

ing for bourgeoisie and requisition 60,000 rubles. We build a school for children and ignorant adults and hire a good schoolmaster. Four lamps have been put in the school. One of us is charged with looking after them. He comes to school as if he came to learn something, and watches the lights to see if they are burning steadily. It's a good thing, and we are doing well with it. Everybody in the region round us is dreaming of the "cold light." It's handy, it's bright, and there is no danger of fire. There is only one thing

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about it that's bad and that is that you can't light your pipe at one of the lights!

And there's the story. The Siberians declare that electric power was brought into the villages by coöperative societies long before the Bolshéviki were ever heard of. Whatever the truth may be, it is a fact that they now have electricity in the country and that we are going to be spared those terrific losses caused by the fires which every year destroy hundreds of our villages.

THE SIGN

Over the apple-trees with their red load
 In world's-end orchards, over dark yew woods,
 O'er fires of sunset glassed in wizard streams,
 O'er mill and meadow of those farthest lands,
 Over the reapers, over the sere sails
 Of homing ships and every breaking wave,
 Over the haven and the entranced town,
 O'er hearths aflame with fir-trunks and fir-cones,
 Over the children playing in the streets,
 Over the harpers harping on the bridge,
 O'er lovers in their dream and their desire,
 There falls from the high heaven a subtle sense
 Of presage and a deep expectant hush,
 And the wise watchers know the time draws on
 And that amid the snows of that same year
 The earth will bear her longed-for perfect fruit.

The Nation

By R. L. G.

ECONOMICS, TRADE, AND FINANCE

THE INDICTMENT OF THE RICH

WE shall speak here of 'profits' in the widest sense of the word. We mean by it all incomes arising from economic activity which are not of the nature either of wages or salaries; and of such incomes we specially mean those which greatly exceed the average, and which place their recipients in the class commonly called 'the rich.' Ever since civilization began men have been numerous — some of them inspired by genuine philanthropic sympathy, some of them embittered by a personal sense of failure — who have denounced the rich, as though riches were necessarily a crime; and the substance of their accusations, however variously expressed, has always been substantially this, that every rich man must be a plunderer. Despite the fact that in the sacred books of the Jews wealth is often depicted as the special reward of righteousness, and Job is congratulated on getting his fortune back again, the cry, 'Woe to the rich,' was very familiar to the lips of the Hebrew prophets; and by many mediæval writers, though not by the greater schoolmen, the rich were constantly threatened, merely because they were rich, not so much with dispossession here, as with divine vengeance hereafter.

But it is in the modern world more especially that this indictment of the rich has assumed its most explicit and its most vindictive forms, and translated itself from the language of rhetoric into what claims to be that of social and economic science. This modern indictment of the rich is based on an interpretation of history and of eco-

nomic production, which may be said to have originated with Marx. According to the Marxian doctrine private riches have at different epochs been acquired by means which proximately or superficially differ. In the ancient world they were acquired by the possession of slaves. In the mediæval world they were acquired by the possession of statutory rights which enabled the noble classes to extort for their own benefit a tribute of so much labor from their various feudal inferiors. In the modern world they are acquired by the possession of the means of production, or, in other words, of capital, which enable the possessors to take a part of the product from the actual producers by whom the means of production are used. But beneath the disguise of all superficial changes, the process by which riches are acquired remains essentially the same. All private riches, in short, are so many abstractions from an aggregate of goods or commodities which the abstracting parties have played no part in producing, and which would always be produced somehow, whether these parties had any existence or no.

This view of the matter has come to be so widely prevalent that many persons half-consciously adopted it who would shrink from its logical consequences. They indulge in contrasts between 'the masses who make things, and the predatory rich whose one occupation is to seize them.' Such language occurs everywhere in the literature of social reform; but the clearest expression of its meaning is perhaps to be found, not in any words or phrases, but in the frontispiece of an English book drawn by a well-known artist, Mr.