

The Human Needs of Labor, though his subsistence minimum worked out at a figure which would have horrified the committee. In practice matters are not so simple. For one thing, there is the familiar vagueness of the word "subsistence:" no one has ever been able to say what it ought to include, and it is not probable that anyone ever will. The conception is so vague as to be almost worthless as a guide to action. For another thing, that vague conception is impossible often to apply in practice. In the first trade in which a board was established—the making of light chains—many women were getting before the board was set up five to seven shillings a week. A very moderate estimate of "subsistence" would have trebled their wages. If that standard had been applied at once, instead of being approached (as was done in fact) by stages reached over a period of years, the effect would have been wide-spread unemployment. If, finally, the minimum wage which a trade can afford is in excess of the "subsistence" level, why on earth should not the workers be protected by the state in the enjoyment of it? It is no more hardship to an employer in a thriving industry to be under a legal obligation to pay a minimum of three pounds than it is for an employer in a trade which just struggles on to be obliged to pay not less than thirty shillings, and an industrial policy based on the idea that there is a difference is illogical. The statement that to compel the former to toe the line "is an oppressive use of the power of the

State" is metaphysics such as practical men are fond of introducing to help them out of a difficulty, and bad metaphysics at that.

The fact is, it may be suggested, that the whole attempt to confine the legal minimum wage to supposedly "sweated" trades and workers is based on an illusion. Social reform in England and perhaps everywhere, being more sentimental than logical, always begins by protesting that it will deal only with the crying abuses and the notorious scandals, and protesting that nothing will induce it to go beyond that. The factory acts—applied first to pauper children in cotton mills, then to all children in the textile trades, then to women and children in the textile trades, then to women and children in all factories and workshops—began in precisely the same way. But once launched, they acquired a momentum which carried them over the greater part of the field of industry. Minimum wage legislation has already run precisely the same course in Australia. It will run it in England, whatever hedges Committees of Enquiry may try to erect. What will be remembered ten years hence, it may be prophesied, will be, not the amendments which this latest committee has proposed, but the general endorsement of the system. In the meantime, its report, and still more the evidence which it collected, are on record, and may be of some small service to inquirers and reformers in other countries.

R. H. TAWNEY.

## Desert's Edge

**I**T is an old story that East is East and West is West, that the twain shall never meet, and that the difference is more fundamental than subway versus camel, sky-scraper and harem, factories, universities and battle-cruisers on our side, and mosques and temple dancers on the other. East and West, we say, approach life from different angles. In the East, for instance, people actually overthrow their rulers if trade is dull or a long drought kills the crops; they hold their rulers accountable for the play of economic forces and the beneficence of nature. We should call it voting on the issue of the full dinner pail. Then these strange people of the East persist in overcrowding; with all outdoors to spare, two million of them pack themselves into a plot of ground not large enough for a tenth that many. That is because of the traditional short-sightedness of the East. Its people haven't the instinct for order-

liness that would enable them to plan ahead—or, having misplanned, the intellectual courage to grapple with the slum and tenement. And how do they celebrate their precious holidays, these singular Asiatic people? They watch priests beating kettle-drums or flying dragon-kites. They don't seem able to create their own recreations, or participate in those that are created for them. They would be left stranded, without the priests to think up games for them. A handful of actors stage the sport. They never flock in forty thousands to watch a baseball game.

Syria and Palestine are only on the fringe of Asia; but I have begun to doubt that byword East is East. There is a gulf, no doubt, between the East and West. Is it a gulf as wide as we create sometimes, to reassure ourselves that here is a quaint continent in need of half-mystical inter-

pretation and a guiding hand? Especially a guiding hand.

## II.

A latticed window opens, the curtains rustle, and the Veiled Lady of the East looks down into the sunny street, and sighs. . . . She has been doing that for years, and always with success, for the veiled eastern lady means Romance. Our novelists exploit her. She haunts our drama. The movies could not do without her. She lures restless old men who detest travel into reading books about it. She dances at the county fair. A tawdry picture of her sells a box of cigarettes. Before her billboard version the grocer's boy stands spell-bound. She is the product of the eastern world; but you must go west to find her empire. The East is used to her.

The West is not. And that makes the difference. To us she is mystery and forbidden fruit. We disassociate her from the drudgery of life. The veiled lady of the East belongs to palaces and peacock feathers. We never envisage her bent over the week's wash or frying fish.

Yet drudgery is more often hers than peacock feathers. She sweeps and cooks and sweeps again, for a spouse who regards her placidly from one meal-time to another. She is a drudge without even the modest compensation of movies in the evening or a novel of life among the upper classes. She is a slave to ignorance and a slave to marriage. She is centuries out of date.

I review these facts, and go to see my friend Abu Hussein. In the garden his wife passes me. I have seen her here before, but I have never seen her face. I am inclined to think, however, that if she raised her veil I'd see the image of my own Aunt Molly. There would be no fascination in that hidden face. It would be genial, ruddy, middle-aged. But she passes me in the garden; two eyes smile at me through a veil; and because I am a novice all the glamor of the East goes with her.

## III.

There is something fine about a Moslem mosque. Often it starts with a great court of pillars, fountain in the centre, blue sky overhead. Then the mosque itself: Byzantine domes on four plain pillars, a brighter sun than any northern temple ever catches, streaming in through windows opened wide. No niches holding idols, no holy of holies barred to laymen. No Buddhist prayer-wheel, Shinto fox, or twelve-armed Brahmin god. No saint in bronze, no relic from the Holy Land, of the sort that here and there a Christian

church displays, credited with supernatural power, prayed to in all reverence. Nothing at all save space and light and emptiness. Plain walls, high ceiling, and bare floor. . . . In one respect Mohammed has been fortunate. To be sure, his religion clings passionately to archaic standards. It enslaves women. It prostitutes education to the mere memorization of outworn classics. But at least Mohammed keeps his temples as he wanted them. Unscarred by superstition, they remain as simple and straightforward as they were when the Prophet spread his faith across the desert.

## IV.

There are two Jerusalems. One rises within the other, a store-house for the pilgrims built amid the minarets and mosques.

At first this inner city seems too awful to be real. That spot which tradition marks as Calvary may once have been a hill; today a rambling temple covers it, sheltering half a dozen hostile sects who crucify wax Christs, boast the superior sanctity each of its own bit of ground, and quarrel over rights and privileges so spiritedly that here, where legend says the first Christian died, a neutral Moslem watchman has often had to be entrusted with the key. This is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Outside, the Via Dolorosa leads across the city, marked with twelve marble slabs for Christ's twelve resting-places, lined with shrines displaying crowns of thorns and Roman chains. The Garden of Gethsemane, no longer a place of shelter from the hardness of the world, blooms as a formal garden in French style. Behind its trim hedges, "beneath the tree where Christ sat," pilgrims snap each other with their cameras.

All this has happened naturally enough. We are descendants of the monkeys, and we make a virtue of museums. No place is too awe-inspiring for us. If we could reach Valhalla one of our first acts would be to put umbrella-stands inside its doorways. Jerusalem has fallen to the showman. Inevitably this eastern city has become the western pilgrim's happy hunting ground.

## V.

In the Holy City there's a rock where God is going to sit on Judgment Day. The legends of three faiths agree to that. It belongs to the Mohammedans, who have built a blue-tiled mosque above it. But the rock itself is revered by Jews and Christians too.

For here, on the top of Mount Moriah, more than one miracle in the Scriptures was performed. And here, praying beneath an overhanging shaft of stone, Mohammed on his way to heaven bumped his head. Any good Mohammedan can show you the very spot. It is as unmistakable as a shell-pit. Trust the Moslem to have documentary proof, where Jew and Christian have to go on faith.

The Rock is like The Flag. It does not change by changing hands. But in a moment of excitement, different people invoke its prestige differently, to suit their own intentions. It means "Join the League" or "No Super-Government." "Intervention" or "Stay Out." That is one use we make of flags and George Washingtons and of words like "honor," "justice" and "necessity." Given a focal point where legend and emotion gather, and men will make its meaning what they choose. That is what has happened to this Rock.

## VI.

From the hills, the valley of the Jordan seems a narrow rainbow: farthest off, the lilac of the desert bad-lands, then the purple of the valley and its trees, then the yellow of the sand, nearer still the dark brown of these tarnished hills from whose crests you see the river. Halfway to the Jordan the mud huts of Jericho gather dismally around a dogged spring. Occasionally a carriage-load of pilgrims rattles through its scorching streets, on their way to fill a flask with holy water.

The holiest shrines are often the most distant ones. There's Mecca, for the Moslem, five hundred miles of sand and blistering sun. There is Amernath for the Hindu, first abode of great god Siva—off behind the mountains in the North. And for the Christian here's the Jordan, halfway round the world from where two hundred million Christians live.

Are places holy because they are hard to get to?

There's adventure to be had, in striking from the highway. There's a joy of achievement in travelling rough roads, no matter toward what goal they lead. There's a satisfaction, telling tales of places other people haven't seen. There's an aura of charm still possible about a distant shrine, that might vanish if you brought it nearer home. Put Mecca on a trans-Arabian air-line, within three hours of Bagdad and Damascus, and it might lose its pilgrims. Move the Jordan to Nebraska, and within a week Congress would vote funds for dredging it.

I do not know whether the Esquimo has either god or prophet. But if he is a religious man an

iceberg eighty miles at sea, ringed with arctic whirlpools, is probably his most sacred shrine.

## VII.

For five miles, to the traveller coming either north or south, ancient Tyre lies ahead like a torpedo boat destroyer anchored off the coast. Not until the last moment does the low peninsula come in sight that connects it with the mainland. Rather it seems to be an island. And in fact it was one, until Alexander marched along, besieged the place for seven months, and finally built an embankment that his troops might storm the city.

Over and over again in history Tyre has been besieged and conquered. Alexander sold thirty thousand of its people into slavery. Romans and Arabs stormed it. Egyptians plundered it. Godfrey of Bouillon marched the first Crusaders through it. Saladin took it away from the Crusaders. And the Turks took it away from Saladin's successors. It has been bombarded, sacked, and pulled to pieces. Its people have been conquered and carried into exile. After each attack it rallied; even recovered part measure of its former glory. But there was one great conqueror it could not hold out against. And he was the explorer, opening new trade routes into Asia.

Economic isolation accomplished what armies had never yet been able to achieve. Tyre lost its hold on life. Its commerce dwindled. A squalid village took the place of that imperial city-state which founded Carthage. If you would do your enemy in, try economics. Boycott is mightier than the sword.

Alexander's embankment is still there. The road is wider now. On both sides of the embankment the tides have slowly heaped up sand. Within the memory of ten generations no other civic improvement has been made in Tyre.

## VIII.

I look at Tyre, and conclude that life has changed more in the time between my grandfather and me than it changed in all the years between my grandfather and the first high-priest of Tyre.

That is overstressing it. But how much? Neither my grandfather nor the high-priest ever saw, or dreamed there could exist, such things as radio stations, monoplanes, type-setting machines, woman suffrage, 62-mile cannon, moving pictures, psycho-analysts and billion dollar budgets. Things basic to life, like human passions, may take a million years to change. But things that can alter life profoundly, the instruments of civilization, have changed with lightning speed. Today an idea flits



as easily from Boston to Calcutta as it used to go from grandfather on the porch to grandmother in the kitchen.

Not so long before my grandfather, nearly every community raised its own food, tanned its own leather, spun its own cloth. People lived in clusters. And the clusters were none too closely linked together. Now and then someone rode in, with news that the King of England had died seventeen weeks come Friday.

And today? If at two o'clock on Thursday afternoon the King of England appears upon the palace steps with trousers seams pressed down the sides, every village in America reads about it Thursday evening. "News" interlocks the world. So do steamships and investments. Communities no longer support themselves. They make buttons or electric lights—and live on food produced by processes of which they have no understanding, in a part of the world they've never seen. The twentieth century world is a world of perilous concentration, of interlocking interests, of desperate specialization. It is a new game. And part of the time we play it with old rules made in Tyre.

#### IX.

Tyre almost antedates the flood; but Tyre is a mere parvenu, an afterthought, when you com-

pare it with Damascus. For Damascus was old, the legend says, when all the world was young. It is the oldest city that still flourishes. Through its gates have marched Jeroboam and King David, Alexander and the Roman Pompey, Hûlagû and Timurlane. It has played many rôles. It has been the arsenal of Saladin, the papal city of the Moslem Caliphs, the booty of the Chosen People. Across it runs "The Street Called Straight," where Bedouins drive their bargains with the merchants.

Damascus is a place to crystallize impressions. It shows the price that Syria and Palestine have paid, for lying in the path of conquerors, the blend of laissez-faire and persistence that holds them back and keeps them going, the archaic code that still governs women, failure to grasp the magic opportunity of schools, pluck in the face of almost universal hardship, the debt both eastern and western civilization owe to one small stony hillside that produced three world religions. . . . From the hilltops that look upon Damascus, there is desert on all sides. It is a gray city, with countless minarets like pins stuck hit-or-miss in some gray cushion. Here and there a lean sliver of the desert thrusts itself into the city's flank. Each year it pushes farther. You think of other cities in this Arabian waste; of passions, dreams, and warlords, long since swallowed by the creeping sands.

CHARLES MERZ.

## The Psychology of Delinquency

THERE is in the Dresden gallery a charming study of the repentant Magdalen. The warm afternoon light falls over a nude recumbent figure and illumines the pages of a wide-open book in which the lovely penitent is reading. It is Scripture of course; perhaps the author is St. Paul. In any case, she is completely absorbed in the contents of her volume for which she seems to consider the world well lost. The painting makes a unique impression and suggests dramatic contrasts: the lady has repented of her wickedness and is now engaged in brain-work; she has renounced the flesh and embraced the spirit; once she was bad but now she is good. It is the combination of a glamorous past with a studious present which has stimulated the painter's imagination and animated his brush. If he rather naïvely emphasizes the sensuous aspects of his subject, that is something which is inherent in his art as well as in his point of view.

This romantic halo was conferred by the same Christian era which devised also for her the most

merciless and vindictive persecution. The hetaira was neither so idealized nor so degraded by the the public opinion of her age as was the Magdalen. The progress from Hellenic to Christian culture did not, as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Ellen Key have often pointed out, improve the position of women so uniformly and so generously as is commonly supposed. The emerging of a prostitute class coincided with the development of an anomalous morality officially stamped as Christian. The revenge of the outcasts was of course not lacking. It consisted partly in the propagation of venereal disease which is widely recognized and duly feared. But this is not the whole Nemesis of the situation, as too many of our social hygienists seem inclined to think. Perhaps more serious still is the propagation of a dissociated state of mind which, through being universally accepted as normal and moral, has come to be regarded as the special mark of sanity.