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EDITORIAL

## INVERTED POETRY.

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**B***radstreet's* is not gotten up in meter; it is all prose; and its prose, not infrequently, looks all the more prosaic because of its broadsides of statistical tables. Nevertheless, it is just one of these statistics-laden pages of *Bradstreet's* that suggests certain olden lyric poems of prophetic beauty—only that in the stances of *Bradstreet's* the poem is inverted.

Once upon a time, in days long gone by, poets of Greece and some of Italy, took, upon a certain matter, a flight that would go far to justify the popular reverence for the bard as a Seer. It was in the matter of the fabled Gardens of the Hesperides. The Gardens were pronounced paradisaical. As the name implies, they were located vaguely “towards the West.” The curtain that originally shut off that “West” lay at first just beyond the ken of the western coast of Greece. In the measure that the navigators pushed “to the West”, the curtain was likewise pushed further off: it came to be located about Southern Italy: it was then removed toward the Balearic Isles: it was again transferred to Spain. So soon as land, however charming, was discovered “to the West”, the still more charming Gardens of Hesperides were transferred still further away. They were seemingly inaccessible. Spain having been reached, the Gardens removed beyond, and under the name of Atlantis were sung about as lying beyond the Western horizon of the Atlantic Ocean—thus keeping alive the certainty that land lay West, until, with the discovery of America, the legend vanished. Such was the poetic conception that kept man’s eyes riveted upon and hopefully looking westward.

*Bradstreet's* recent issue containing the statistical tables that show the increasing number of failures of small concerns, and, accordingly, the increasing rush of small concerns towards their destruction, is truly an inverted picture of the poetic aspirations that inspired the poems on the Gardens of the Hesperides, and

later on Atlantis.

The fantasy that leads to results has noble and ennobling aspirations for its source: the lyric meter naturally becomes its vehicle of utterance; the fantasy, on the contrary, that has base and debasing aspirations for its source, leads to failure: the dissonance of capitalist “philosophy” is its appropriate vehicle of expression. In search of Gardens, where peace and plenty and human harmony reigned, man broadened his knowledge of his own planet and thus laid the foundation for the verification of his golden dreams; and the legends that kept his hopes alive thrilled with the music of rhythm. In search of the means to enslave its fellow-man, in search of the capital that will enable it to live upon the sweat of the brow of others, the small concern or the middle class rushes like a swarm of moths to its perdition; and fittingly enough the legend that keeps alive its hopes and lashes it on is the falsehood {of} capitalist theory.

*Bradstreet’s* statistics of failures and the poems of the Gardens of the Hesperides and of Atlantis are historic counterparts. They tell supplemental tales, though the one is poetry and the other poetry inverted.

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

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