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*The*  
**PARABLE**  
OF THE  
**WATERTANK**

*By Edward Bellamy.*

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## THE PARABLE OF THE WATER TANK.

Reprinted from "Equality".

There was a certain very dry land, the people whereof were in sore need of water. And they did nothing but to seek after water from morning until night, and many perished because they could not find it.

Howbeit, there were certain men in that land who were more crafty and diligent than the rest, and these had gathered stores of water where others could find none, and the name of these men was called capitalists. And it came to pass that the people of the land came unto the capitalists and prayed of them that they would give them of the water they had gathered, that they might drink, for their need was sore. But the capitalists answered them and said:

"Go to, ye silly people; why should we give you of the water which we have gathered, for then we should become even as ye are, and perish with you.

But, behold what we will do unto you. Be ye our servants, and ye shall have water."

And the people said: "Only give us to drink and we will be your servants, we and our children." And so it was.

Now, the capitalists were men of understanding; and wise in their generation. They ordered the people who were their servants in bands, with captains and officers, and some they put at the springs to dip, and others did they make to carry the water, and others did they cause to seek for new springs. And all the water was brought together to one place, and there did the capitalists make a great tank for to hold it, and the tank was called the Market, for it was there that the people, even the servants of the capitalists, came to get water. And the capitalists said unto the people:

"For every bucket of water that ye bring to us, that we may pour it into the tank, which is the Market, behold! we will give you a penny, but for every bucket that we shall draw forth to give unto you, that ye may drink of it, ye and your wives and your children, ye shall give to us two pennies, and the difference shall be our profit, seeing that if it were not for this profit we would not

do this thing for you, but ye should all perish."

And it was good in the people's eyes, for they were dull of understanding, and they diligently brought water unto the tank for many days, and for every bucket which they did bring the capitalists gave them every man a penny; but for every bucket that the capitalists drew forth from the tank to give again unto the people, behold! the people rendered to the capitalists two pennies. And after many days the water tank, which was the Market, overflowed at the top, seeing that for every bucket the people poured in they received only so much as would buy again half a bucket. And because of the excess that was left of every bucket did the tank overflow, for the people were many, but the capitalists were few and could drink no more than others. Therefore did the tank overflow.

And when the capitalists saw that the water overflowed, they said to the people:

"See ye not the tank, which is the Market, doth overflow? Sit ye down, therefore, and be patient, for ye shall bring us no more water till the tank be empty."

But when the people no more received

the pennies of the capitalists for the water they brought, they could buy no more water from the capitalists, having naught wherewith to buy. And when the capitalists saw that they had no more profit because no man bought water of them, they were troubled. And they sent forth men in the highways, the byways and the hedges, crying: "If any man thirst, let him come to the tank and buy water of us, for it doth overflow." For they said among themselves, "Behold, the times are dull; we must advertise."

But the people answered, saying: "How can we buy unless ye hire us, for how else shall we have wherewithal to buy? Hire ye us, therefore, as before, and we will gladly buy water, for we thirst, and ye shall have no need to advertise." But the capitalists said unto the people: "Shall we hire ye to bring water when the tank, which is the Market, doth already overflow? Buy ye, therefore, first water, and when the tank is empty through your buying will we hire you again." And so it was because the capitalists hired them no more to bring water that the people could not buy the water they had brought already, and because the people could not buy the

water they had brought already the capitalists no more hired them to bring water. And the saying went abroad, "It is a crisis."

And the thirst of the people was great, for it was not now as it had been in the days of their fathers, when the land was open before them, for every one to seek water for himself, seeing that the capitalists had taken all the springs, and the wells and the water wheels, and the vessels and the buckets, so that no man might come by water save from the tank, which was the Market. And the people murmured against the capitalists and said: "Behold, the tank runneth over, and we die of thirst. Give us, therefore, of the water, that we perish not."

But the capitalists answered: "Not so. The water is ours. Ye shall not drink thereof unless ye buy it of us with pennies." And they confirmed it with an oath, saying after their manner: "Business is business."

But the capitalists were disquieted that the people bought no more water, whereby they had no more any profits, and they spake one to another, saying: "It seemeth that our profits have stopped our profits, and by reason of the profits we have made, we can make no more profits. How

is it that our profits have become unprofitable to us, and our gains do make us poor? Let us, therefore, send for the soothsayers, that they may interpret this thing unto us," and they sent for them.

Now, the soothsayers were men learned in dark sayings, who joined themselves to the capitalists by reason of the water of the capitalists, that they might have thereof and live, they and their children. And they spake for the capitalists unto the people, and did their embassies for them, seeing that the capitalists were not a folk quick of understanding, neither ready of speech.

And the capitalists demanded of the soothsayers that they should interpret the thing unto them, wherefore it was that the people bought no more water of them, although the tank was full. And certain of the soothsayers answered and said, "It is by reason of overproduction," and some said, "It is a glut," but the signification of the two words is the same. And the others said, "Nay, but this thing is by reason of the spots on the sun." And yet others answered, saying, "It is neither by reason of glut nor yet of the spots on the sun that this evil hath come to pass, but because of lack of confidence."



“Nay, but this thing is by reason of the spots on the sun.”



And while the soothsayers contended among themselves according to their manner, the men of profit did slumber and sleep, and when they awoke they said to the soothsayers: "It is enough. Ye have spoken comfortably unto us. Now go ye forth and speak comfortably likewise unto the people, so that they be at rest and leave us also in peace."

But the soothsayers, even the men of the dismal science—for so they were named of some—were loath to go forth to the people lest they should be stoned, for the people loved them not. And they said to the capitalists:

"Masters, it is a mystery of our craft that if men be full and thirst not, but be at rest, then shall they find comfort in our speech, even as ye. Yet, if they thirst and be empty, find they no comfort therein, but rather mock us, for it seemeth that unless a man be full our wisdom appeareth unto him but emptiness." But the capitalists said: "Go ye forth. Are ye not our men to do our embassies?"

And the soothsayers went forth to the people and expounded to them the mystery of overproduction, and how it was that they must needs perish of thirst because there was over-much water, and how there could not be enough because

there was too much. And likewise spoke they unto the people concerning the sun spots, and also wherefore it was that these things had come upon them by reason of lack of confidence. And it was even as the soothsayers had said, for to the people their wisdom seemed emptiness. And the people reviled them, saying: "Go up, ye bald heads. Will ye mock us? Doth plenty breed famine? Doth nothing come out of much?" And they took up stones to stone them.

And when the captitalists saw that the people still murmured, and would not give ear to the soothsayers, and because also they feared lest they should come upon the tank and take of the water by force, they brought forth to them certain holy men (but they were false priests), who spake unto the people that they should be quiet and trouble not the capitalists because they thirsted, and these holy men, who were false priests, testified to the people that this affliction was sent to them of God for the healing of their souls, and that if they should bear it in patience and lust not after the water, neither trouble the capitalists, it would come to pass that after they had given up the ghost they would come to a country where there should be no



And the name of the drops of water  
was Charity, and they were  
exceeding bitter.



capitalists, but an abundance of water. Howbeit there were certain true prophets of God also, and these had compassion on the people and would not prophesy for the capitalists, but rather spake constantly against them.

Now, when the capitalists saw that the people still murmured, and would not be still, neither for the words of the sooth-sayers, nor of the false priests, they came forth themselves unto them and put the ends of their fingers into the water that overflowed in the tank and wet the tips thereof, and they scattered the drops from the tips of their fingers abroad upon the people who thronged the tank, and the name of the drops of water was charity, and they were exceeding bitter.

And when the capitalists saw yet again that neither for the words of the sooth-sayers, nor of the holy men who were false priests, not yet for the drops that were called charity, would the people be still, but raged the more, and crowded upon the tank as if they would take it by force, then took they counsel together and sent men privily forth among the people. And these men sought out the mightiest among the people, and all who had skill in war, and spake craftily with them, saying:

“Come, now; why cast ye not your lot in with the capitalists? If ye will be their men and serve them against the people, that they break not in upon the tank, then shall ye have abundance of water, that ye perish not, ye and your children.”

And the mighty men and they who were skilled in war hearkened unto this speech, and suffered themselves to be persuaded, for their thirst constrained them, and they went within unto the capitalists and became their men, and staves and swords were put into their hands, and they became a defense unto the capitalists, and smote the people when they thronged upon the tank.

And after many days the water was low in the tank, for the capitalists did make fountains and fish ponds of the water thereof, and did bathe therein, they and their wives and children, and did waste the water for their pleasure.

And when the capitalists saw that the tank was empty they said: “The crisis is ended,” and they sent forth and hired the people that they should bring water to fill it again. And for the water that the people brought to the tank they received for every bucket a penny, but for the water which the capitalists drew forth

from the tank to give again to the people they received two pennies, that they might have their profit. And after a short time did the tank again overflow, even as before.

And now, when many times people had filled the tank until it had overflowed, and had thirsted till the water therein had been wasted by the capitalists, it came to pass that there arose in the land certain men who were called agitators, for that they did stir up the people. And they spake to the people, saying that they should associate, and then they would thirst no more for water. And in the eyes of the capitalists were the agitators pestilent fellows, and they would fain have crucified them, but durst not for fear of the people.

And the words of the agitators, which they spake to the people, were on this wise:

“Ye foolish people, how long will ye be deceived by a lie and believe to your hurt that which is not? For behold, all these things that have been said unto you by the capitalists and by the sooth-sayers are cunningly devised fables. And likewise the holy men, who say that it is the will of God that ye should always be poor and miserable and athirst, be-

hold! They do blaspheme God and are liars, whom He will bitterly judge, though He forgive all others. How cometh it that ye may not come by the water in the tank? Is it not because ye have no money? And why have ye no money? Is it not because ye receive but one penny for every bucket that ye bring to the tank, which is the Market, but must render two pennies for every bucket ye take out, so that the capitalists may have their profit? See ye not how by this means the tank must overflow, being filled by that ye lack and made to abound out of your emptiness? See ye not also that the harder ye toil and the more diligently ye seek and bring the water, the worse and not the better it shall be for you by reason of the profit, and that forever?"

After this manner spake the agitators for many days unto the people, and none heeded them, but it was so that after a time the people hearkened. And they answered and said unto the agitators:

"Ye say truth. It is because of the captitalists and their profit that we want, seeing that by reason of them and their profits we may by no means come by the fruit of our labor, so that our labor is in vain, and the more we toil to fill the tank

the sooner doth it overflow, and we may receive nothing because there is too much, according to the words of the soothsayers. But behold, the capitalists are hard men, and their tender mercies are cruel. Tell us if ye know any way whereby we may deliver ourselves out of our bondage unto them. But if ye know of no certain way of deliverance, we beseech you to hold your peace and let us alone, that we may forget our misery."

And the agitators answered and said: "We know a way."

And the people said: "Deceive us not, for this thing hath been from the beginning, and none hath found a way of deliverance until now, though many have sought it carefully with tears. But if you know a way, speak unto us quickly."

Then the agitators spake unto the people of the way. And they said:

"Behold, what need have ye at all of these capitalists, that ye should yield them profits upon your labor? What great thing do they wherefore ye render them this tribute? Lo! It is only because they do order you in bands and lead you out and in and set your task and afterward give you a little of the water yourselves have brought, and not

they. Now, behold the way out of this bondage! Do ye for yourselves that which is done for the capitalists—namely, the ordering of your labor, and the marshaling of your bands, and the dividing of your tasks. So shall ye have no need at all of the capitalists, and no more yield to them any profit, but all the fruit of your labor shall ye share as brethren, every one having the same; and so shall the tank never overflow until every man is full, and would not wag the tongue for more, and afterward shall ye with the overflow make pleasant fountains and fish ponds to delight yourselves withal, even as did the capitalists; but these shall be for the delight of all.”

And the people answered: “How shall we go about to do this thing, for it seemeth good to us?”

And the agitators answered: “Choose ye discreet men to go in and out before you and to marshal your bands and order your labor, and these men shall be as the capitalists were; but, behold they shall not be your masters, as the capitalists are, but your brethren and officers, who do your will, and they shall not take any profits, but every man his share like the others, that there may be no more

masters and servants among you, but brethren only. And from time to time, as ye see fit, ye shall choose other discreet men in the places of the first, to order the labor."

And the people hearkened, and the thing was very good to them. Likewise, it seemed not a hard thing. And with one voice they cried out: "So let it be as ye have said, for we will do it!"

And the capitalists heard the noise of the shouting and what the people said, and the soothsayers heard it also, and likewise the false priests, and the mighty men of war, who were a defense unto the capitalists; and when they heard they trembled exceedingly, so that their knees smote together, and they said one to another: "It is the end of us."

Howbeit, there were certain true priests of the living God who would not prophesy for the capitalists, but had compassion on the people, and when they heard the shouting of the people and what they said, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy, and gave thanks to God because of the deliverance.

And the people went and did all of the things that were told them of the agitators to do. And it came to pass as the agitators had said, even according to all

their words. And there was no more any thirst in that land, neither any that was ahungered, nor naked, nor cold, nor in any manner of want; and every man said unto his fellow, "My brother," and every woman said unto her companion, "My sister," and so were they with one another, as brethren and sisters which do dwell together in unity. And the blessings of God rested upon that land forever.



"It is the end of us."



## THE CIVILIZED MONKEYS.

By Fred D. Warren.

A great traveler went to Africa. He penetrated far into the Interior where the foot of Civilized Man had never before left its imprint. He found a tribe of Monkeys contentedly living on the things which Nature had provided in abundance.

Each Monk gathered what he needed, and his Neighbors did the same—and there was none that lacked. The Man was surprised at the ignorance of these simple-minded creatures, and he concluded to give them a few lessons in Political Economy. He called together several of the Brightest Looking Fellows, and unfolded to them his Plan to Live Without Work.

“In my country we do not gather the fruits of the Field and Forest—others do that for us.”

“How so?” inquired one.

The man, lowering his voice, gave his audience of Select Persons the Secret. On the following day, before the rest of the tribe were astir, the Select Few,

under the guidance of the Man, took possession of the Forest and the Cocoanut Groves. When the other Monkeys came forth to partake of the Morning Repast the Manager of the New Company stepped forward and said:

“Dear Fellow Monks, it has seemed best that we (indicating the Select Few) should take possession of the Land and the Cocoanut Groves. We have, however, decided to give you all work, for which we will pay you Wages, so that none may lack for food,” and, with a pleasant smile and a kindly twinkle in his eye, he explained the Scheme of Civilization which the Great White Man had brought with him.

The other Monkeys seemed well pleased with this arrangement—for was it not a step toward Civilization?—and went to work with light hearts and willing hands, gathering the fruit of the trees. One-half the nuts picked were turned over to the new Owners, while the other half was retained by the working Monkeys as their Wages. In a short time the members of the Company were in possession of all the nuts they could eat, and having need of no more a notice was posted by the Manager, stating that operations would cease for the present,

and that the Workers could take a vacation.

Presently they became hungry and would have plucked of the fruit of the Trees, but the Manager said: "Nay, when we have work for you to do you can gather the fruit for us and we will give you a part of it as your wages. But see, we have all we need for some time to come, and it will not be necessary to resume operations yet."

Though the trees were laden with nuts, and the Monkeys were willing to work, the Manager could not be prevailed upon to resume operations—because there was a surplus on hand.

A consultation was held, and one of the Monkeys—more rebellious than the rest—openly advocated taking possession of the Grove and satisfying their needs, saying they had as much right to the fruit as the pretended Owners.

This seemed good in the sight of some, but others shook their heads and said that it was not the way of Civilization—that they should wait until times "picked up." Others (those who had received favors from the Company) said that those now without nuts should have saved from their supply while at work, so that when the company no longer

needed them they would not be in want.

As the Monkeys got hungrier the grumbling became louder. To their untutored minds it seemed ridiculous that they should be hungry while the Cocoanuts rotted on the ground. After a time many Good and Conservative Monkeys openly advocated taking possession of the Grove and supplying their needs as they did in the days before Civilization.

And so it was decided.

The Monkeys in a body went to the Manager and demanded of him the keys to the Grove, and the Manager was much afraid at this outcry among the people, but his appeal to observe the "law"—the law made by the Select Few, under which they took as their private property that which was intended for All—was of no avail. The Monkeys possessed themselves of the Grove and the Fruit. There was plenty for All, including the Manager and his former Friends—but they were invited to do their share of work, which they did, as no one else would gather for them.

QUESTION—ARE WE AS WISE  
AS THE MONKEYS?

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