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EDITORIAL

## SCRAWNY SPARTANS.

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**D**R. ANDREW CHRISTIAN, reputed to be a successful Back Bay, Boston, physician, is of the opinion that “the race is degenerating”; and the way to strengthen the race is “to put weak babies to death.”

Long, long ago, in the days of Sparta’s splendor something of this sort was practiced. Defective babies were not allowed to grow up and cumber the State. Sparta has come down the ages wrapt in the glory of her people. Is Dr. Andrew Christian a forerunning breath of Spartan days that are approaching? No; Dr. Andrew Christian is a scrawny Spartan. ’Tis the days of scrawny Spartanism, not the days of the Sparta of Lycurgus or Leonidas that America can await via the Dr. Andrew Christians.

Sparta started from below upward. She adjusted her social institutions in such a way as to produce healthy bodies, holding healthy minds. Sparta knew these were impossible without social wellbeing, and she established social wellbeing. The Spartan was born heir to the necessaries for a healthy life, and to the best opportunities for the training of body and mind that the commonwealth could furnish. Under these circumstances the deformed child was not attributable to a deformed State; the State was guiltless; being guiltless, the State might be justified to look upon the weakling baby as a freak of nature, and treat it accordingly. Otherwise do the Dr. Andrew Christians proceed.

The Dr. Andrew Christians stand on their heads. The social system upon which they dote is that of capitalism. So far from providing social wellbeing, capitalist society provides social distress. The overwhelming majority of the people either are forced to work unconscionably long, or are kept to the perhaps more unnerving task of looking for a job, or scheming to do others lest they be done by others. Woman labor increases, even in occupations that unsex the woman. The wages received are

paltry, and even that paltriness is rendered still more paltry by the food adulterations and adulterations of clothing that a “clever” capitalism promotes. Such national physical un-wellbeing can not choose but stunt the mind. Stunted of mind, drained of body, what else but an increase of weakling babies is to be expected? Nor is this all. The human race is one, tho’ economic distinction may divide us into capitalists and wage slaves. Never yet did a ruling class thrive whose roots sucked up parasite-like, the vitality of the class below. Nature avenges the outrage upon her. The ills bred of tyranny above stalk like specters in the halls of the tyrants and pollute these also. From capitalist economic oppression and want below, morbidness above is inseparable. Infanticide, direct and indirect, is a habitual practice among the rich. Wealth is insatiable. What the poor may thrive upon, happy, the rich dare not marry on, let alone bring forth children. Unnecessary to pursue the subject in all its details. Maternity is undermined. Weakling babies is the consequence. Differently from Sparta, capitalist society is responsible for these weaklings—and these, its brood, it would kill off, with the expectation of “strengthening the race”!

’Tis not the weakling babies, but capitalism that needs the hand of the executioner. ’Tis not the quack social doctors, but the well trained army of the class conscious proletariat that can stay the evil. ’Tis not the scrawny Dr. Andrew Christian Spartans, but the genuine Spartan heart and mind that the Times are urging to the work of saving the race.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

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