says, "Keep your tools and machinery; we will make some of our own."
And to the wealthy loafer, "Off with your coat and work, for it is written, "If he that will not work, neither shall he eat!"
Then he sets about organizing his labour, just as the big Trusts do—this man for that job, that man for this. No man must be idle, because every idle is a burden on those who work, and the more that work the greater the wealth produced for division.
What would be thus created by the toil of all, would belong equally to all. And poverty would disappear from among men, and be remembered only as a nightmare in the literature of our age.

That is all we would need to teach, I think, in Primer I—just the simple elements of justice upon which socialism is based. Primer II, might contain some easy object lessons in practical Socialism.

When there had been mastered the student would be in a position to spell out words and sentences, and so reach up to the more complicated ideas involved in the methods by which Socialists propose to GRADUALLY transform Things As They Are into Things As They Ought to Be.

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When the Vanguard Van gets going, with its travelling lecturers, there will be less reason to complain of the lack of simple and direct instruction in Socialism—that Subject of all Subjects for men and women. All who are anxious to spread the light and speed the coming of the Good Time should send along a donation, however small, to the Van Trustees, Cunard Mary and "Einzuk," 34 Queen Street, Brisbane.

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