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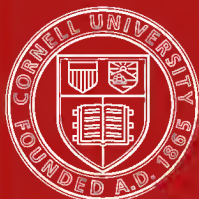
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THE PATTERN NATION

70.

James Carlton Young Esq^r
Loring Park
Minneapolis
Minnesota
United States,



I present this book,
with my best wishes
for his library, & for the
full success of his high
purpose in founding it.

H J Wrixon
Melbourne
Australia.

15 Decem^r - 1910

THE
PATTERN NATION
OR
SOCIALISM
ITS SOURCE, DRIFT, AND OUTCOME

BY

SIR HENRY WRIXON, K.C.

AUTHOR OF

'SOCIALISM,' 'NOTES ON A POLITICAL TOUR,' 'JACOB SHUMATE'

London

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

THE Author desires to acknowledge much favourable criticism of this book. A few words have been added to its Title, in order to announce its object. This, as is soon made plain to the reader, is to show, as a fact which we have to face, the onward course of Socialism up to its more advanced stages, when we may expect that peoples, taught by experience, will declare for freedom and thus save civilisation.

It has been objected to the book that it proclaims the danger which threatens us, but does not show how it is to be avoided; that it states the problem, but fails to give

the solution. The case, however, is this: a powerful party propose a certain course of action as the true remedy for the ills, social and industrial, which beset us. This party is gaining credence and influence among millions of the poor, who are eagerly looking forward to the time when the Socialists will hold the government in their own hands, and the people will enter upon the beneficent conditions of life which are promised under the new dispensation.

The object of *The Pattern Nation* is to show that this movement is a false one, a going back from freedom and true progress; that the reasons by which it is justified are fallacious, and that therefore the course which peoples are so confidently urged to take, they ought not to take. We deal with the day which is passing over us when we say that whatever we ought to do, we will make a mistake if we accept Socialism.

As for what follows, the view presented in these pages is that if we hold fast by freedom, we may reasonably expect that freedom will bring forth its own remedies for the difficulties which arise under it. Liberty, when it is applied to the industrial system, at times causes disorganisation, just as it does when it is given to the political system. But in both cases it is the creed of thoughtful men that the true remedy is not to go back to slavery, but to go forward to freedom. It is part of the argument of *The Pattern Nation* that it is a mistake to discard the free system without giving it a fair trial, and before its ability to meet the wants of the time, with the aid of the better social feelings which now prevail, has ever been effectually tested. It is no small thing, surely, if we can show that the course which we are now asked to take is the wrong one, even though

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we leave to the freemen of the future the duty of exploring for their own day the path of progress.

The present edition has been divided into chapters for the sake of greater clearness, and a few additions have been made to the text with the same object.

March 1907.

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THE PATTERN NATION

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

THERE is involved in the industrial and the political conditions of our Western civilisation a problem which, as yet, it scarcely realises, but which is being rapidly developed, and which in due time it must grapple with if, itself, it is to survive. The problem is, What will the poor do with the rich? It arises when, on the political side of life, lawful government by the majority of the people becomes an established fact, in vindication of the principle that men are equal; while the industrial and social side of life is still left to be controlled by methods that have for their foundation the fact that men are unequal, and

that their rewards in life are to be unequal also. At first sight it might seem that a lasting solution of these conflicting conditions could only be reached in one of two ways : either by some modification in politics of the principle that all men are to have equal power in government, or by doing away with the freedom of industry, owing to which men have such unequal lots in the world's struggle. And certainly, difficulty does arise from these two contrary principles being at work in carrying on the mingled life, political, industrial, and social, of the one people. Still, if each principle was confined in its operation to its own sphere, healthy progress could be continued indefinitely in the nation. But when it is proposed to use the power of the political side to enforce its own equality upon the social side, the problem that we speak of presents itself. And this is the outlook now before us.

When the majority of the people in the nations of the West come to have government in their own hands, and the worse-off class rule, Western civilisation will have to

choose between freedom, with the struggle of life, and Socialism, with promised ease and comfort. Democracy, the reign of the masses, under some form, is its destiny. Time must show what shape it will take. The two kinds of Democracy are essentially different. The free Democracy represents a progressive movement that is political in its scope and aims, and which, while pursuing the social amelioration of the people, seeks to do it through themselves, and has for its foundation principle, before all things necessary for true popular progress, freedom and the natural individuality of man. The other, which may be termed the Democracy of Socialism, cares for political power, and prizes it chiefly as an instrument by which to promote social equality, and the industrial relief of its citizens, which it holds can only be achieved by changing the present constitution of society, which it terms "capitalistic," and constituting it anew under the benevolent despotism of Socialism. To do this it is ready to give up personal liberty, as it finds that if you leave people free, you cannot keep them equal.

Thinking men have long ago believed and foretold that just such an issue must arise in our civilisation when, in the due process of political development, the power of the people to rule became a reality. It seems indeed to be in the nature of things that, given the conditions which we see setting in around us, such an issue must be developed. And some people have maintained that the crisis when it comes to a head can have only one outcome, namely, the destruction of the present social system. When the worse-off people, say they, the decisive majority in every community, do come to govern, they will no longer tolerate a state of things under which they remain poor, while a few are able to get upon their shoulders and become rich. Whatever may be the reasons that recommend such a system they will not, it was predicted, tolerate it for the day which is passing over them, upon which day and not upon future generations the sons of men generally centre their attention. The old crude way of regarding the outlook led people to expect a breaking up

of the institutions of social life by the violence of the many, displayed directly, or perhaps under revolutionary forms of political action.

American statesmen showed early in the last century that they realised what was involved in modern Democracy. Daniel Webster, one of the most thoughtful of them, says: "Universal suffrage could not long exist in a community where there was great inequality of property. The holders of estates would be obliged, in such a case, either in some way to restrain the right of suffrage or else such right of suffrage would, ere long, divide the property. In the nature of things those who have not property and see their neighbours possess much more than they think them to need, cannot be favourable to laws made for the protection of property. When this class becomes numerous it gets clamorous. It looks upon property as its prey and plunder."

Calhoun, who with Webster and Clay made up the trio of leading American statesmen in the middle of the last century, excused slavery on the ground that it enabled society to avoid the social revolution that was

threatening free society. He said, addressing the Senate of the United States as far back as 1837: "It is useless to disguise the fact; there is and always has been, in an advanced stage of wealth and civilisation, a conflict between labour and capital. . . . We have, in fact, but just entered that condition of society when the strength and durability of our political institutions are to be tested."

Burke considered that, under popular government, property would not be preserved unless it had predominant representation.

Mackintosh, after Burke the most philosophical of politicians, declares that our present social state is founded upon the two institutions of property and marriage, and that universal suffrage would "produce the same practical effects as if every man whose income was above a certain amount was excluded from the right of voting. It is of little moment to the proprietors whether they be disfranchised or doomed in every election to form a hopeless minority."

Macaulay, speaking in 1842 in the House of Commons, says emphatically: "My firm

conviction is that in our country universal suffrage is incompatible, not with this or that form of government, but with all forms of government, and with everything for the sake of which forms of government exist; that it is incompatible with property, and that it is consequently incompatible with civilisation."

Many years later, in his well-known letter to a friend in America, he repeats his belief that, under universal suffrage, "either the poor would plunder the rich and civilisation would perish, or order and prosperity would be saved by a strong military government and liberty would perish. . . . For with you the majority is the government, and has the rich, who are always a minority, absolutely at its mercy."

It is curious, if we look back 2200 years to the time of Aristotle, to find that acute observer saying much the same thing. He declares that the State should regulate everything well relating to property, since men say that around it arise all the difficulties of government.

It is already sufficiently clear that Macaulay's forecast will not be fulfilled in the manner that he anticipated. No violent tearing down of institutions in the advanced nations will take place, if for no better reason, because it will be quite unnecessary. The established government of a country has no need to tear down anything. When the mass of the people are so advanced as to have the power of the State, the lawful regular government, in their hands, they can by peaceful, constitutional methods do the same thing which Macaulay anticipates will be done with sudden violence. Those whom he regards as the mob in the streets will be the Sovereign on the throne, and with stronger right divine to rule as they please than any of their predecessors. They can, if such is their will, dispose of the property of the minority and distribute it by social methods, more or less gradual, among themselves. They can do it gently and quietly, and all for the public good, as they believe. It will be obvious to the improved and cultivated masses of the future that there would

be no sense in seizing by violence what they can take by law. You need not smash the safe open when you have got the key. It would be absurd to throw down the capitalist and tear the clothes from his back when you can in an orthodox manner take now his hat, then his coat, next his vest and other garments, till in time you leave him entirely *sans culotte*.

Accordingly now the old problem between the poor and the rich appears enveloped in the disquisitions of various learned and ingenious schools and theories—those of Marx, Lassalle, Engels, and lesser writers; of Socialists and semi-Socialists, Collectivists, of the friends of capitalistic transformation, of exploitation, of expropriation, of the play of new economic forces; of the coming to their own by the proletariat, and finally of the pleasant views of the half-and-half men who say, “We are all Socialists now,” without meaning it. Yet the issue stated by Macaulay in his direct style is still the real one in the great movement that we see going on through Western civilisation. It

is partly disguised by the many noble aspirations, and bright forecasts for a future happy social life for men, which accompany it ; and by ardent schemes for higher methods of industrial life, which all good men would rejoice to see realised. Certainly, many men of a good and even a noble type have been Socialists. Still, it is but a new manifestation of the old problem between the rich and the poor which fills so many pages of history ; only the question now is, not what the rich will do with the poor, but what the poor will do with the rich. And this does involve the fate of our present civilisation ; for if the Socialist scheme of life, which is clearly avowed by its authors, is carried out, our present form of civilisation must pass away. We are told we shall have a better one. All we can be sure of is, that we cannot maintain that one which we have now.

While such is the problem that our civilisation carries in its bosom, it is, as yet, only partially understood among us. In the realm even of speculation, men do not care to recognise the naked truth as to the real mean-

ing of many of the theories for social progress that are from time to time announced ; while, in practical affairs, the full development of the crisis is delayed for the simple reason that over the greater part of the Western world the people do not yet, in fact, govern. Universal suffrage has been conceded, in theory, as the foundation of government in England, and the United States, and over a part of Europe ; but over much of Europe there is no popular government, and even in England, the United States, and those European nations that nominally own its sway, government by the people is, as yet, not a real thing. Obstacles arising from various causes have delayed its advent.

In England the vast superstructure of regal, aristocratic, professional, and social influence has partly delayed, but partly also concealed its progress. After the reform of 1832 there was an understanding that the glittering superstructure shall be left undisturbed, and the high families have the public places, while the common people control the public policy. Royalty and aristocracy shed abroad a

glamour and a sense of stability which is illusory, and prevents people observing what is going forward. Very advanced things may be done by political or municipal bodies without censure and, indeed, apparently without attracting attention, so long as peers are members of them, who can afford to be Socialistic owing to the perennial distinction of high birth.

But the election of 1906 gives a forecast of what is coming. An Independent Labour and Labour-Socialist party of fifty-one members, in addition to an overwhelming Liberal majority, partly at least in accord with them, with two Cabinet Ministers announcing the doom of the House of Lords, is no slight advance from the rise of the popular movement in the nineteenth century, when its trusted leaders scouted the idea of a general suffrage and declared that universal suffrage in England would mean the extinction of liberty and civilisation. The full and direct power of numbers, however, under some Gladstone of the future, has yet to be realised. In Europe similar causes have had some

effect, but still more powerful factors are the vast military systems, in their nature the very opposite to Socialism, and the armed antagonism of nations. In Germany, for example, so crippled is the political system and so powerful is the military autocracy, that you cannot truly affirm the government to be a government by the people at all. In the United States, the general well-being, the dominance of two great parties, both of which are under the influence of the capitalist, the deadening influence of the "Machine," and the conservative restrictions contained in the Constitution, all modify the results that universal suffrage would otherwise produce. The Supreme Court there has often, and upon vital issues, prevented the popular will from being given effect to. The vast accumulation of wealth in that country in the past, and its use and misuse for political purposes, have so far presented a barrier to the mere rule of the majority and to the encroachments of the Socialist principle. Also, owing to special and temporary conditions, individualism and the principle of competition have been stronger

there than in any European country. When it has to sustain as many millions as Europe does, and the pressure of life penetrates its people, the charm of political relief for industrial ills will be as powerful with them as it is in other lands, and the popular vote will not be as easy to manipulate as it is at present. Even now one can see signs of a coming change there, and threatening signs too.

In these various nations the force of the people's will is at present deflected from the course it would naturally take, by the political and social medium which surrounds it and through which it has to operate. These countries, therefore, do not as yet show what the people would do if they were free to give effect to their real desires. They have yet to learn what government by universal suffrage means.

In some of the dependencies of Britain, as, for example, in New Zealand, a cheering spectacle is certainly presented to mankind. There the people do indeed rule, and all enjoy an easy life. But they are only a handful of well-to-do settlers, full of in-

dustrial energy, surrounded by fertile lands that could support millions, blessed by all the natural conditions of plenty, with no standing armies or costly establishments to maintain, spending freely on wages to labour, a vast revenue, raised by high taxation both of property and imports, and by profuse loans from abroad. Flocks and herds multiply on the wide and fertile prairies, the forest timber grows, the fish fill the rivers, the coal lies accumulated in its strata, the gold is distributed through its leads, and nature goes on producing wealth for man, irrespective of and not owing to his political systems. So long as quiet, everyday government is maintained, commerce continues, and the wool and frozen meat bring their value in the markets of the world, whatever may be the theories of their public men for dealing with social problems, which are indeed serious matters for the nations of Europe, but of which as yet they, in their infant community, have had no practical experience. The Socialist party do there indeed promulgate their views

with the same vehemence as they do in Europe; and a few of the more harmless of them are partially accepted. But the people are too well off to think seriously of the real thing. The mass of poverty, and the constant struggle for bread, which lead up to social revolution in old crowded nations, are wanting there. The few years of the early experience of this young, happy community can afford no light to the nations of Europe. It is in the old world, not the new, that the crisis will come. You might as well measure by the needs of a boy at school what his wants would be when a full-grown man, fighting his way in the world and having a family to provide for.

But in due time the people will come into their inheritance of political power, and then the question will present itself under conditions that are new in the world's history: What are the poor going to do with the rich?

This is by no means an inquiry merely as to the personal fortunes of the wealthy and the disposal of their money-bags. It is the concrete form in which the momentous issue

will present itself, whether the peoples of our time will hold fast by freedom, though linked to the struggle of life which it entails, or whether they will go along or drift along to the despotism and promised ease of Socialism. The conditions under which this issue presents itself are, as has been said, new in the world's history. For though in the past the poor have often assailed the rich and sought to curb their pretensions, yet never before will the world have seen established in great nations by law and constitution the regular settled government of the majority of the people—the wage-earners. The steam that used to find vent in explosions is now turned into the governing power of the social machinery. The word of our civilisation to the toiling millions is one man one vote, and let the majority rule. This means absolute sway to whoever can get hold of the majority of those toiling millions. In no civilisation of preceding ages and in no other civilisation of our own time has such an experiment been tried. Such a government in any case, and even if it had its energies

engaged, like other forms of government that have preceded it, with the broad political questions of national life, would show new tendencies in dealing with such questions, and have difficulties of its own to cope with. But the problem now before our civilisation would not be there. That problem arises when, in the course of popular progress, this government of the people takes it in hand to rectify those social ills that in one way or another have afflicted men under all forms of polity, and, in pursuance of this purpose, seeks to impose by political action on the industrial side of life that equality which it has already established by passing laws on its political side.

It is to be observed that this purpose of using the political power to direct the working of industrial life is also a new fact in Democracy. The Democracies of ancient times to which we most often refer, and in which we find many developments that are analogous to those of our own age, never entertained such a notion. The popular leaders of Greece and Rome, while they

sought to placate the people by distributing the lands among them, and by largesses of corn and money, never thought of this means of satisfying popular aspirations. The idea never occurred to them. Among the Athenians, when the State owned silver mines, the working of them was left to the private employer. When the erection of great buildings for public purposes at Athens was urged, we find, indeed, that sometimes the employment which would be thus given to the wage-earners was urged as a reason for undertaking the work. But this phase of the unemployed question among the Greeks is the nearest approach to the new industrial ideas of our time. The Romans made some main roads, but that was a matter of State, the roads being military roads. The experiment of constituting, in Democracies, the political government also the industrial "Boss," and thus commingling the daily work of politics and of industry, is a new departure of our age, and is, as far as we are aware, unknown in any previous period of man's history.

It is not to be denied that many of the aspirations which inspire the Socialist movement are humane and even noble—nothing less than to lift the masses once and for ever out of poverty, and to free them from the irksome, ceaseless struggle of life. Nothing can be higher than such an object, but what there is now need for men to understand and to realise is that to carry out this purpose on the lines which Socialism dictates we must give up freedom. We must come back to the old principles by which despotism has been supported, and under which it used to be maintained that liberty is not the chief design of good government, but that the right management and well-being of the people is; and that the claims of personal freedom must give way to this great primary purpose of human life. If the new policy prevail, the charm of freedom and personal independence will fade away before the glamour of a kindly collective despotism, which is to look after every citizen and direct him aright.

And here let us call to mind that for our

present purpose we are concerned only with the question, how far men can secure by political action and the new social system to be by law established, that amelioration in the lot of the masses which all desire to see brought about. We are not now dealing with the duties of property or the moral obligations of wealth. In the realm of morals, not alone all unjust, but all merely selfish use of wealth, stands condemned by first principles. The duty of the rich man is clear—to use his wealth with public spirit ; also to help the needy. He offends against the moral law not only if he makes an unprincipled use of his money, but also if he wastes it in that ostentatious display which may perhaps be considered to partake more of the nature of vulgarity than of crime. The obligations that wealth entails upon its owners have been always recognised as part of human duty. Like other human duties, it is imperfectly discharged by some. But what is now proposed goes beyond such considerations, and aims at bestowing beneficent conditions of life upon the poor by law and

State action ; and so we get outside moral obligations. It must not be supposed that those who question the feasibility of such a course are less earnest than others in insisting upon the moral duties, the purpose of which the new dispensation seeks to enforce by the authority of law. If, to be sure, by the legal system you can abolish both property and poverty, then there will also be an end of the duties and virtues belonging to either. But those who believe that this consummation is impossible do not only earnestly insist upon those duties as part of their system, but also look forward to the continued growth of a keener and higher sense of their obligations upon men.

Moral questions apart, our present inquiry is, what truth or reality is there in the prospects held out to us of this new industrial life, which, when it is established, is to remedy injustice by law and make us independent of the social virtues? It will be found that this Socialism, in many aspects so generous, yet rests upon principles which, if adopted, would not only destroy

freedom, but would lead to the decay of Western civilisation.

We will assume, for the purpose of our inquiry, that in the peoples of the advanced nations the political stages of the conflict between the many and the few have been passed through. The people have won in succession personal freedom, political freedom, political power, which when it becomes a fact means for them political domination. The government of the nation rests upon universal suffrage, one man one vote, perhaps also one woman one vote. The whole people, from the street to the mansion, cast their votes equally together into the ballot-box; the box is shaken, and out of it emerges, by the mandate of the majority, a government over all, lawful in its powers and irresistible in its force. Momentous fact! Let us contemplate it for a moment. It is, as we say, new in the history of man.

In the ancient world the bulk of the poor were slaves, and were voiceless in the political life of the nation. Those lofty declamations about freedom that still rouse

our enthusiasm sounding through the centuries, concerned only an upper class of people. The dull, menial drudgery of life was mostly done by slaves. In the Republic of Athens, out of a population of less than half a million, some 300,000 were slaves, and only about 25,000 electors. True, some among the free citizens were only labouring wage-earners, and there were, of course, the poor, so conflict was waged there too between the better-off and the worse-off. But how much more fundamental does this conflict become in our happier times, when all the slaves have become citizens; no longer mute toilers massed down by themselves near the base of the social pyramid, but each man, not only free himself, but with an equal voice with the rich man, in the rule of their common country? You walk down the street. Of the first hundred people you meet, eighty, say, come from cottages and are hurrying to their work in shop, yard, or factory. Twenty of the hundred come from mansions of larger or smaller size, on their way to offices, where they plan the operations

of labour, direct its services, and pay its wages. Many of the eighty, we will assume, earn enough to live with their families in fair comfort ; but their share of realised wealth is small, their capital is their labour ; they work each day and through each revolving year for their daily bread. The twenty possess property, upon which they appear to live at ease, and by which often they are able to provide for their children after them. But nevertheless, now, for the purpose of government, the highest purpose of a nation, all are equal. The votes of the hundred citizens are heaped together, and the voice of the majority shall direct the lives and dispose of the property of all, the twenty men from the mansions included. The factory hand, amidst thousands of fellow-employees, has as good a vote as the owner of the factory, who employs and pays them all,—nay, much better, for he and his fellows are combined by common interest, and as much dominate over their employer at the ballot-box as he dominates them in the factory. When this state of things becomes a

reality, a revolution has been effected, though it may take time to develop its full consequences. The transfer of power from the aristocracy to the middle classes was a political change, its transfer from the middle classes to the wage-earners is a social revolution.

It is plain that when the early reformers gave the vote to the masses they did not realise that this was the meaning of what they were doing. They thought that the poor would still continue to be guided by their better-off neighbours, and would choose their representatives from them. What was in their minds was that they and their class were to lead, while the people followed and obeyed. It does not seem to have occurred to them that before long the position would be reversed, that the people would lead, while it would be they and their class who would follow and obey.

When the reforming Duke of Bedford was congratulated upon his zeal for Parliamentary Reform and his disinterestedness in sacrificing his four close boroughs and two others which

were almost secure;—“Not so very disinterested,” was his reply, “for I doubt not that I should influence the return of a considerably greater number of members if the suffrage was universal.”

Mr. Gladstone, as late as 1877, writes, though in somewhat enigmatical words, that the new voter would “lean freely and confidently on his judgment of those who have superior opportunities, and have also, or are supposed to have, superior fitness of all kinds.”

The keen intellect of Alexander Hamilton, the statesman who planned the Constitution of the United States, led him to the conclusion which he expresses in the *Federalist*, that mechanics “are sensible that their habits of life have not been such as to give them those acquired endowments, without which, in a deliberative assembly, the greatest natural abilities are for the most part useless,” and that therefore they “will always be inclined, with few exceptions, to give their votes to merchants in preference to persons of their own professions or trades.”

Richard Cobden and John Bright express

much the same view. The forecasts of these eminent men are certainly not being fulfilled, as Democracy develops. Under it, the inherent power of numbers stands forth, revealing not alone the growth of new political ideals, but the development of a new force in public affairs, and a force compared with which previous forms of government were feeble. For a king or an aristocracy was always more or less dependent upon the masses; but there is nothing outside or beyond popular rule to hold it in check. You cannot appeal to the people against themselves. It is the absolutism of the past, reappearing under a popular guise, but with enhanced powers and resting upon broader foundations. Nor is any other form of government possible for our civilisation, till Democracy has run its course and fulfilled its mission. We sometimes hear surprise expressed at this new apparition,—the power of the masses, and the changes which it works in the older ideas and methods of politics. But why?

If you take a class of men of high birth

and large possessions and give to them the rule of the country, a certain kind of government will then be established, with social surroundings and a public sentiment suitable to it. If this aristocratic rule is abolished, and power goes to the middle classes, so that the Legislature is composed of professional men, tradesmen, and small freeholders, you have another form of government, and one different from that of the aristocrats, with its own merits and defects, and also with a public sentiment that is in accordance with its ideas. But if now you pass by both the aristocrats and the middle class, and give government to the mass of the people, so that the supreme power rests in the hands of the artisans, the labourers, and the wage-earners generally, you again get a government that has merits and defects of its own, but certainly one that is wholly different from the other two, and which also will have aspirations peculiar to itself, and a social surrounding and a public opinion of its own, loudly voiced in a people's press. You have no longer the elegant tone of the drawing-room of the social edifice, nor

yet the business surroundings of the office floor. You are right down among the crowd in the street, and it is with their pressing needs and eager impulses that you have to reckon. Is it any wonder if we find the atmosphere changed, and that the new power does things, thinks thoughts, and displays tendencies which were unknown under the two other dynasties? We are not now considering the advantages or the disadvantages of any of these forms of government. We only ask attention to the profound difference between them, but particularly between that of the wage-earners and that of the wage-payers.

What has prevented this difference from being more fully developed is the fact, which we have already called attention to, that so far there has been a good deal of make-believe about the so-called rule of the people. When it does become a fact, principles, interests, theories, prejudices that were all powerful under aristocratic or middle-class rule disappear by general consent, and in their place come quite other ideals and

interests, and prejudices too, which are suited to the new Sovereign. What takes place is not adequately described by the phrases which at times are used in political disquisitions. "Government by public opinion," "government by the whole people for the whole people," "the evolution of the nation's voice"; these, and phrases such as these, express a truth, but not the whole truth of the matter. No more does the exhortation that advanced public men sometimes proffer to their weaker brethren,—to cease trying to mop back the tide with the proverbial broom, and to come forward and direct it. The tide will not be directed by the politicians; it will come in, in its own way, and float the politicians along with it. They can ride on the tide, certainly, but only so long as they float with it. Old phrases remain, but they mean different things from what they did mean. Thus the expression, "government by public opinion," when we hear it to-day, does not describe the same authority that it used to describe, and people are misled who go on with their speculations as if it

did. A century ago England waged a life-and-death struggle against Napoleon for twenty-two long, strenuous years, till she laid her enemy in the dust at Waterloo. The "public opinion" of England steadily supported the government in that contest, and also in sternly suppressing all internal restlessness during its continuance. Difficulties and reverses only intensified its resolution. At that time public opinion in England rested on the middle classes. Without its support (whether wisely or foolishly given, does not matter for our argument) the war could never have been carried through. But would the "public opinion of England" do the same thing now? Certainly not. For it is a different kind of power from what it was, and would act in a different way. England stands where she did from 1793 to 1815, and the people of England are the brave people they were then, but the public opinion which rules the land now is as different from the public opinion which ruled it then as her Prime Ministers now are different from Mr. Pitt. They may be better

men, men more suited to the times, but they are not the same kind of men.

No; we must understand that when the majority do rule, what is established is a government of the wage-earners, and one which as much takes its tone and colour from them as an autocratic government takes its from the autocrat, an aristocratic from the aristocracy, or a middle-class government from the shopkeepers. This domination of the wage-earners will be the great fact of our age. In due time it will be uniform in its effect over our civilisation. The idea that some Western peoples will accept it and some reject it, owing to racial and other differences, will prove imaginary. For the wants, the grievances, and the objects of the masses are substantially the same in all our Western peoples; and the differences in nationality will be found less potent in dividing them, than will the community of feeling and needs among the poor be in uniting them. There will soon be a sameness in the people's politics the Western world over. The wage-earners are all of one brotherhood.

But though the people must rule, and though the people's rule will evidently be something different from what the early reformers imagined, yet if politics continued to be truly political in their scope, and concerned mainly with national affairs and interests that are common to all classes, there still might be considerable community of action between the different classes of the people ; and a sympathetic purpose might be developed between the worse-off and the better-off in their political action dealing with matters of public and general concern. If, however, our Democracy turns aside to grasp Socialism, then the forecasts of those eminent men to whom we have referred will be not only unfulfilled but reversed. For then the main work of politics, the work that will come home to men's bosoms and businesses, will be the task of regulating the industrial side of life and correcting the inequalities of fortune. Under this latter style of Democracy, the Socialistic, new conditions of national life will be developed. Under it no people can be

one united people. They will be sharply divided into two, the well-off and the worse-off, by the very purpose of the new departure, which is to upset the system under which at present the national wealth is distributed, and to enforce by political action what is thought to be a more just one. What the mass of the people are to gain by the redistribution, the few are to lose.

One necessary consequence will be that the wealthy minority will be disfranchised as completely as if it were made a penal offence for them to vote. They will be voiceless at the ballot-box. Their wealth carries with it political ostracism. They may have influence outside the political machine—and inside it too, possibly—of an illegitimate kind. But they will have no direct voice in politics, since they are only an insignificant minority, and the main purpose of politics now marks them off from the great and permanent majority of the people, whose wrongs, it is considered, can only be righted at their expense. And under our political systems only the majority

at the polls is represented; the minority goes for nothing. Those who have directed the destinies both of England and of the United States have always scouted proposals for proportional representation. Thus the majority have not only all the government, but also all the representation in their hands. Whoever throws the highest number scoops the pool. Nor can there be any alternation of parties in their favour, owing to changes in public opinion, such as used to be the case under middle-class rule; since the majority are a constant and, for this purpose, a united party with one fixed object—namely, the social deliverance which is promised as the result of their political exertions, but the full fruition of which they find to be ever delayed, thus continuing indefinitely the need for their united action.

Not only will the wealthy minority be banished from the political arena, but, in the case we are contemplating, there would be nothing gained by their being there. Of what value in the Socialist Legislature would a few representatives of

the wealthy class be? Of as much value as the House of Lords has been, or will be, in resisting the advance of Socialism in England. They could effect nothing. Their opposition, coming from persons pleading for their own interests, would irritate without controlling, and would consolidate into antagonism views that before perhaps were wavering. Their mere opposition would give a good cry to the friends of the poor man, and show what to rally against; while their co-operation would embarrass and discredit tendencies of a wholesome kind, which natural causes might be developing from the rough conservatism of the masses themselves. Though thus impotent to stay anything, their action would tend to relieve the majority from that full sense of responsibility which ought to attach itself to the exercise of all absolute power. When popular government becomes a real thing, if it turns towards Socialism, consequences such as these will follow, and the better-off will cease to be a direct factor in politics.

For while the political domination of the

rich is compatible with some representation of the poor, the political domination of the poor, when Socialism prevails, means the extinction in politics of the rich. Nor is it in the tendency of things to mitigate this inequality. It is rather to intensify it.

But, in any case, in our time—this conflict time between Socialism and Freedom—it is clear that the Democracy must work out the problem by its own forces, and be preserved by such saving influences as can be evolved from the masses themselves. Whatever is going to happen, the old idea that the poor would follow the lead of the rich is disproved by experience. Freedom of industry, if it is to be maintained, must be maintained by the wage-earners themselves. For even if government remain national and political in its character, and the wealthy are still allowed a voice in it, yet it is with the majority—the poor—that the decision must rest. If we would understand what is now before us, we must realise that, as the French say, an event in affairs has happened. The people are the new

king, and changes, social as well as political, follow naturally from that fact.

One of these will be the growth of a people's public opinion. This will spring from the poor, but will not be confined to them. It will influence all men's thoughts, since it will represent the ideas and the tone of the established government of the age. Men conform to accomplished facts, and unconsciously mould their ideas to accord with what they see dominant around them. Praise follows power. People get accustomed to accept the ideas of their rulers and to think their thoughts. A Court atmosphere of make-believe and acquiescence surrounds all governing authority—popular or regal. Success makes converts. It is this phase of public opinion which secures for the postulates of Socialism respectful attention and sympathetic deliberation. A tone of thought spreads itself abroad, generated from the poor man's point of view, which will find reasons for favouring what he wants done, and being hostile to what he dislikes. A public man

may make the most severe remarks about the capitalist or the upper classes; and there is in every community some upper class. But if he spoke of the people in a similar fashion, he would not be prosecuted for sedition, as was the wont of kings, but he would be politically extinguished. The popular press will voice the ideas and wants of the masses. Statesmen, and not only Liberal statesmen but Conservative statesmen too, find that there is both security and ease in taking the popular view of questions. They cannot alter the course of the stream, and not only is it unprofitable, but it seems to be out of place to strive and splash against the current. Even the wise man warns us not to resist against the face of the mighty. It is always safe to make a concession to the stronger side. There may be reasons against it; but in practical politics votes are reasons too, and the question is, what the objections to any generous proposal will amount to at the determining test of the ballot-box. Thus, it is ever good business to announce some new

concession to popular demands, which at the very worst can always pose as a graceful surrender to the inevitable. But indeed as every question has two sides, there is ever a plausible case to be made out for any new (Liberal) economic proposal, especially when the governing tone of public feeling predisposes men to accept it. Thinking is so much a matter of volition.

Thus theories and schemes that under a middle-class rule would be regarded as too wild to require an answer, will be favourably entertained even by learned professors, and when they cannot be wholly accepted by public men, will still be discussed with all that care and respect that is due to a monarch's words. They are never bluntly dissented from as being obviously wrong or foolish; but objections are suggested, where one must make them, in a deferential manner, accompanied by protestations all the while, of the wisdom of the people's voice and the homage ever due to it. This style of public opinion is promoted by the fact that every-day politics

tend to become more a matter of will than of intellectual conclusions. Their function is to ascertain what the people's will is, and then to do it. Where and how this will is instructed and formed is not its business. Once ascertained, even if it is not the best thing intrinsically, it is the best thing to do practically.

We must not suppose that this spirit of submission to the ruling majority will be felt only by adroit time-servers. The same spirit of acquiescence, not merely in the commands but in the principles and the ideas of the sovereign power, has marked men, and worthy men too, even outside the political circle, under all forms of government. Hence came that reverence of most good men among our forefathers for kings, and their indignation against rebels, malcontents, and even dissenters, which made possible the stern laws against high treason and the persecution of dissenters. In the Life of Dr. Robert South, the eminent English divine, Prebendary of Westminster, and Canon of Christ Church, Oxford, we read that that learned ecclesiastic, in 1685, preached before

King Charles II. a sermon in which, discoursing on the bad consequences that often follow from apparently trivial beginnings, he exclaims: "Who that had beheld such a bankrupt, beggarly fellow as Cromwell first entering the Parliament House with a threadbare, torn cloak and a greasy hat (and perhaps neither of them paid for), could have suspected that in the space of a few years he should, by the murder of one king and the banishment of another, ascend the throne, be invested in the royal robes, and want nothing of the state of a king but the changing of his hat into a crown?"

His biographer continues: "On hearing this the King is said to have burst into a violent fit of laughter, and turning to Lord Rochester, to have exclaimed: 'Odds fish, Lory, your chaplain must be a bishop: therefore put me in mind at the next death.'"

In such terms did an educated, able, and worthy man speak of one of the greatest of Englishmen. And Robert South was no supple self-seeker; for he refused a bishopric

when the King offered him one. He was simply, like most other men, susceptible to the prevailing spirit of submission to the established authority in the midst of which he lived. His submission, no doubt, was enforced by the sanction of religion. He believed that the authority of the King was from God. And this spirit still remains in its essence, though changed in its expression, when the sovereignty of the people is established. A Divine authority is still held by the faithful to attend the people's will. It cannot be wrong ; it is impious to thwart it ; you are ever safe in conforming to it ; it must in the end prevail. When one man one vote becomes a fact, *Vox populi, vox Dei* is no longer a fiction. There is a *Jus divinum* for peoples as well as for kings.

And here let us say, though perhaps it is hardly necessary to do so, that because we call attention to the dangers which beset the new popular dispensation, it must not be thought that we forget the blessings which it confers. Governments in every age, and resting upon principles the most different,

have all been marked by defects of their own. Complaints by subjects of their rulers are the commonplace of history. And the best citizens have been those who tried to remedy evils, not those who complaisantly fell in with them. We only desire to make clear what are the real facts by which nations are now faced ; and it is the more needful to do this, because there are many people who either do not see them, or if they see them, will not face them.

All must rejoice at two at least of the results that follow from this uplifting of the poor. One is, that they will be cared for with a thoroughness and an earnestness that, such is the imperfection of mankind, they never would have been were it not that now even the self-interest of men prompts loyal efforts to improve their lot. The road to success in public life is opened only by their favour. This, we say, is a grand result. For of what value is it that a form of government be polished, intellectual, in many respects effective, if the mass of the people are neglected? And can any sort of

government be considered a failure if the mass of the people are the better for it? The weighty matter is to see that this good result is really secured, and is not dissipated amid the ferment of angry, but barren, class conflicts and visionary speculations that promise us much but which give us no sane or abiding conditions of human life. The other valuable result is that, under the people's rule, the people *are* governed in peace, and with such wisdom as each community may have at hand. This is a great thing in our times, when the only way of ruling the people is through themselves. You solve the question of how you are to govern the people by the people governing you. But there is a settled government. Thus far have things grown, that there is no other solid basis of human rule now left in our civilisation. Kings, autocrats, aristocracies, what is left of them but plumes and dynamite? Look at Russia. If peoples are not always wise, who in our time are wiser? We loyally pray for a long and successful reign for our new monarch; and we are not the less loyal if we

seek to remind him that, just as with his predecessors, he can only have this, if he acts with judgment. The Fates themselves could not prop him up if his dynasty were to be based upon illusions.

CHAPTER II

THE NEW KING

THE mass of the people, then, are the new king. It is a natural inquiry, what sort of person are we? What is the man in the street like, when you multiply him by millions? This is a question worth pondering over. Some say that when we reach the masses we are safe, and that in the voice of the whole people we find an answer to the old inquiry, "Where shall wisdom be found?" Others say that though the masses improve and knowledge spreads, yet political intelligence does not widen out as we might have expected, and that universal education does not do all that was promised in its name; since, being superficial, while it enables peoples to see evils more clearly, it does not

also teach how to see through them to their true remedy. Also it is the fact, as we all know, that even the best education no more ensures wisdom in politics than it does in religion or morals, since it cannot be relied upon to keep men in hand, once human impulses surge up in force, as they so emphatically do in politics. The personal element then comes in, and even the trained intellect, instead of being the director of our will, at times becomes its servant. It may even give us a false lead on to a wrong track, which would never have been discovered by plain good sense and honesty, as has more than once been shown by highly cultured aristocracies.

The truth upon this determining question brings with it both warning and consolation; and a warning and consolation that will be found to have a bearing upon the issue of the revolution of our industrial system which is now proposed to us. The question that here concerns us, it is to be observed, is not so much about the personal virtues of the people. All

who have been among the poor know of the good and kindly qualities that the hardships of life often evoke. But the point that claims our attention is not so much what the people are individually, but what they are and what they will do when they act politically, together. And the fact is, that a people may be socially advanced and intelligent and yet allow themselves to be represented by a political system that is upon a lower plane than they are on themselves; and under its influence may do things and sanction wrongs which, looking at them as individuals, you would never think they would do or sanction. The saving influence is to be found in the teachings of experience, which after a while cause the people to assert themselves, and to rise superior to mistakes; so that looking back for a period you find that, on the whole, progress is being made. But as to politics, they have never been a scrupulous department of human affairs, and you must be prepared for developments in the political arena which, looking at the people in their

homes, you would never expect. You find that they will support men and approve of methods in public matters that they would never accept for the regulation of their own private affairs. They will make a man a trustee for their country, whom they would on no account think of naming as a trustee for their children's property. For the private man is a different person from the political man; as may be realised by contemplating College professors at their lectures, and the same men when engaged in a heated University election; or by observing the charitable subscribers to an hospital divided by a contest between two popular medical candidates.

Further when government rests with the party that can secure a majority out of some millions of voters, it is obvious that this difference between the private man and the voting elector is more pronounced than ever, and that the personality of individual electors, and such virtues as they may possess, become an obscure quantity. Much, very much, then

depends upon the character of the political class who act for them and carry on the practical operations of politics. This class in modern Democracy have to work in a perplexing sphere, indeed, have to carry on daily government as efficiently as may be, while at the same time they satisfy the eager and often conflicting wants of the masses, and conform to the different phases of public opinion. They therefore must be judged with consideration by all who understand what a critical matter the government of advanced nations has become. And the political profession is one for which no preliminary qualification is required, which is ill-paid and precarious in its conditions, and the members of which are engaged in a constant struggle to find new proposals by which they can excite and secure to themselves the popular favour. In this struggle political parties, instead of fulfilling the function of statesmanship in catching up and embodying the nobler aspects of nationhood, at times appeal to lower interests and to the selfish instincts of men. And thus a people may be led to do politically

what we would not expect from them personally.

If we would assist our speculations by observation, let us look at the people of the United States. They may truly claim to be the most advanced eighty millions of men whom this age or any other age has seen. If intelligence in the masses could guard a nation from being misled, the history of the Union should present a sample page for other peoples. Education from the prairie school to the University ; literature dispersed abroad ; the pulpit, the press, the platform, experience in self-government for some generations, have all done their good work for America. As for the material conditions of their life, they were all favourable. Ample free land, no pauper masses or privileged classes, no standing army or costly establishments of State to maintain, no unsound institutions inherited from the past, injurious to continue, but dangerous perhaps to uproot ; blessed, to start with, with a fine Puritan strain in the national character, and left with a continent all to them-

selves, to take the straight road to a sound and happy national life. Seeing these things a century ago, generous men declared that the problem of popular government was solved in the United States of America; and they greeted the young and lucky nation with the ancient benediction, "May the gods grant you long life: as for all other blessings they are already in your grasp."

And they are a great and also a sagacious people. But have they avoided follies and abuses which, judging from the people themselves, we should not have expected? By no means. Except when they rouse themselves for some great question, they hand over their politics to the "Boss" and the "Machine," and so the political life of the people is lower than their intellectual and industrial life. Under the guidance of the political class, they have made false moves, and in some cases taken retrograde steps on the political highway. Thus, the political powers of the nation sanctioned slavery to the last, and continued to spread the influence of the curse over the Union.

The abolitionists were for a long time in politics a small discredited sect. Of the two great parties, one supported slavery directly, the other indirectly; for a time it appeared to be a well-established American institution. Certainly it is cheering to find that in the end the conscience of the people prevailed, and that slavery was abolished. But it was not the political government that did it. It was the civil war that brushed aside the politicians of all parties, one of the noblest of whom, Abraham Lincoln, offered to guarantee slavery to the South with the whole power of the State, if only they would remain in the Union. In regard to the Caucus plan of government and the Spoils system for appointing to the public service, this intelligent people have under the same guidance not only gone wrong, but have retrograded from the higher standard that their fathers, the founders of the Republic, set. Washington, when asked to appoint a political friend to a place for which he was not well fitted, rather than a political opponent who was

fitted, at once refused the friend, saying that his duty as President was to appoint the best man, even though he was a political opponent. Madison pronounced that a President who would make political appointments would deserve impeachment. Jefferson, the father of American Democracy, emphatically declares that the popular convention should be constituted so as to express the voice of the people themselves, and not that of office-holders and office-seekers.

The foolish Granger legislation that was made a party cry some years ago, the delusions and the dishonesty of the silver and currency proposals—such as compelling the government to buy and store silver that it would never want, in order to keep up the price—the insolent aggressions of wealth, the defiant lawlessness of the Trusts, together with the impotence of the government and the law to grapple with them, the corruption of the city governments, the indifference of the lawfully constituted authorities to the cruel lynching of negroes—at times innocent men—the industrial strikes which partake of

the nature of civil wars,—all these are phases of national life which we should expect and which would come naturally from a nation whose citizens could not read or write ; but which surprise us when they are done in the name of an advanced and intelligent people. They are not the fruits that we expect from the school, the press, the platform, and the long exercise of political rights and duties. It shows the difficulty of getting rid of human nature and its weaknesses by any methods of culture, or by experience in politics, and that we must not conclude that because a people are an advanced people, therefore their political action will necessarily be wise and just. It is plain that such a people may find themselves in the hands of the “ Boss ” and the Caucus, and resignedly come to regard this condition of things as the necessary state of every-day politics. Still all the time the American nation itself goes on growing in strength and enlightenment, with its vast religious and philanthropic energies, its wonderful, if too vehement, industrial system, its educational

work, both high in its standard and wide in its distribution, so that it may claim to be the most advanced in the world. And who does not look forward to the time when this leading people of our age will assert themselves in their national politics, and purge off from them those baser elements that have grown up around them?

But while this is the hope of thinking men for America's national future, it must be admitted that in one respect with them popular government is a distinct and confirmed failure—that is, where it directs municipal government, controls city and industrial works, and has the disposal of offices and valuable concessions connected with them, and generally is mixed up with enterprises out of which personal gain is to be got. When this, the most advanced Democracy on the earth, takes these in hand, the result is mismanagement and corruption, and this not in a few places, or for a time, but in all the great cities, and during the experience of the past half-century. When government by universal suffrage applies the

machinery of the popular vote to this sort of work, its nobler qualities disappear. No fact is more certain, and no men declare it more earnestly than do honest Americans themselves ; and there is no fact which it is more important for our present subject to inquire into and to weigh well.

If we look back a lifetime, we find Boss Tweed ruling and plundering New York, with venal judges, corrupt officials, and a hireling police. Constantinople was not under a more unprincipled government. In the impartial *North American Review* for October 1871 we read :—

“What is thus true of the city of New York is no less true of the State, and of many other States. In most of the States of the Union demagogues have persuaded the people that they are wise enough to choose a number of public officers, and that this is the most Democratic way, the way in which the people can exercise the most control over their affairs. But in fact it is the way in which the Caucus and the reign of political jobbers is perpetuated ; in which

the people stultify themselves and resign all real control over their affairs to a secret unofficial and self-seeking council of political managers; and in which able and honest men, who cannot be the creatures of such a conspiracy, are almost inevitably driven out of political life."

A few pages on we are told that "the Legislature had coolly handed over the property of the great city of New York to four exposed and convicted corruptionists, to do with it what they chose to do in a secret meeting."

If we pass on to our own day we find one who speaks with authority, Mr. Maurice Lowe, thus writing in a signed article in the *National Review* for April 1903:—

"Here again one notices the indifference of the people to the crimes of those whom they put in authority over them. The people of St. Louis knew that their city officials were in league with bribers, and that huge amounts of money were being improperly used. They simply shrugged their shoulders. Evidently the inhabitant of a great American city, New York, Phil-

adelphia, Chicago, St. Louis, Minneapolis, has come to the conclusion that he is bound to be robbed and despoiled by those he elects to office, and that it makes no difference which particular gang of thieves does the looting."

If we turn to the *London Times* for 26th August 1905 we learn that in Boston a man who was convicted of fraud and sent to gaol was, while serving his sentence, renominated and elected to the Board of Aldermen by a vote cast for him in all the wards of the city—"almost the largest vote obtained by any of the successful candidates, and a much larger vote than was cast for any candidate of the Good Government Association. A circular was sent to every elector during the contest, informing him that the candidate was a convicted criminal then in gaol." If we take up any American newspaper or magazine we are pretty sure to have similar facts put before us. For example, in *McClure's Magazine* for February 1905 the opening article is headed "Rhode Island: a State for Sale." In it we have a detailed account of the corruption of the

city governments. We are told: "In some towns the bribery takes place openly, is not called bribery, nor considered a serious matter. The money paid to the voter is spoken of as 'payment for his time.'"

Some pages on, in the same number, we find an incidental reference in another article, dealing with a different subject, to quite another part of the Union. "Springfield, Ohio, is one of the most prosperous of the smaller cities of the State. It is a beautiful town of about 41,000 people, fine streets, fine buildings, busy factories, churches, an imposing library. . . . If ever there was an example of good citizenship lying flat on its back, with political corruption squatting on its neck, that example may be found in Springfield, Ohio. And the worst feature of all is, that good citizenship there is apparently well satisfied and comfortable where it lies."

Lately we find the Public Prosecutor for New York declaring that the County Court Judges there, elected by the people, are corrupt.

So hopeless has the popular government

of cities been found, that in Washington itself it has been swept away and affairs handed over to three Commissioners, who are appointed by the President.

Why dwell on these unpleasant facts? Because in any inquiry the first thing is to learn what the facts are. And the fact about the people's government of our time is, that so long as it is concerned with national affairs it is only marked by infirmities such as must be expected in all peoples, and which the broad and patriotic purposes of national life tend to rectify. But when you turn on the Democratic system to the management of mercantile and industrial concerns, it misses its high function and the better element is exorcised out of it. This phase of popular government in any country will, when the system has time to work out to its natural results, be found to be industrially inefficient and politically demoralised. And this from the necessary operation of natural causes. For the great difficulty in all governments is to get the right men to work them. And this is not less so when the men are chosen

by the masses, voting through the Democratic machinery for elections, and influenced by all the artifices of the popular hustings. Even when the men so chosen are required only for great national duties, which themselves teach unselfishness, we still have to expect and to put up with the necessary imperfections of man. If we could suppose the case of having under any form of government wise and good men to work it, almost any form of government would do. The object of thinking men is to get as near to this result as is possible.

But when you employ this popular election by the masses to select men who are to manage the industrial and commercial side of life, to spend the public money on trade purposes, dispense lucrative contracts, grant valuable franchises, bestow "billets" among numerous and eager competitors, and generally to provide work and wages for the people, upon whom they themselves depend for their position, and perhaps for their living,—when you do this, you also do your best to get a low type

of rulers, not a high type, and to impair the character of the people themselves. And this, not owing to the wickedness of anybody in particular, but, as we have said, to the operation of obvious, natural, and necessary causes. An aristocracy providing for itself out of the public service is demoralising enough to any State ; still, the evil is confined to a few. When you extend this system of political outdoor relief to the people at large, you depart from the whole meaning and purpose of popular government. The elector, instead of being taken out of himself and taught to venerate himself as a trustee for his country, becomes absorbed in the struggle for his share in the good things going ; while the representative, who has to live too, forgets the general interests of the public—future perhaps as well as present—in satisfying the clamorous wants of the most active sections of his supporters. Politics, from being the work of looking after the nation, becomes the business of taking care of yourself. Instead of the statesman you have the “ Boss,” and instead of the elevating

spectacle of a people's election for the high purposes of national life, you have the debasing wire-pulling of the "Machine." This is shown in the United States only too clearly. There, the Spoils system has done injury enough to public politics. But in the city governments you have the Spoils without the politics at all. Different explanations are given of the secondary causes, as they may be termed, by which this result is brought about. It is the fault of the wealthy, of the demoralisation caused by the Civil War, of bad political methods, particularly of the system of rotation in office; finally, of the general indifference of the electors. We will not take upon us to say which of these explanations is the right one. It is enough for our instruction to know, which sadly we do, that all this does in fact happen when government by universal suffrage undertakes the control of the industrial affairs of the people. Nor is what we see a crude recent development which we might expect in time to work itself free from the early

mistakes of inexperience. It has prevailed now for generations, among a people long blessed with general education and all the experience of self-government. The same result will, in due time, be made equally plain in all countries, where you mix up politics with the direct personal gain of electors and elected. It will appear in a lurid light if, and when, the Democratic government undertakes the management of the Socialistic State.

In the United States, then, we see at once the strength and the weakness of the people's rule. Their municipal politics are a failure. Even as to their general, or what we might call their public politics, it cannot be said that they are on the same level as the nation itself, or that they show that growing enlightenment which we should expect from the political experience, the universal education, and the social improvement of the masses. But as a people they are the most advanced eighty millions on the globe. We may take them as a fair type of the progressive nations of the world. As good

as they, we may hope, will be the other peoples of the West, who will soon be king.

Such will be the man in the street, multiplied by millions. On the political side of life he rules. In it the principle is accepted as fundamental, that no man is to be regarded as superior to any other man. By laws that have been enacted, all are declared equal before the ballot-box, and the majority, the wage-earners, govern.

But how about the social and industrial side of life? In it, old nature's law still prevails, come down to us through the ages, under which, instead of one man being equal to another, the absolute inequality of men and the manifest superiority of some men to other men is the experience of mankind every day and all day. As a keen critic of human nature has said, we would soon realise this if only Nature had enabled us to see the differences in men's minds, as plainly as they appear in their bodies. From this it follows that if industry be left free, if the struggle of life is allowed, some men, a minority, will amass wealth and

thus not only have social superiority over the majority, but also have power over them in industrial life. The majority of people, not being able of themselves to direct their own industry or store up the capital that is necessary for its maintenance, find that they are dependent upon the few who are gifted with the qualities, some of them, perhaps, not very lovable, which enable them to perform the service to society, which must be undertaken by some one, of directing industry and also acting as reservoirs for wealth ; the stores of which being distributed and their employment directed by the captains of industry, enable its reproduction to be continually carried on. Here we come upon a principle that is not merely different from the ruling principle of the political side of life, but antagonistic to it ; the laws, habits, ideas, and atmosphere generally of the industrial world, being the direct opposite of those which prevail in the political world. The man who is the equal of another at the ballot-box is his servant in the factory, and the men who

serve in the factory are masters at the ballot-box. The two systems do not fit into one another. The nation is like a waggon drawn by two mules, whose instinct is to strain apart and each to haul the other to its own side of the road. But, as has been said, despite this incongruity, both could be worked together if, as in past time, the operation of the political system was confined to what are properly "politics," or the public affairs of the nation, while industrial and social life was left, generally, to the control of its own forces. If, however, the scope of politics is directed so as to include the management of the industrial side of life, with the purpose of there enforcing that equality which is so dearly prized on the political side of life, then we come directly upon that problem which Western civilisation must either solve or perish in the attempt to solve.

We are in the presence of a state of things which cannot be dealt with by vague optimistic forecasts of the time when men will be unselfish, or by adopting semi-Socialist courses (with indignant repudiation of the

complete scheme), as we see the half-hearted allies of Socialism sometimes do. This is not facing the situation. But the true Socialist does face it. His attitude is an instructive contrast to the irresolution of his opponents, —if they are his opponents. He declares frankly that political equality is a barren heritage if coupled with social dependence, and that political power is valuable indeed, but valuable because it is an effective weapon with which to fight the social battle. He avows that he intends to use his political power in order to destroy the system of free industry and place his system in its stead. On the issue thus raised the Western world will have in due time, as we have said, to make a choice. You cannot have the Socialist scheme and, at the same time, maintain our present system of civilisation. You may have either plan of regulating human society, but not both together, nor, for any length of time, in full-grown nations, a half-and-half system. If you maintain the freedom of industry and its reward, private property, you cannot have

the Socialist plan of life. But if you undermine the freedom of industry and the institution of property, you cannot get on without it. This much may be said, whether the Socialistic system is good or bad, and whether it is coming upon us or whether it is not. For it may be coming, and at the same time it may be a mistake. The history of man would not be the blurred page it is, if all his social movements had been under wise direction.

CHAPTER III

SOCIALISM

IT is important to observe that while the antagonism between the free system and the Socialist system is decisive, yet the friends of both may agree in the early stages of various methods of social amelioration ; which methods, however, are capable of having, as time goes on, a turn given to them that leads on direct to Socialism, by those who have from the first supported them for Socialist reasons. From this fact confusion arises, and indecision as regards the manner in which Socialism is regarded in its early stages. Owing to it the Socialists have the advantage of action being taken, with the consent of both parties to start with, and new projects adopted, but with widely

different designs, and which, according as they are worked out, will lead to widely different results. The friends of free industry support them to give present help to the poor and to enable them to work for themselves afterwards under the free system ; while the object of Socialism is so to shape methods of relief as to in time undermine the free system altogether. The desire to help the wage-earners is so strong that many men care little what lines are gone on for the present. Yet it all depends on what lines you do go on. Just as rails going out from a railway station appear for a while to lie together, but if you take the one set you will in the end be carried off to the east, and if the other to the west. This mingled resemblance and ambiguity in methods of social advancement is a great assistance to the earlier movements of Socialism, as it enables principles to be inaugurated under the shelter of philanthropy, which can in time be so worked as to be fatal to the system of freedom.

Thus, it is a natural part of the free

system that in any industrial crisis some State or municipal authority should be ready to assist in finding employment on proper conditions for those who, from no fault of their own, are out of work ; that the State should liberally help, as it does in Germany, to provide pensions for the old age of those wage-earners who make some small effort for themselves ; that vigorous municipal action should be taken, supported by the needful taxation of property, to carry out the conditions of health in the streets and the surroundings of the poor ; that the laws regulating the condition of factories should be made searching and effective,—these measures, and such as these, form part of the creed of every thoughtful friend of freedom. But now take these and impart to them a Socialist handling, and you arrive at some of the leading principles of that faith. You establish a system which takes it for granted that it is the duty of the State to find work for its people ; to provide all citizens with pensions in old age ; to fix hours of work and rates of wages in factories and at homes ; and under which it

is the duty of the County Councils to tax property, so many shillings in the pound, to improve the surroundings of the poor, with an understood reservation to take the remainder of the shillings when necessary. Or consider the case of employment under the State. All governments must have certain public departments in their own hands. But if first, for one reason and then another, you go on continuously adding to the number of industrial undertakings which the State is to manage, you are going on the direct road to the complete Socialist ideal, that the State should employ every one. Nay, take the obvious case of taxation, the fundamental right of all governments. What if the majority imposes taxes upon the minority, not to supply legitimate financial needs, but to promote Socialistic ends? No weapon could be more ready or more formidable. An Income Tax, exempting the majority themselves, and rising by graduated steps upon the few, could in a short time and in a quiet way effect a greater revolution and bring in Socialist conditions more effectually, than could all the

blood-stained insurrections of the poor against the rich in past times.

While, therefore, all parties join in the earlier stages of various projects for improving the conditions of industry and bettering the lot of the poor, there is a wide difference in the objects of those who promote them; and as they are worked out their purposes become conflicting. As far as the Socialist is concerned, his purpose, which at first often poses as humanitarian, soon develops into one mainly political. As he advances in power, no mere improvement in the condition of the poor would satisfy him, unless it was achieved by the displacement of the well-off. It is of the essence of his creed not alone to fill the hungry with good things, but to do this by emptying the rich. His enthusiasm may be inspired by benevolence, but it is not satisfied by that generous feeling. It can be satisfied only by a social revolution, which shall sacrifice those classes who have hitherto been, as he considers, "exploiting" the people. He renounces the statesman's task of trying to improve

the social state, as he finds it, for it is the constitution of the social state which he condemns.

When he gets into power, his true principles stand revealed, even though he may be in some happy young community, where there is no practical need for their operation. Nowhere is he more explicit in the declaration of his intentions than in some of the newly-settled dependencies of England, where all started equal, where most of the people are now well off, and where the small wealthy class are the ever-changing set of energetic citizens who for the time are better off than their neighbours, but whose children generally sink again into the crowd, in accordance with the principle of "three generations between shirt-sleeves." In much the same way, the loudest cry against the private ownership of land came from the United States, in the Single Tax theory of Henry George, where there have been no impediments to the free distribution of land, where the owners of land are numerous, and where, in quite recent times, the people's govern-

ment have sold and got the price for millions of acres, which the Henry George school proposed to confiscate.

There are other elements which go to create the confusion of thought with which Socialism is regarded; and which prevent people from realising the facts which are before them. It is an old and wise saying that truth comes more readily out of error than out of confusion. There are few subjects more surrounded with confusion than this of Socialism. Sometimes, no doubt, this is owing to the discreet reticence of its wary political friends, who naturally enough do not care to show their hand more than the present stage of the game requires. Sometimes it is owing to sympathetic misconception of facts that are plain enough of themselves. To illustrate the matter, we will take a few instances.

Some men draw a distinction between the different shades of Socialism, and will tell you that they are Socialists to the extent of removing disabilities and giving all men an equal chance. There is only

make-believe, not real difference from the free system, in this distinction. A hundred years ago there would have been weight in it. But now, in advanced countries, this open course for all is pretty well secured by the free system, and if anything more is needed to ensure it, the system of freedom is pledged to give it, as it is of the essence of that system to have all men to run the race upon their own merits. As a fact, most of the prizes in industrial life have, in those communities, for some generations gone to men who have worked their way up from the ranks of the very poor. Those who were better placed at the start have generally failed in the race and fallen back into the crowd. And when under the free system you abolish all class privilege, when you educate all, when you protect the rights of labour, when you exempt the poor from undue burdens, when you leave the course open for all to enter, you do all that you can do to give men an equal opportunity—*if* you are to leave them free to run the race at all. If you do leave them to run this race and the

best man to win, then you are not a Socialist, and no amount of clearing the course and giving all an equal chance will make you one.

The fact is, that when men speak of favouring the Socialism that is to give all an equal opportunity they use a phrase that is unmeaning, so long as you allow the struggle of life at all. It is this struggle that is aimed at by the Socialist. For though you provide that all men should start with equal opportunities, their further opportunities will soon become unequal, owing to the different abilities of men; and you would want to go on all their lives setting things right afresh, if you would make the equality of opportunity a continuing condition of life. You give an equal education to A and B, and start them in life with £1000 each. In a few years you find that A has lost his £1000, while B has turned his into £2000; and B's services are sought after, while nobody cares to employ A. After this, their opportunities are distinctly unequal, and they pass the rest of their respective lives in this unequal condition. And this is the general

state of men. What is really meant by this phrase is not merely giving people equal opportunities, which is the foundation of the free system, but keeping them equal afterwards. To accomplish this you must either alter human nature, or do away with the struggle of life, which reveals its unequal capabilities. The thorough Socialist is the logical man on the question. He is not troubled about equalising the conditions of the struggle, for he does away with the struggle altogether.

A haze is also often thrown over this subject by what is sometimes distinctly stated, and at other times taken for granted, that before the advanced ideal which Socialists propose can be realised, human nature must be considerably changed. Some men will tell you that they would not think of giving full effect to their theory until this change comes about. The mist of distance is invoked to shield their speculations; but their practical conduct, for the present, goes on as if the speculations were true. They go on taking steps towards

their goal, as if it were a matter of course that the change which they anticipate will take place in due time. How do they know that human nature will alter? Do they propose, when we have travelled their road to the Socialist state, that we are to turn back and revive the discredited free system, if we then find that human nature is not altering? What signs does man's nature show of altering now? Ceaseless change takes place in human affairs; constant improvement is going on in matters social, political, and industrial, owing to the growing general intelligence, and to our understanding better the questions that arise in those different branches of life. But the striking fact is, how little the fundamental conditions of human nature alter through it all. The chief thing, and the crucial fact for the Socialist scheme to face, the power of self-interest upon men, still remains the same as it ever was. It has the same effect upon men, whether singly or in masses, that it had at the dawn of history. It is still the main-spring of human nature. Despotic power,

too, which the new system demands, whether in the hands of one or of many, is still liable to the same temptations and is fruitful of the same abuses as it was of old. If, indeed, the time ever does come when men will rise superior to self, the Socialist system might be tolerable; but then men could be safely left to the free system, as it would in that event be purged of all the defects that now impair its usefulness.

It is not necessary to tell us that such a stupendous change as Socialism proposes cannot be brought about at once. That is self-evident. But men are not like the flies of summer. We are concerned for those who will come after us in our national life, which, combining the present with the future, is one united interest. The serious matter is, is this road thus pointed out to us the true one to go upon? Where will it lead us to in the long-run? If we are starting on the wrong road, or even if we do not very well know where we are going, it is a poor consolation to feel that the catastrophe will not happen till long after

our own time. It is like drawing a bill on the future, for our present ease, without considering how it will be ultimately met.

The question which men have now to face is, not whether they agree with the Socialist in thinking that there are evils under the free system, which of course there are, but whether they agree with him that the true remedy for them is to destroy that system and institute his own in its place; and to do this before the power of freedom to cope with social ills has ever been properly tested. For it is one of the unfortunate facts of the present situation that when those evils began to be keenly realised, the Socialist broke away from the free system and proclaimed that the only remedy was to adopt his new scheme of industrial life. Thus, just when the reforming period set in, men's energies were dissipated from earnest and concentrated efforts to solve, by action under the free system, the problems of industry by which we were pressed. Freedom was not given a fair trial. Industrial reform took a political

turn and became a matter of Caucus Bossdom and State Paternalism.

Confusion has thus been created on this subject by ambiguous methods of social relief, by the professions and evasions of half-Socialists, by the simplicity of those who cannot see and the incredulity of those who do not want to see the real issue that Socialism presents.

All the while the sincere Socialists deserve credit for being perfectly candid. They state plainly what they want and what they intend to do, when they are able to do it. Their methods and object are different from those of any other political party, and they remain constant to them. Not Bismarck himself was more outspoken in declaring his intentions, though many, as he uttered his startling sayings from time to time, said that he spoke so openly that he could not mean it seriously, just as our half-Socialists say now of their whole-hearted brethren. Afterwards, however, he surprised men by doing just what he said he would do.

The new movement can lay claim to not

only the enthusiasm of a religion, but to a unity of belief in its followers. Its spokesmen are busy propagating their faith throughout the nations of the West; but amid all the differences of nationality, they speak with one voice in the condemnation which they pronounce upon our present system of life and industry, and in describing the revolution which they hope to bring about. This is made plain if we read some of the authoritative announcements of the representative Socialist bodies in Europe. Though the more recent statements are perhaps the most explicit, we will go back a few years to show the continuity of the new gospel.

There has been no substantial departure from that of the German Social Democrats at the Erfurt Conference in 1891. In their "Programme of the German Social Democratic party" they declare that "only the transformation of capitalistic private ownership of the means of production—the soil, mines, raw materials, tools, machines, and means of transport—into social ownership,

and the transformation of production of goods for sale into Socialistic production, managed for and through society, can bring it about, that the great industry and the steadily-growing productive capacity of social labour shall, for the hitherto exploited classes, be changed from a source of misery and oppression to a source of the highest welfare and of all-round harmonious perfection."

In the Programme of the French Socialist party, voted at Tours 1902, we read :—

"The irresistible tendency of the proletarians is to transfer into the economic order the Democracy partially realised in the political order. Just as all citizens have and handle in common, democratically, the political power, so they must have and handle in common the economic power, the means of production. They must themselves appoint the heads of work in the workshops, as they appoint the heads of Government in the city, and reserve for those who work for the community the whole product of the work."

The Revised Programme of the English

Social Democratic Federation (1903) declares :—

“That the emancipation of the working classes can only be achieved through the socialisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, and their subsequent control by the organised community in the interests of the whole people.” Under the head of the “Immediate Reforms” which it proposes, we read : “Financial and Fiscal. Repudiation of the National Debt. Abolition of all indirect taxation and the institution of a cumulative tax on all incomes and inheritance exceeding £300.”

The Fabian Society is supposed to represent the thoughtful and cultured phase of Socialism in England. It declares, as its basis, “that the Fabian Society consists of Socialists. It therefore aims at the reorganisation of society by the emancipation of land and industrial capital from individual and class ownership, and the vesting of them in the community for the general benefit.”

In the Election Address of the Social

Democratic party in the Reichstag in 1903 we read :—

“Our aim is the introduction of the Socialistic order in the State and society, based upon the ownership of the means of production by society and the obligation of every member of society to work.”

Mr. J. Keir Hardie, writing in the *N.A. Review*, August 1903, tells us that the English “Independent Labour party is a Socialist, and not, as its title might seem to imply, a purely working class organisation. It aims at the creation of a co-operative commonwealth, founded on the socialisation of land and capital” (see *Modern Socialism*, by R. C. Ensor, 1904).

Mr. Brooks, in his *Social Unrest*, summarises the matter very fairly :—

“As Schaeffle writes, ‘The alpha and omega of Socialism is the transformation of private and competing capitals into a united collective capital.’ Or the English Fabians, ‘Socialism means the organisation and conduct of the necessary industries of the country, and the appropriation of all

forms of economic rent of land and capital by the nation as a whole, through the most suitable public authorities, parochial, municipal, provincial, or central.' Whatever form the definition takes, there is to-day no clearly conceived Socialism that does not aim first of all at the socialising of the 'three rents.' If Socialism were to triumph and be carried to logical completeness, no individual could draw a penny's interest from rent or profits. These would pass to the community. That they may pass to the many rather than to the few is the reason why in all these programmes the same demands are made" (*The Social Unrest*, 1903, Brooks, p. 269).

Extracts such as these could be multiplied by turning to the declarations of the Socialist organisations in any country, which are repeated from year to year up to the present time. Printers' ink makes nationalities kin, and so we can read from the believers in the new creed the one expression of their faith the wide world over. The declaration of the wrongs they complain of and

the remedy they propose is everywhere identical. In England,—and it is the same in the United States and in the colonies,—as time goes on and they grow stronger, they resolutely maintain themselves as a distinct party, and refuse to be mingled with the mere Liberals, though they, the Liberals, welcome them effusively, and offer to carry out most of the Labour Legislation which some would have us believe is all that is seriously intended. “Let us be brothers and live together happily,” say the Liberals. “You may be followers, if you please,” is the reply.

By their acts as well as by their language they renounce the idea of conciliation with existing methods, whether social or political. This is illustrated by the attitude taken up by the fifty-one Labour Socialists returned to the House of Commons at the General Election in 1906. These repudiate connection with the Liberal party, though that party loudly promises an immediate advance upon the lines of social amelioration. Mr. Keir Hardie, the chairman of one division

in Parliament, declares that what is before the world generally, "for weal or woe," is the "final struggle between the common people and the upper classes." The Labour Representation Committee has formally resolved, we read, that their purpose is "the overthrow of the present competitive system of capitalism and the institution of a system of public ownership of all the means of production, distribution, and exchange." Indeed, this well-worn formula (which has been more than once and lately adopted by the Trades Union Congress in England) announces a revolution so stupendous that the French Revolution would be a passing street broil in comparison with it.

The true Socialist, then, disclaims and must disclaim all connection with the Liberal or any other political party which is bent on maintaining, while improving, the existing form of society. Against the present framework of our social state he runs up the Death's-head and Cross-bones. What he proposes is not a reform only, nay, it is more than a revolution, it is a

change in the basis of our civilisation. To talk of his toning down, maturing, sobering with responsibility is to contemplate him as a dishonest man. Such a result can only come about by his renouncing his faith. Most of the Socialist leaders are, we need not doubt, honest men. They do not look for official position, to their credit be it said, unless there comes with it the power to carry out their principles.

But even were this not so, we must not forget that the position in which they are, and the forces which impel them, would prevent them from acting otherwise or from coalescing with existing parties. As mere Liberals, their occupation would be gone, and the spirit would be gone out of them too. They have their people and their cause behind them, from which and from whom they derive their vitality and strength. They are not mere intellectual speculators, enjoying their theories, and able to alter or to shed them as they please. The serious thing is that they are the exponents of a wide and deep manifestation

of popular feeling, to the strength of which many causes in our age contribute. It is the first and surface effect of the principle of political equality, when it is turned on to the social and industrial side of life. They are the spokesmen for the empire of the discontented. The force which propels them and gives power to their principles is not their intrinsic truth or value, but it is to be found in the restlessness of the masses, joined to the hard lot of too many, and at times the unfair conditions of labour; all which leads to the development of social projects outside the lines of mere politics, and which tower high above the machinations of parties. All the platforms and all the theories, from Karl Marx down to the present time, and any number of wild speeches would be of little consequence, were it not that behind them is the great fact of the social unrest, and also the still greater fact to which we called the attention of the reader at the outset, namely, the lawful and dominant power which the institutions of our time give to that empire of the dis-

contented. This it is which makes the problem before us none other than the issue, whether the system of industry upon which our present civilisation rests is to be maintained, or whether it is to be supplanted and another and, we are told, a better one put in its place.

It is said, and truly said, that this new social and industrial life which we are promised is a Utopia which can never be realised among men. We need not trouble ourselves about it, we are told, because it is a fancy which it is impossible to give effect to. True, it is impossible. But before we can even attempt the new state, we must clear away the old one; and herein lies the danger. So far, the present system of industry stands in the way. The first thing to be done is to undermine it, with a view to clearing it off and leaving the ground free for the new construction. This work is easy, plausible, and includes a good deal of what has much to recommend it at first sight—distributing wealth, supplying men's wants, easing the struggle of life, and abolishing by law all disagreeable conditions

of industry. This is that part of the new dispensation which the Socialist at present has in hand. The work of reconstruction is postponed. And this part he seeks to carry out at the cost of the principles and the habits of industry which have built up our present social and industrial life. It is surprising how easily and almost imperceptibly measures are adopted and principles conceded which, when worked out to their natural effect, would sweep away the free system of industry altogether. A few simple laws, distributing wealth and altering the conditions of employment would, in a generation or so, render our present system of life and industry a thing of the past. Our civilisation is wealthy, cultured, self-satisfied. It moves proudly forward with swelling sails and flags flying; but thin are the planks beneath, between it and the great deep.

Such is the problem of the future. How is it going to work out? What is going to happen? Are the objects which are so clearly stated by the spokesmen of Socialism going to be carried out? Be they wise or

be they foolish, are we (or our children) destined to see them seriously attempted? Is there really in store for men a new heaven and a new earth, wherein shall dwell Socialism?

The immediate advance towards Socialism will not be determined merely by the arguments for it or against it. Arguments go to form a public opinion that ultimately has weight; but men's daily action in political matters is not guided by intellectual conclusions. People do what they like to do, and will learn of the consequences from the teachings of experience. Numerous experiments in Socialism are being made in all countries, and more will be tried; and the question whether these will lead on to complete Socialism depends upon the effect which those experiments, and their consequences, will have upon that matured public opinion which, often wiser than individual opinions, overshadows the promptings of every-day politics, and is the ultimate ruler of nations. We assume, to be sure, the case of a people who are strong enough to

stand the experiment, for there is the danger of a nation going so far, without realising where it is going, that it may, like Macbeth, find—

Should it wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er.

And this is the most practical danger of the day that is passing over us. But we see our progressive age to abound in social experiments in many directions, which are greeted with general applause at first; yet if we observe them some time later on, we find them to be losing their hold upon people, and afterwards to be tacitly admitted to be false moves. And this not owing to any new arguments upon the question, but to the silent and often slow teaching of experience, moulding public opinion, and disclosing evil consequences that may have been spoken of before, but which were never considered seriously till they were practically felt. The old objections, to which no attention was paid at the time, may not even now be acknowledged; and it is a curious fact how little confidence in favourite men is shaken

by the failure of their projects. Still, on all sides the thing is felt to be a mistake. It is when this reserve of public intelligence, instructed by experience, comes into play, that we get the matured judgment of the country. We look, therefore, to the lessons that will be taught by the early experiments in Socialism to practically sway the peoples of the West in determining whether they will hark back from it or finally commit their destinies to it.

CHAPTER IV

THE PATTERN NATION

IT may assist our speculations upon this question if we take the concrete case of one of the advanced nations of Europe, and endeavour to follow in such a nation what will be the working out of Socialist experiments in its practical life and politics. We will assume that our pattern people have reached a mature age in national life, have their territory fully peopled with the toiling millions, have among them the ever-present problem of the poor, are surrounded by neighbouring nations who are active competitors in the industrial race, and whom also they must keep prepared to meet at times in the arbitrament of war. From the experience of such a full-grown nation only can

we expect to derive information that will be useful to other nations. We will suppose this people to have gone through the different stages of the struggle for self-government successfully, and that they have established the rule of the majority by a genuine system of universal suffrage.

The first features that strike us in the early stages of the social progress of our pattern nation give cause only for satisfaction. We see spread abroad an active principle of sympathy with the burdens of the poor, which is a delightful contrast to the indifference of past times; and this no idle or helpless sympathy, but one that has behind it the whole power of the State. It is popular to be sympathetic. The public man who wants to be successful is taught by self-interest, even if by no nobler impulse, to make the cause of the poor his own. Accordingly, we find continuous efforts made by the State to help the wage-earner. One abuse after another is corrected; one concession after another is made to the interests of labour; one privilege after another of

the capitalist class is curtailed. Whatever executive authority or the power of laws can do is done to mitigate the hardships that are incident to the inequalities of life. The easy side of Socialism will be adopted without troubling with the correlative obligations of the complete system. State employment for the unemployed; regulation of the hours of work and its wages by law; the continued enlargement of the scope of State industries; old age pensions for the poor; people's children to be provided for by other people, will all be carried with general applause. The air will be filled with new plans for dealing with human needs, with projects for securing happier methods of industry, and proposals to substitute for the old selfish instincts of mankind a generous concern by all for all.

But as time goes on, the results from these efforts will not be all that was expected from them. Many real evils of human life, some of them beyond the reach of any laws, will remain, and men's discontent with their lot in life—a principle which certainly is a

motive power of progress—will continue pretty much as it was before. The early measures of Socialism will not do what was promised for them. In supplying some wants they create others, and the work of the State in emphasising people's needs and providing for them carries with it the weakening of the energy of the people to save themselves. It comes to be generally understood that the wants of all men must be supplied, with a tacit understanding that the thing is to be arranged for by somebody else. But notwithstanding the all-embracing activity of the State and its solicitude for the poor, it will be only too true that poverty and hard conditions of life will still be found among the people of our pattern semi-Socialist nation. A striking feature in its social condition will be the number of its failures in life,—at least failures in the sense of men not being able to make provision for their own old age. The roll of claimants upon the State Old Age Pensions will not diminish with the new and favourable conditions of industry,

but on the contrary will go on increasing. The aged poor are as destitute as they were under the free system, and they are more numerous. Good wages help the earlier stages of life, but apparently do not avail to ease its decline. And the need of the old people for aid is genuine. Provision must be made for them by the State or by some body ; for as the new system develops, they are less and less inclined to make provision for themselves. And nothing surely can be more pitiable than to see sad old age struggling with its growing infirmities, and all the time made sadder still by want ! Humane men, fervid reformers, will point to the evils and wrongs that will still afflict the pattern nation, and will ask of the public conscience, are such things to continue ? If you, the people, are not willing that they should be perpetual, then you must frankly accept complete Socialism, the only true and effective remedy.

An uneasy feeling spreads abroad, accordingly, that great industrial changes are required to set things right, and that, impelled by an irresistible fate, they are impending

over the land. The Socialist declares that the evils from which the people still suffer are owing to their having only the partial benefits of his methods, and that the true remedy, and the ultimate remedy, is for the nation to be thorough and to go on to his completed system. The pattern nation will be in perplexity. At times it would seem as if the people, in the discouraging search after social satisfaction, would throw over the old conditions of industry bodily, and embrace the revolution that is proposed to them.

But though such is the vague feeling that prevails, so far our pattern nation has taken no decisive step to commit itself to Socialism, or to destroy the system of free industry. It is facing that way, but has not yet set out definitely upon the road to it. For with all its experiments and philanthropic ventures, and amid all the haze and tumult of the new social advance, there still remain standing the two foundation principles of the free system of industry, unremoved as yet, though threatened and somewhat impaired; private property and the private employer—the

captain of industry. On these depend the industrial side of our civilisation, just as its domestic side rests on the sister institutions of marriage and the separate home. So long as those two principles of industry are maintained you cannot have Socialism; but if they are undermined, the free system is gone, and you must devise some new method of carrying on the work of the nation.

Let us consider what is involved in these two institutions.

The institution of private property has long been attacked and often been condemned by powerful spokesmen in the course of the world's history; but men have never yet been able to shake it off. Damaged and threatened as it has been, it comes up again and again, and we do not seem to be able to get on without it. It is certainly unamiable in many of its incidents, and at times harsh and apparently unjust in its operation. The weak point about it, according to the trend of men's ideas now, is not only that it makes the social lot of men so unequal, but that it is based upon the fact that men are by nature

unequal. By the results of its working it is constantly reminding us of this inequality in an offensive way. If all men were equal in capacity and industry there would be no objection to an equal division of the general produce, just as there is often now among partners in a private concern. A child will be struck by the abuses that property gives rise to, while it is not every man who can follow out the reasoning by which it is supported.

Archdeacon Paley, Doctor of Divinity, in his *Moral and Political Philosophy*, thus describes property :—

“ If you should see a flock of pigeons in a field of corn : and if (instead of each picking where and what it liked, taking just as much as it wanted, and no more) you should see ninety-nine of them gathering all they got into a heap ; reserving nothing for themselves but the chaff and the refuse ; keeping this heap for one, and that the weakest, perhaps worst, pigeon of the flock ; sitting round and looking on all the winter whilst this one was devouring, throwing about, and wasting it ; and if a pigeon more hardy or

hungry than the rest touched a grain of the hoard, all the others flying upon it, and tearing it to pieces ; if you should see this, you would see nothing more than what is every day practised and established among men. Among men, you see the ninety-and-nine toiling and scraping together a heap of superfluities for one (and this one, too, oftentimes the feeblest and worst of the whole set, a child, a woman, a madman, or a fool), getting nothing for themselves all the while but a little of the coarsest of the provision, which their own industry produces ; looking quietly on, while they see the fruits of all their labour spent or spoiled ; and if one of the number take or touch a particle of the hoard, the others joining against him and hanging him for the theft.”¹

¹ It is said that it was owing to this passage that Paley lost the bishopric to which his merits clearly entitled him. George III., who was an industrious man, had read the *Moral and Political Philosophy*, and was sadly perplexed by this lively illustration of the Pigeons. So, when the Minister, on an opportunity offering, proposed the Archdeacon for promotion to the Bench, the monarch, in much perplexity, exclaimed, “What, what, Pigeon Paley a Bishop, Pigeon Paley a Bishop? Never.”

The learned author adds, "There must be some very important advantages to account for such an institution," and goes on to consider the arguments in its favour, or rather the human needs that have led to its adoption by mankind. It is not necessary for us here to repeat those arguments. It is enough for our present purpose to say, what will not be questioned by thinking men, that property is essential to our existing form of civilisation. If it is rendered insecure in any country, the experience of all ages shows that no fertility of soil, no climate, however genial, and no wealth of nature's other gifts, can prevent that country falling into decay. Men must wrest a living from nature by toil, and under the free system of industry he will not toil unless he knows that he is assured the possession of what he wins by his labour, and assured beyond doubt or question. You can of course upset this basis of civilisation if you please; but then you must get another in its place. Intelligent Socialists admit this. It is no difficulty with them, as their purpose is to

destroy the present social system. They promise us a new sort of social life, with new and better methods for ensuring industry among men. This is as it may be. All we know is, that if the institution of property is destroyed, the present industrial system, and the form of civilisation which is based upon it, must pass away.

Yet it cannot be expected that, amid all the surging efforts of the victorious masses to equalise human conditions, such an institution as this will go unquestioned. The public sentiment will be unfriendly to it. It will tolerate it, rather than boldly avow and support it. The political atmosphere will be filled with theories that are hostile to it, and proposals for giving a partial effect, to begin with, to the most popular of these; and, as all men view things from their own standpoint, such theories naturally appeal to those who are not property-holders, and whom it is proposed to benefit at the cost of those who are. Karl Marx's speculations, Henry George's Single Tax, the theory of the unearned increment, confiscating taxes

on land, the policy of having taxes and death-duties graduated so as to exempt the smaller holders of property and go on to a crushing rate upon larger holders ; the question whether even, if a man is to be assured of his property, he is entitled to leave it behind him to others ; also whether a man should be allowed to own property in land at all, or above a certain small amount in personalty—these, and speculations such as these, will flourish in the congenial atmosphere of our progressive people. The mother earth from which they all derive their vitality is a sense of dissatisfaction among the many, who have now come to feel their power, with the institution of private property itself ; under which one man is proved to be stronger than other men, and he and his representatives are rewarded accordingly.

The early efforts of reformers were directed to secure the rights of the poor, as the poor, and men were taught to be proud, if need be, of their poverty. "A man's a man for a' that." We

soon, however, get beyond this and seek to get rid of the ills of poverty, by merging poor and rich together on the same level at the base. This sense of dissatisfaction with property prevailing abroad, like an atmosphere, influences the thoughts and the feelings of men about the reasoning which justifies the institution itself; the more so as different views may be plausibly maintained regarding it; and, as has been said, the abuses that it gives rise to are obvious to all.

But no open war is as yet declared against it in our pattern nation. No direct assault is made upon it. The danger that will threaten it will not be that of any popular violence; for the people will have risen to a condition much superior to that of their forefathers, and to the clumsy excesses that have marked the struggles of the poor in times past. The danger will arise from the power of taxation, duly exercised, according to the "golden metwand of the law." For while the old legal phrases and forms that describe and limit

the taxation power remain, the principle which they embody and the protection they secure are gone, as far as one class of the tax-payers are concerned. We may illustrate this by taking the case of the Anglo-Saxon people on either side of the Atlantic. It is the first principle of free government, and, it may be added, of safe and sound government, that there shall be no taxation without representation; and this as much for the true interest of those who are to spend the taxes, as for that of those who pay them. If one set of men have authority to impose and spend taxes which another set have to pay, but have no valid voice in imposing, then we have arrived at the foundation principle of despotism. It was to resist this that our forefathers fought and waged continuous conflict in field and Senate against all forms of royal loans, demands, benevolences or other claims upon their money, which they had not themselves "cheerfully granted," to use the old words of money bills, to the king.

To maintain this first principle of freedom,

America rebelled against the mother land, with the approval of the best and wisest Englishmen. Dr. Johnson, certainly, in his *Taxation no Tyranny*, denounced the Americans as traitors, and justified George III. His main argument was, that they suffered no wrong in having just burdens imposed upon them by the lawful Government of the whole Empire, even though they could not be said to have themselves consented to the taxation. But all enlightened men merely smiled at the antiquated bigotry of the old Tory, as being fit for the time of Charles I., and only for courtiers then. All agreed that the foundation of just taxation was that those who were personally to feel the pressure of the tax should have an effective voice in imposing it. Men must have themselves the power of granting their own money, exclaims Burke, or you have not even the shadow of liberty. The revolutionary, Tom Paine, in his *Rights of Man*, says that the majority of the people may have what taxes they please, but only so long as they do not

impose on the minority conditions different from what they impose on themselves. Only thus can be secured fairness in fixing the tax and economy in spending it. As Locke, in treating of taxation, says :—

“The supreme power cannot take from any man part of his property without his own consent; the preservation of property being the end of government, and that for which men enter into society. . . . Men therefore in society having property, they have such a right to the goods which by the law of the community are theirs, that nobody hath a right to take their substance, or any part of it, from them without their own consent. Hence it is a mistake to think that the supreme or legislative power of any commonwealth can do what it will and dispose of the estates of subjects arbitrarily.”

Particular taxes might not be unjust in themselves. It was the principle that was fatal. Ship-money was not unfair as a tax. The taxation of America was not wrong in its purpose, and was trifling in amount. But patriotic men resisted, because they

knew that if a ruling power can impose taxes at its pleasure, all security against waste in spending and oppression in levying the taxes was gone. Yet this is just what will happen in our pattern nation when government by the people becomes a fact, and under it the wealthy classes are specially taxed. The rich and the poor in theory are one nation, for the purpose of imposing taxes upon themselves and paying them. But the process is a fiction as regards taxes on property. The rich have no power as regards imposing the taxes, while the poor have the power, but are exempt from the burden. Those who feel the burden have no weight in regulating it, while those who impose the burden never feel it. The London County Council illustrates this position. Its expenditure may be well-intended, but no one can suppose it would be indulged in to the extent it is if the majority who govern the elections had personally to pay for it. It is rendered possible by the fact that it is substantially levied upon the minority of

the ratepayers, and spent in the interest of the majority. Or take the ordinary case of an Income Tax, which exempts the wage-earners from its operation, places some trifling impost upon the class above them, and goes on with a graduated force to impose a real burden on the wealthy. Out of 100 electors, 90 impose the tax but do not pay it; 10 pay the tax, but have no voice in imposing it. The representatives chosen by the 90 are also, no doubt, by force of law the representatives of the 10, and can technically claim their authority to tax them, much as the Parliamentary leaders made war upon Charles I. in his own name. But as a fact the people taxed are voiceless in the matter.

We do not now speak of the fairness or unfairness of any tax, or of the wise or foolish purposes of those who impose them. It is not merely a question whether the rich are to pay more or to pay less; nor is it only a dispute about who is to square the public ledger. It is the principle of liberty itself that is in question. Free government,

both in theory and in fact, rests upon the right of self-taxation. The striking thing is how in Democracy the methods of despotism can be revived with regard to dealing with the few, the permanent minority, in the electoral body.

But we would be far from assuming that the advanced people of our pattern nation, especially if they be an Anglo-Saxon people, will deliberately propose it to themselves to abuse the absolute power which they will possess by levying unjust taxes upon the wealthy few, merely for the sake of getting money to spend. They certainly will not set out with any such intention. There is often a sense of justice, and of generosity too, in the mass of the people, and as they get more enlightened they are less disposed to be vindictive to any class. And if their government remained political in its scope and working, the rights of the few might be respected, notwithstanding that they are a permanent minority at the ballot-box. Also excessive taxation of the wealthy in time exhausts itself. What can be obtained

from the few is in any case little to distribute among the many; interest for the use of money rises when the capitalist is endangered, for the more the State takes from him the less he has to devote to the purposes of private enterprise. So long, therefore, as the purposes of taxation are financial, excessive taxation of any class carries with it some corrective influence of its own.

But this security is gone when taxation is imposed, not to meet financial needs, but to promote the industrial revolution that is the purpose of Socialism. It is another instance of the ambiguous methods of which that system can avail itself. For its ultimate object is to impair, and in the end destroy, the institution of private property, and taxation, from being an instrument of finance, becomes a weapon for the fight, or rather, indeed, a knife with which to operate upon the body politic. Getting more or less from a tax is not, then, of much consequence so long as its operation promotes the industrial object with which it was imposed. And the majority are relieved from any

sense of injustice; for their object is not a sordid one, but the carrying out of great social reforms. The spoliation which they are carrying out is not only lawful but beneficial. In this way, the claim of the majority to tax the minority, namely, that together they constitute one people, with common interests and common burdens, so that what hurts one part of the Commonwealth is felt by the whole (as is a wound in the human body), this claim becomes only a make-believe. For when the principle of Socialism prevails, this oneness of the nation is at an end. The community is not only divided into two peoples, but into two peoples one of whom is determined to extinguish the other. So far from there being a community of interest, there is a settled purpose of destruction upon the part of one of them. The theory under which the right of the majority to tax the minority is justified, becomes a sinister fiction. The whole situation is transformed; and men soon realise the grim significance of this taxing power, under which one set of people could,

with all formality of law, take the money of other people and spend it upon themselves.

That the one class of citizens was providing the money, and the other class spending it, would be made apparent by the contrast between their respective attitudes regarding the management of the public revenue of the State. The minority would be for economy and low taxes; the majority would be eager to carry out schemes of social relief and State industries, and to tax freely for their support. Each party would look at things from an opposite aspect, since the loss of the few would be the present gain of the many. When, as a result of the lavish policy, it was found that public expenditure, and, with it, taxation, was mounting up; the public debt increasing; that capitalists were getting frightened, and private enterprise dying out—these things would not vex the Socialist leader. They would please him. They would all be hastening the time when the capitalistic system would collapse and leave the ground clear for State ownership.

While others are perplexed about the future,

His bosom's lord sits lightly on his throne,

and he blesses the power of taxation, and particularly that sort of taxation which the Tory Johnson declared to be no tyranny. If the people of our pattern nation, then, should turn determinately to Socialism, taxation will be their weapon.

What will give great support to Socialist proposals for ample expenditure and increasing taxation is that there are always, in this sad world of ours, social wants that ought to be met if we can get the money to meet them. If you start with the principle that people must have things right about them, so long as there is somebody else to pay the bill, you enter upon a course of action under which you may hope to supply the needs of those who want, but you may be certain that you will exhaust the resources of those who have. The process, too, presents itself in a plausible aspect to the public, since what is proposed is often what all fair men would like to see

done some way and at somebody's expense ; as is the case with part of what is undertaken by the Municipal Socialism even of the United States. But the fact remains, that this power of the many to tax the few will be the test of the soundness of the Democracy of our times. If it turns to Socialism, it will abuse that power. But the abuse will bring in time its own retribution. It would make a curious page in history if taxation, after it had dethroned kings and defied aristocracies, when it is an established right of the people, should end by sacrificing the people themselves, and be the means of hurrying them on to the despotism of Socialism.

In any case, however, during the uncertain semi-Socialist period in our pattern nation the lot of the wealthy will not be a happy one. There will be a change in men's ideas since the time when Mahomet proclaimed, as his parting message to his followers : "Ye people, your lives and property are saved and inviolable amongst one another till the end of time " ; and a change even since the

time, little more than a century ago, when in Revolutionary France the Declaration of the Rights of Man announced that "property was an inviolable and sacred right." Property owners will be in the position of the rich but murmured against relative of the poor family, who criticise their kinsman, put up with him for the present, and console themselves by looking forward to the time when he will pass away, and his riches be more usefully employed. But still, so long as the semi-Socialist period does last, the institution of private property cannot be got rid of. When it is undermined, the half-Socialist state must pass away too, and be merged in complete Socialism. For the institution of property is bound up in the system of free industry, and though it may be threatened, it cannot be lost till the people of the pattern nation have determined to take their final plunge into Socialism, a contingency which we will consider further on.

Kindred to the institution of property, and dependent on it, is the case of the private employer of labour, sometimes called the

captain of industry. He too will have a troubled life and a threatened one during the semi-Socialist period ; but he too will live as long as it will, for if you abolish him you must have complete Socialism, since semi-Socialism can provide only for a part of a nation's wants, and as to the rest, you must have the private employer until you are prepared to accept the complete system of Socialism. Individuals working on their own account, without direction for their labour and without the aid of the capitalist, constitute but a small part of the producing power of a people. Yet the fact is, that no institution will be less congenial to the ideas and the aspirations of the governing people in our pattern nation than the private employer of labour. As Socialism advances, not only is private employment enfeebled and hampered, but a dislike to it is spread abroad among the workers. It becomes uncongenial to them. They should be their own employers. Still, industry must go on under some system. Difficulty is said to be good for man, so, as some one must

direct our labour, we are faced by the alternative of the captain of industry under the free system, or the political "Boss" under Socialism. But let us look at the case of some vast factory in the hands of a private owner. He works truly, but not with his hands. He has a stronger head than others, and with this he is able to direct the labour of thousands. He pays them wages, sees that they do their work, and if dissatisfied with them discharges them. If he is successful he makes a fortune out of his share of the profits; he lives in splendour and founds a family. Also he, perhaps unconsciously, performs a necessary service to the country in storing up wealth that some one must store up if industry is to go on. But the rank and file of workers under him, if we except the clever ones who can rise out of the ranks, have to toil daily for their living, and find it hard to save for their old age.

Certainly free industry, if it is to survive, must and will continuously raise the condition of the workers. But the first and

present difficulty is that the system itself of Master and Man is all out of gear with the political side of life in our pattern nation. And the reason why the captain of industry is thus highly rewarded is especially out of line with the ideas that are congenial to us. The reason is none other than this, that he is an abler man than the rest of us, has a keener intellect, sounder judgment, more energy, and that peculiar knack for succeeding in what he undertakes that Providence gives to one only among millions. He probably began life as a poor, perhaps a neglected boy, who had to pick up education for himself, and live at first upon the few pence he could get for doing some menial work. Mr. Schwab, President of the United States Steel Corporation, tells us that at a gathering of forty successful business men, at which he was present, only two had been at College. Thirty-eight were poor boys who had the run of the common school only, and had to work their way up as best they could. And this strong business leader may be a selfish unamiable

man too, with no civic virtue about him. But there he is, and he makes the business a successful one and enables our wages to be paid ; while if you, or I, or our mate on yonder bench were put in his place, the factory would be insolvent in twelve months. Who is sufficient for such things ?

Far be it from us to rejoice at this arrangement of Providence. If we may say it without irreverence, we would say that if our will could have directed the operations of men, they would have been different from what we see them to be. The world, however, has so far been trundled along by even such imperfect methods as this one. But can we expect the governing people, in our pattern nation, to take kindly to such an institution as this ? Yet can you get rid of this private employer ? We cannot, certainly, till we put something in his place. For nothing is more clear than that masses of men are not able themselves to direct their own industry. The friends of freedom look forward to co-operation as one means of enabling the worker to cease from being a wage-earner merely, and to become

a profit-sharer. But under co-operation, or any other method of industry, there must always be the directing head to tell people what to do, and to see that they do it. Without this the workers would be a mere mob. They might as well go into a battle without a leader as into their factory. And political power, when the Socialist turn is taken, does not develop the spirit of self-reliance in peoples. On the contrary, the more powerful the citizen is as an elector, the more helpless he seems to become as an individual, and as his authority over others increases, his capacity for taking care of himself is weakened. The more thoroughly Democratic institutions are developed on the Socialistic line, the more completely is the individual independence of the citizen lost, whether in politics or industry.

The need, therefore, of some authority to show men how to work is as imperative now as it was a thousand years ago. Socialism fully recognises this need and undertakes to supply it, and not only to pro-

vide men with work, but to see that they do it. In our pattern nation during the semi-Socialist period, the dissatisfaction with the private employer and his gains prompts the State or City government to go on continuously taking into its own hands different industries, and managing them as government undertakings. There can be no process more seductively popular than this. The wage-earners are freed from the feeling of serving a master, as the State employs them, and they are the State. Their wages must be the best; their places are assured; their grievances can always be debated in Parliament or City Council, and righted at the ballot-box. The more industries are taken over, the greater is their power; a compact body fighting for their bread and butter are, at an election, like a disciplined regiment against a crowd. Besides, their cause is the cause of the worker against the employer, and as such is generously backed even by the wage-earners who are still in private hands. If the State industries should not prove remunerative, the public purse or

municipal rates, filled by taxation levied upon property and upon those who are working outside, under the spur of competition, are open to meet the loss. We are speaking of the period of semi-Socialism, when only some of the industries of our pattern nation have been nationalised. All the while, the State employees are still left personally independent, which they could not be under complete Socialism, and thus are able to combine the comforts of paternalism with the freedom of individualism. No wonder that the semi-Socialist condition is felt to be an agreeable one, and that State employment is preferred to private employment when the government is a government by the people.

As far as the Socialist is concerned, he feels a sincere and reasonable joy as he sees in one industry after another the private employer ousted and the State installed in his place. What more can he ask than that you should go his road, and how can you go it except by taking one step after another? When the State has taken over all the industries the journey is at an end. The

thing is done. The force of Socialism can no further go. The statesmen who have all along declared that they only meant to go part of the way, that the complete scheme is absurd, that the sensible thing is to nationalise monopolies only, will find that they have been led by a way that they knew not, to the very conclusion which they had repudiated.

What increases the gravity of the position is, that if the Socialist view be true, that the popular government or the municipality can successfully manage industries and present, as a clear gain to the public, the profits which under private enterprise go to the capitalist, and if it be further true that the nation loses nothing by the strangling of private enterprise and the dying out among the people of individuality and the spirit of self-reliance, then it is true, certainly, that the State should take over monopolies, but it is also true that the State should take over everything. You cannot fix a plain line where it should stop. Look at one of the strongest cases for State ownership.

The State, it is said, should own and manage the public railways. If so, it is surely reasonable that it should have its own coal-mines and its own ships to carry the coal. Should the running of the people's railways be dependent upon private employers for coal, and liable to heavy charges if the coal rises in price, and to be stopped altogether if there is a strike at the private mines? Should not the State also have its own supplies of iron, and its own factories to make its rolling stock, as so many private companies do now? Why should it pay the extra profit and be exposed to the risks of private enterprise? Then the public telegraph and telephone service naturally go to the State, it is said, with the Post Office. The supply of light, water, and street traction to the people obviously follow. What can be more proper than that the State should be the landlord of cheap, healthy homes, and eliminate the private landlords' profits? Banking is obviously as much a public affair as are railways; and the business of insurance is best served by the secure

State as an insurer, and the profits going to the people instead of to the capitalist. Why should not the State have its own factories to make the uniforms for its vast army of employees, military, naval, police, railway-men, and warders? After so many industries have been conceded to the State, no valid reason will exist for insisting that the rest should be kept to private enterprise, and industrial conditions will have become such that private enterprise is not very eager to keep them. It is merely a question of the policy at any particular crisis about each new proposal; and the more the State takes over, the more do new difficulties, which often arise from what has been done, supply plausible arguments for taking the rest.

On what principle can you fix the point where it should stop? At monopolies? But if you allow private enterprise at all, and its reward private property, there must be some monopoly under it; and after you have taken over ever so much, still some things are left to which the objection of being monopoly will apply, quite as much

as to some of those which have been already nationalised. One of the last things thought of for State management is agriculture. Yet if you allow men to own land at all, where can you get a greater monopoly? It certainly is of the first importance to a country that its lands should be put to the best use, should be cultivated in the best manner, and so should supply as much food as possible for the use of the people. Some men have not the capital to enable them to put their land to the best use; some men do not know how best to use it; some men designedly put it to unprofitable uses. The State, by the wise direction of common operations, by the use of the best machinery, by not needing rent or profit, could surely, if Socialism be true, carry on a united system of farming better for the people than they can individually farm for themselves. Semi-Socialism is, in truth, merely a phrase of opportunism. If one-half of the Socialist creed is true, so is the other half. The Socialist theory of industry and the free theory are hopelessly contradictory

of one another. A nation can certainly live under the free system, and we are told it will live better under the Socialist system. What we may be sure of is, that no full-grown nation will live for long under a mixture of the two systems; for then the energy necessary to keep it going effectively would be paralysed by the Socialist leaven, and no sufficient principle of action would have been provided in its place, such as full Socialism promises to supply. This truth will be taught to the people of our pattern nation surely, though perhaps slowly, by the teaching of experience.

But so long as they are yet only half-Socialist, the private employer is still necessary for them. True, his operations are circumscribed; but he cannot be got rid of. Though threatened he lives, but in the estimation of many not worthy to live for long:—

Who was the thane lives yet;
 But under heavy judgment bears that life
 Which he deserves to lose.

CHAPTER V

EARLY DAYS

To the stranger who observes our pattern nation in the *first stage* of its semi-Socialist state, it appears to be in happy case. It presents a pleasing prospect. Numerous benevolent purposes are taken in hand. The struggle of life appears to be for the time eased. Old people get pensions, the government professes to look after the unemployed, the State employees are well cared for; the law fixes the wages and hours of work, now eight, now six, for those who are outside. Private critics may raise questions about how some of these things are to be paid for; but none care to play the part of the unfeeling economist. The

poor are not merely cared for; they are courted.

And here the more wary friends of the new movement would be willing to rest and be thankful, if the course of events could make it possible to do so. And well they might be. So far, they have filled the generous part of the friends of the poor, giving the people the benefits of Socialism without having to accept its responsibilities. The force of public opinion and the power of law have been directed to secure the better distribution of wealth, leaving to private enterprise to go toiling on at the even more difficult task of its production. If any business appeared to be specially profitable, it was called a monopoly and taken over by the State. Only the leavings of the State, the more difficult and uncertain industries, such as agriculture, were left to private enterprise. The State extended to many of its citizens the comfort of Socialism, leaving them at the same time to live their own lives as they please, with the full rights of individualism. For example,

the government undertakes the duty of finding work at full wages for the unemployed. It would seem reasonable that if it does this, it should have some voice in the previous careers of those whom it thus undertakes the care of, and the course of whose lives has led up to the need of its intervention. This would at once become clear if the pattern nation ever did go on to complete Socialism. For of it the foundation principle is, not only that the State gives every man his work to do, but sees that he does it, aided by a penal system to enforce the duty, and that he does it, moreover, steadily all through his working life. If you imported into full Socialism the freedom of the semi-Socialist state, for men to work or not as they please, a crowded nation would soon be starving. For though many men might be willing to work fairly, the idleness of the unwilling, if unchecked, would destroy the whole industry of the people.

Under semi-Socialism all difficulties are avoided. The pleasant half of the new system is taken, but its disagreeable com-

plement is left. Its leaders seek to combine the comfort of Socialism without its discipline with the freedom of individualism without its spur, competition. They glory in the beneficence of the Socialistic state, but do not face its responsibilities ; and denounce the tyrannical capitalist system, while they live on the fruits of its industry. For, in this transition state, things will be kept going by drawing on the accumulated wealth of the community, and by the impetus of the habits of industry and thrift that have grown up under the centuries of freedom and self-help. In truth, the people of our pattern nation will be in a period of slack water, enjoying themselves with paddling about, and not yet having to work the labouring oar by which progress is made. Small young communities, amid boundless virgin soil, and surrounded by all the natural conditions of plenty, where wealth grows as much by the bounty of nature as by the industry of man, should they wish to make experiments, could prolong this transition state for a considerable time ; in fact,

until they had to face the problems of matured national life. But widely different would be the case of our densely-peopled, pattern nation in Europe. Such a nation has to maintain a persistent effort to live, and it will not be able to hold its own long in the European struggle without the impetus to industry of either one system or the other—the incentive of competition or the compulsion of complete Socialism (if, indeed, such a system prove to be possible).

Accordingly, in our pattern nation, after the experience of a generation or less—and what is that in the life of a people?—a falling off in production will become manifest, and a stationary condition of industry will set in. The decay of the spirit of private enterprise, and the growth of a national habit of mingled extravagance and dependence upon others, which government paternalism naturally leads to, will be a general predisposing cause of the decline. There will be an all-round falling off in the productivity of labour. Men will begin to realise that Socialism is a force only as regards one-half of the indus-

trial system. It can readily make laws equalising the distribution of wealth, but no laws can equalise the efforts for its production, except indeed by reducing the strenuous to the standard of the idle. The decline of energy in the worker will also have been promoted by the belief which will have been instilled into his mind, that he is morally entitled to whatever is the product of his work, and that it is only the unjust conditions of industry, which have so far prevailed, which limit his reward to mere wages. There is in this way a sort of moral sanction pronounced for his not being too industrious: since why should he toil to make other people's fortunes? And what man can be expected to be very zealous under a system by which he and his fellows are prevented from coming by their own? Thus in the pattern nation the old motto which we used to see inscribed upon the banners in processions of the wage-earners, "Labour conquers all," obtains a political rather than an industrial fulfilment, and the natural instinct of us men to be as lazy as we can, is sanc-

tified by the principle of being as lazy as we ought.

But in two important directions lessened production will be definitely felt. One will be in the now enlarged sphere of State and municipal industries. These, in a thorough Democracy, can never be worked upon the lines of the strenuous industries of private enterprise. At first some show of effort, such as is necessary under competition, may be made; but before long the industrial enterprises of the popular government will be animated by the principles of the political spirit, not the commercial spirit. It is in the nature of things that this should be so, and it will not be permanently altered by the accident of circumstances. Indeed, it is to escape the struggle of the commercial side of life that the State system of industries is started, and the freedom from this struggle is the reason of their popularity. The more industries are taken over, the larger the army of State or City employees becomes, and these, acting as one man at the ballot-box and fighting for

their personal wants, are a power that the average voter of the country is neither able nor indeed anxious to combat. For they will have the sympathy of the wage-earners; as theirs is the cause of labour, and the people are, as we have said, generous to their brethren, even where they have nothing to gain directly themselves. In the ample range of State industries the wage-earners will dictate their own conditions.

In saying this, do we impute any unworthiness to the State employees in our pattern nation? Far from it. On the contrary, we look forward to a continuous improvement in the workers, and, at any rate, they will be as unselfish as any other men in the community would be. Only they will be a mass of men who are without the incentive to effort of either the one system of industry or the other, either the competitive system or the complete Socialist system. We certainly could not truthfully claim for them greater industry or self-denial than would be displayed under similar conditions

by the most cultured and ambitious classes. And what would be the condition of the professions of law, or medicine, or literature, if in them all were secured enough for comfortable living, but none allowed to shoot ahead and make a fortune ; if there were no struggle and no effective penalty for slackness ; while the wrongs and hardships that will harass men in all callings were humanely and continuously made topics of State attention and redress in Parliament or municipal body ? Those professions would soon decline in efficiency, and so will the numerous State or City industries of our Democratic pattern nation. They will be monopolies firmly established, and surrounded by all the causes that promote expense and inefficiency while they paralyse energy. In them there will be a gradual falling-off in productiveness.

If we turn to the industries that are still in private hands we shall find a similar decline. When laws controlling private industry are undertaken by the Socialist they certainly propose to accomplish an excellent

object, namely, to improve the lot of the wage-earner. This has been so bad in the past, that all fair men are agreed that it is now the first business of our civilisation to put it upon a better basis. The only question is, under which system of industry will you do it—under the free or under the Socialistic? Under the semi-Socialism of our pattern nation it is indeed sought to accomplish this good object; but the movement is not merely humanitarian, it is also largely political. Animating the whole purpose of the movement is the conviction that the present system of industry is unsound, and that it must in due time be supplanted by the collective system. The sincere Socialists are never weary of proclaiming this, and they shape their measures for regulating industry now, with one eye ever directed towards this consummation. They certainly desire to help the wage-earners; but if, in doing this, they also so impair the position of the capitalist that in time he will not find the game worth playing, can they be dissatisfied? Certainly not. For

what must happen then? Why, simply that the State shall take the industry over, and so far their perfect ideal be realised.

Thus in our pattern nation the Socialist power will develop a code for industry and wages, impelled thereto by mingled feelings of humanity and political foresight. It will be based upon an excellent ideal, but without due account being taken of natural difficulties. They will insist upon more than can be permanently secured under any human system. They pass generous laws for the worker, and industrial conditions are left to adjust themselves to them; but unhappily they will not do this always. It is one of the facts of life that at times men, though they labour industriously, yet get no return for their toil. The husbandman, work he ever so hard, too often, owing to bad seasons, loses his crop. The fisherman toils all night and gets nothing. The miner bores to no purpose in the earth in his search for the hidden treasures. And in all walks of life where men are left free to earn their bread there will be disappointments, unfair

results, and wrongs too, which, when brought out into the light of day, no one could or would justify, but which can be got rid of only by getting rid of the struggle of life itself. Half of the evils of life have to be dealt with by putting up with them. In free industries also millions of capital are lost in unsuccessful ventures, and thousands of investors beggared.

The wage-earners in our pattern nation, however, are secured by law wages and hours of work that the law considers right. But these can only be maintained permanently where the product from their labour is sufficient to meet those demands, and also to provide for the contingencies of natural losses, such as we have glanced at,—renewals of plant and the other charges on the industry, which often must be laid by for, in anticipation, years before the actual want. In the State-regulated as well as the State-owned industries (chiefly those carried on in the cities) the good results are insisted upon in all eventualities, and no adequate provision is made beforehand for

distant charges and for unfortunate turns, such as the farmer and miner have to lay by for. They are left to be levied by enhanced prices on the general community, or met by votes out of the public Treasury. But our pattern nation must hold its own in the competition for the markets of the world, that is ever fiercely increasing in intensity. Even as regards its home affairs, this favouring of certain lines of industry at the general expense is a state of things that is possible only during the semi-Socialist period. If the State had to work all industries it could have no privileged ones; all that were necessary for the national existence must be carried on, and carried on so as to be productive, to compete with other nations, and also to provide for those losses that we have referred to. During the semi-Socialist period, then, the favoured industries, whether owned by the State or still left outside, will fall off in that productiveness which would be necessary for their healthy and continued maintenance if they stood alone.

There will be another cause also of the

decline of production in our pattern nation. It will arise, not from the workers, but from employers—the unhappy capitalist. His case, too, asks for consideration. Some people seem to think that they can launch a policy of antagonism to capital; can direct taxation against it, not for financial needs but to promote Socialist projects; can discredit, in popular estimation, thrift, and the qualities that make men independent; can give at least a left-handed support to the party which proclaims that they will confiscate property when they get power; and yet that, all the while, the energetic few are to go on daring greatly and struggling bravely to accumulate, just as they used to do in the past, when they had free scope for their enterprise, absolute security for their winnings, and a general sentiment of tolerant approval for their success.

A prominent feature of the new ideas under Socialism will be a subtle and quiet, but widespread spirit of contempt for the keen industry, thrift, and self-denial by which alone men can accumulate the wealth of nations.

Labour, if the mark of man's imperfection, is also the test of his merit, and is, in truth, a necessity for his nature. But this gospel of hard work becomes unfashionable, and so far from those who represent its practical working being held in public esteem, both they and the labour which they demand become discredited. Invectives will be hurled by most popular men against "the despotism of the employer," "the greed of capital," "the interest of the wage-master to have as many hungry people running after his job as possible," "the wealth of the workers being tossed about from gambler to gambler." These denunciations, true as regards a few, will at once provoke and voice a popular sentiment against the whole class of employers, and even against the cause of labour itself. For the discredited employers represent the cause of labour too, or at least that side of it which tells of its imperative need to mankind and reminds men that they have obligations to labour to discharge, as well as rights with regard to it to enforce. Yet in the face

of all this, some people, we say, expect the hapless employer to go struggling on, as before, to amass wealth for better men to tax. It is easy throwing stones in wells, but who shall pull them out ?

This attitude of the semi-Socialist state towards thrift and private effort produces its natural effect. You cannot have everything. You cannot combine opposite results under any policy ; nor can you have the advantages of enterprise and the struggle of industry, together with the satisfaction of a system of no struggle. This same struggle of life is a serious thing for any man to face. Most men will avoid it if they can. Those who have gained prizes in life often talk complaisantly of it in old age ; but not one of them will say that they would have faced it if they could have comfortably avoided it, or that they would have faced it unless they were assured of their reward in case they won. The good man in ancient story, when reproached for still going on serving the Gods, though they in return sent him nothing but ills and rebuffs, replied, " But I will still

serve the Gods." This pious feeling will not survive in the capitalist class of our pattern nation. They will gradually become less strenuous, less saving, less able, and less anxious too, to engage in those daring ventures which bring about great industrial results. And without this daring leadership the mass of men may toil and get little for their labour. Thus there will be a weakening of the industrial vigour of the people all along, from the captain of industry down through the ranks of the workers.

A further factor in the decreasing production of our pattern nation, and one the proportions of which will be ever enlarging, will be found in the problem of providing for the unemployed. It is ever a difficult matter to keep all the people of a nation profitably employed. Part of the difficulty arises from defects, common to men, of which we are all ourselves conscious. It is not every one who is willing to work on steadily during his life, or, if willing, who has foresight to provide beforehand for periods of industrial

depressions. When those periods come, all agree that special efforts should be made by the State or the municipal authority to help those who need help over the crisis. But the aid should be only a temporary one, given under conditions that would not tempt men to neglect independent industry. In this as in so many other directions the principle of Socialism comes in quietly, at first in disguise. The State giving employment at a crisis is developed into its being the duty of the State to provide work for whoever demands it.

When you in this way transfer from each man the task of taking care of himself and transfer it to the State, you arrive at the foundation postulate of Socialism. And nothing could be more proper under the complete Socialist system, where you would control the whole of men's lives, and, when necessary, compel them to work ; but nothing would prove more disastrous under the free system, and so long as you let men do as they please and live their own lives till they want the State aid. The political complexion of employment by the people's government,

and the demand for it as a right, disguise the fact that it is simply (so long as the free system lasts) another form of charity, drawing upon the substance of one class of the people to assist another. And it is proper as a charity; but when it is elevated into a right of citizenship, the need for it spreads abroad in the most diffusive manner, for the great impelling power of free industry, the primary obligation of each one to take care of himself, becomes lost. The situation is a false one, as has been pointed out with regard to other aspects of this subject. It has imposed upon it the obligations of Socialism without its rights; and it secures to citizens the benefits of the free system, while it relieves them of its responsibilities.

It must not be supposed that our pattern nation will deliberately accept such an impossible position. It will drift into it; at first impelled by that natural wish to help distress any way, which originates and disguises so many charitable projects that in the end mean Socialism. But the more our pattern nation provides for the unemployed

upon these political conditions, the more numerous grow their ranks. The more the government does, the more it may do and must do. As the circle of government help widens, the principle of self-help is paralysed, and as those who are helped must be paid for by those who are still working for themselves, the position would before long become impossible, and free industry would find itself overweighted by the burden. The unemployed would be used by the State to a great extent on unproductive works, while they would be paid by taxation of money which, in private hands, would have been spent in paying the wages of independent workers and fruitful work.

Thus the State undertaking to provide for the unemployed will be one more of the causes of the general falling off in the productiveness of our pattern nation. A period of slow decline will have set in, at first unobserved. Production will be stationary, private enterprise enfeebled, the cost of living rising, a decline in prosperity experienced, and generally that condition prevailing

in the body politic which a man speaks of when he says that he does not feel well, and that something is wrong with him. The conditions of semi-Socialism are unstable. The pattern nation has been resting upon neither one system of industry nor the other. The principles of the free system have been emasculated, while the responsibilities of the Socialistic have not been accepted. The community has been living under an unhealthy stimulant, and is feeling the consequences.

The question will then present itself to all men, what is to be done to set things right? This will be a vital issue indeed, at the point which we suppose our pattern semi-Socialist nation to have reached; since, when you advance to a certain stage on the road to Socialism, to go on farther is to go on altogether. After a certain point in the Socialist transformation of industry is reached, there would not be sufficient energy left in the community to stand by itself. Elements of national strength, that it had taken centuries to build up, would be so impaired by an easy

but dependent style of living, that the necessary conditions of the life of freedom and individualism would not be there. If you were suddenly to give such a people industrial liberty, with, however, the responsibility of taking care of themselves, they would not be strong enough to grasp it and use it aright. It is one characteristic of the Socialist methods that they create the need for their further expansion; and when you have taken one step you find that, to make it safe, you must take another. It is a serious question, therefore, for our pattern nation, how far they will go on the road to Socialism; for they may go so far that even if they want to come back they would have nothing left to come back to. They may have to go on, even though they do not know to what they are going.

In this critical stage of our pattern nation the more wary friends of Socialism would be glad to cling to the semi-Socialist state of affairs, even at the cost of some compromise. But not so the ardent votaries of the new faith. They will now loudly proclaim that it

is half-measures which are paralysing the land, and that the true and only remedy is to advance to complete Socialism. They will ridicule the notion of weak believers in the cause, that the true mission of Socialism is only to clear the course of industrial life and give all a fair start, letting then the best man win; when its true purpose is, as they have all along proclaimed, to do away with the competitive race altogether. They will argue that it is unfair to any system to judge of it by partial results, when you do not give full effect to its principles; and that giving this full effect is the true remedy for any evils that their partial application may give rise to. They will also urge that—as even those statesmen who favour only half-measures of Socialism often admit, it is but a matter of time when full Socialism is reached—it is better to accept the inevitable outcome now, in good time, than to delay it to no purpose. It is only the difference, say they, between the express, which runs right through, and the lumbering goods train,

which goes to the very same terminus, delaying from time to time at wayside stations.

And certainly there is force in this contention. The thorough Socialist is the only consistent man in the Socialist circle of our pattern nation. That is one reason why he is so powerful. If his system is a true one, if we are agreed that it is coming for our children, then the objections to our trying it now for ourselves are merely opportunism. There are certainly evils enough in the present system to call for some remedy. The thorough Socialist will point to those industrial ills that are not only prevailing, but in some cases newly developing, and, as he looks for salvation to the State and to it only, he will demand that the State should undertake the whole responsibility of the industrial life of the country. The time will then have come when our pattern nation will have to decide whether it will commit its destinies to complete Socialism.

CHAPTER VI

THE DUTIES OF FREEDOM

AND here let it be said that the free system, if it is to be maintained, must show that it has in it the capacity to ensure progress in industrial conditions, and to satisfy the just aspirations of men. If it cannot do this, heaven forbid that any arguments or theories should save it. If it is true that complete Socialism will enable humanity to achieve a new life and be happy, by all means let us have it. It is only because it is a delusion that we object to it. Above all, the free system must show itself able to grapple with the problem of the pauperism of nations. No civilisation could be saved that proved itself unable to cope with that problem. A great part of the success of Socialism is owing to

the earnest way in which it has called attention to the condition of the poor ; and to the fact that, while charging the free system with being unable to improve things, it boldly undertakes to banish poverty when its system is adopted. Not a few welcome Socialism simply because they think any change is good if it promises relief from our present ills. It is one of the misfortunes and also the mistakes of the time, that many are ready to discredit the free system, as a true guide to progress, before its capabilities for good have ever been properly tested under the new and favourable conditions, which the improved capacities of the mass of the people and the awakened sympathy for them among all classes have established. They overlook the progress that has already been made under the free system ; some have even sought to question it.

But the fact is that the outlook under that system is full of hope, if men would devote their energies to working for progress under it. Though much remains to be done, the most prominent feature in the social history

of the past century is the continuous improvement in the condition of the people. In the last fifty years wages have been in some industries doubled, in all largely increased, while the cost of living and the hours of work have been reduced. Degrading conditions of life that attracted no attention a century ago, and were not even complained of by the poor themselves, are now dragged to the light of day and felt by all men to be intolerable. As the public conscience became more awakened, continuous improvement has been going on in the housing of the poor, the wages of the labourer, the cheapening of food, the education of the young, the easing of taxation on the masses, and also in the rising up in all classes of a sympathetic feeling for them. This growing amelioration of social conditions is a good deal owing to the improvement of the poor themselves. And may we not also look for an improvement in the wealthy classes? Is the progress of education and enlightenment to affect the poor only? May we not expect that the rich shall grow more and more

sensible to the duties of property, and in time come to regard the misuse of wealth, or its vulgar ostentation, as quite as deserving of censure as any of the failings for which the poor are blamed?

There are, however, two questions especially that the free system must grapple with if it is to make good its hold on men. One is facilitating the development of the wage-earner into a profit-sharer. The other is the purging of the free system from abuses that have grown up around it, but which are no true part of the system itself. At one time it was the faith of the more advanced friends of the worker that his true destiny was, under some system of co-operation, to gradually rise into the position of a partner in the industry in which he was also a wage-earner. For the effective carrying out of this reform, a high class of qualities would be demanded from the men, suited to the new industrial condition; but the growing improvement in the people themselves and the success that has already attended many co-operative industries, justify us in

regarding the movement as offering one solution for our industrial difficulties, if only the workers are willing to try it. It only wants their energies to be turned towards it, instead of towards State Socialism. Certainly, every man who was ready to display some of that effort and self-denial which is essential for success in any of the learned professions, would be able to rise out of the ranks of the wage-earners and have a share in the enterprise in which he was working. There would be no need to ask for any change of human nature, or to invoke those superhuman virtues which are assumed as necessary before the complete Socialist ideal can be carried out. Not all the wage-earners might have the energy to rise out of the ranks; but most of them, we may believe, would not remain wage-earners only under the employer, but would be also profit-sharers with him. Others would have co-operative enterprise of their own, under the discipline and direction of their own captain of industry. At any rate their industrial destinies would be in their own hands

and not in those of wire-pullers. Nor would it be too much to expect from the advanced workers of the coming time, that they would have the self-denial necessary for putting by the surplus profits of their co-operative industry in good years to meet the losses of the bad ones. A continuous improvement in men themselves is a condition precedent to their uplifting under any system of industry. But the free system demands only the ordinary merits of human nature, not the superlative virtues of Socialism.

This is one feasible method of escape for the majority of workers from the system of mere wage-earning, an effective way of settling the vexed question of how the worker is to get his proper share of the wealth he has helped to produce, and also how he is to effectually participate in the results of new machinery and labour-saving appliances. These would all be at the command of co-operative enterprise, and would ensure to the manual worker not only his full share of what his own labour produces, but also his portion of that which

must be credited to machinery, which would thus, instead of being his competitor, become his servant. At the same time such a system of industry would be in full accord with the principles of freedom. Each man would be free to work out his own life, and property, the reward of individual exertion, would be widely diffused. Apart from its being impracticable, what makes the whole idea of Socialism repellent to so many thoughtful men, notwithstanding the relief which it promises to the poor, is the way in which its methods are mixed up with political management, with the wire-pulling of the Caucus, the domination of the "Boss," and the extinction of personal independence.

It is no part of our task to define the industrial methods of freedom in the coming age. It is enough for us to maintain that if only men will hold fast by liberty, freedom may be trusted to find the solution of its own difficulties. But without dogmatising upon the new methods which the enlarged experience and growing improvement of the

wage-earners may in time point out to them, we may safely say that the true goal for labour to have worked towards is to rise from the condition of wage-earners to that of profit-sharers, but preserving, at the same time, individual freedom. And this would have been its natural destiny had not its energies been turned aside by the plausible but enervating principles of paternalism. Had the zeal and ability which has been directed towards supplanting the free system altogether, been devoted to bring about favourable conditions for a people's system of co-operation, Western civilisation would be farther on the true road of progress than it is at present. But the real advance of the wage-earner has been impeded by his cause being mixed up with the specious professions of Socialism; and announced as an impending victory at the ballot-box, instead of being vindicated, and dealt with upon the enlightened principles of free industry. When, however, the difficulties of the new system, which will become more apparent the nearer we come to it, dispose men to consider other methods of industrial

progress, the friends of freedom must be prepared to show that their system has feasible ways, open to the honest worker, of rising out of the condition of a wage-earner.

And not less important will it be to rid the system of free industry, with property as the reward of labour, from the abuses which have been growing up around it, but which are morbid growths, not the natural offshoots of the parent system. That a man should be entitled to direct his own industry and to keep what he can lawfully make by it, is an intelligible principle. But this principle is distorted out of all semblance of its true self by the operation of trusts, combines, corners, knock-outs, and all the other machinations of lawless monopoly. These methods are crimes, according to the common law of England and of America. The old decisions of the English Law Courts are clear in their condemnation, as crimes, of combinations against the freedom of trade and industry, as they "discourage labour and restrain persons from getting an honest

livelihood and put it in the power of other persons to set what price they please upon commodities, all which are manifest inconveniences to the public." Merchants were sent to gaol in England a hundred years ago for malpractices which are trivial compared with those which have been openly perpetrated of late, particularly in the United States. In 1800 a hop merchant was convicted in England and sentenced to some months' imprisonment for buying up all the goods in one line in a particular locality and combining with others to bring about an artificial rise in the price. The Judge, in passing sentence, said: "The same law that protects the proprietors of merchandise takes an interest also in the concerns of the public by protecting the poor man against the avarice of the rich; and from all time it has been an offence against the public to commit practices to enhance the price of merchandise coming to market, particularly the necessaries of life, for the purpose of enriching an individual. The freedom of trade has its legal limits." Without accepting

the political economy of this judgment in its entirety, we can safely say that the law of England condemns many of those combinations of capitalists which have come into fashion in our time and by which some of the most gigantic fortunes which we read of were amassed.

It is the undoubted right of the State, while it maintains freedom of trade and protects its necessary product, property, to restrain abuses in regard to either of them. If we inquire how it is that those abuses have become rampant and gone on, little challenged in the most Democratic nation of Western civilisation, we find that the reasons are twofold. The Socialist party do not make earnest war on them, as they see in them a serious menace to the whole system of freedom. Nothing can render that system so unstable, and nothing could better pave the way for the State stepping in and owning these huge monopolies, in the hope of returning to the people the wealth which now goes into private hands. The Socialist points to it as a good object lesson of what

the Socialist State could do. And there is no doubt that the gigantic accumulation of wealth in a few hands which these unlawful enterprises bring about, do endanger, and naturally so, the institution itself of property, as they present such a strained application of the principle that a man should be allowed to keep what he has earned.

Another cause of the impunity that these abuses enjoy, is the weakness of Democracy in its every-day government. It is surprising how many abuses the public put up with quietly under a real people's government. In a crisis, when the masses are roused, its strength is irresistible; but in the daily round of politics the party in power seek to avoid difficulties, and to make as few enemies as possible. In a thorough Democracy the last thing thought of is the people. Particular classes fighting for themselves, active interests demanding some concession, the public servants contending for better wages, the tenants of the State calling for remissions of rent, special industries seeking indul-

gence,—these, and particular interests such as these, will prevail under the easy-going sway of popular government, over what may be the true interest of the people as a whole. There is no central authority independent enough to insist upon the rights of the public generally, and in their name to defy the sectional claims of self-interest. It is the particular interests that are ever active ; the vast quiescent public is moved only upon great occasions. Things drift along the course of the strongest current. Money then is power indeed ; and though the capitalist is denounced, his influence remains and prevails. Surely, however, we may hope that if peoples remain free, they will be roused, and their governments impelled to grapple with abuses which even aristocratic governments condemned as offences against the poor. We see some prospect of this, even now, in the United States, with regard to the rings and corners that prey upon that country, in the indignation which has been excited through the recent revelations of systematic bribery of

the State Legislatures by public companies. The cynical avowal of the system, by the officials who bribed, has astonished observers from other countries. Their apparent unconsciousness of guilt in the matter is amazing, and betokens the effect of familiarity and long unquestioned usage. In speculating upon the prospects of free industry in our pattern nation we certainly assume that the system of freedom will prove strong enough to put down those abuses, and vindicate itself equally from the reproach of abject poverty and the insolent aggressions of wealth.

CHAPTER VII

THE OUTLOOK

ASSUMING, then, that the Free System will be able to cope with those evils which have sprung from liberty, or, rather indeed not so much from liberty as from license, we recur to the question, will our pattern nation, after a fair experience of semi-Socialism, decide to go on to complete Socialism?

Let us recall the situation as it will then claim the attention of the men who think. Even the partial experience which they will have had of Socialism at work will make them ponder. It will be becoming gradually plain that questions relating to the foundations upon which rest not only industrial life but popular freedom and civilisation itself, are being brought to the fore by

experiments which were entered upon in a light-hearted manner. For while in our civilisation human industry has escaped from the condition of servitude into that of free industry, it has, so far, had the spur of competition to keep things going, and the duty cast upon each man of taking care of himself. As things developed, men have become restive under the irksomeness of these conditions, and the disposition was fostered to get an easier life, by reverting to the old state of tutelage, but this time under the people's government. The real nature of the movement is at first disguised by all being done under popular forms. But the difference remains between the two states of national and social life, and it is total and fundamental. The one is based upon freedom; the foundation of the other is despotism.

The trend of human passions and aspirations varies from time to time, and the popular feeling has in this age been so engrossed with the needs of social amelioration (which after all, though an important part of, is not the whole of man's life), and

the charm of equality, that it waxes cold upon its old love of liberty,—the more so as it is assured that the new despotism is to be its own, a people's despotism, and that it will be an effective engine by which to secure both equality and also easy conditions of life. An important factor in the movement is that all the training of the wage-earner in his Trade Unions, and also in his political organisations, has accustomed him not only to submit to absolutism for the sake of securing material advantages, but to pride himself upon the discipline which it enforces. Hence personal independence and the claims of individualism have come to be regarded by him as a poor thing, a thing not to be proud of, but to be distrusted. The impetus of this feeling, which is natural to men who and whose fathers have been engaged in continuous conflicts with employers, animates the wage-earners of our pattern nation during the early stages of the semi-Socialist period. Each new restriction upon industrial freedom, each command of the law to a man not to work, even in his own home, except as it

permits him, each additional industry taken out of private hands and vested in the State, each new device for undermining individualism, are hailed with satisfaction, as so many victories over capitalism, and that freedom of industry which is necessarily involved in competition. The industrial ideas of the Middle Ages are revived, only this time by the other end of the social scale, in the hope of securing for the wage-earner, by the force of government, easy conditions of life and labour. And just as in politics, the workers have accepted the discipline of the Caucus, so they hail the rule of the State "Boss" in industry. The motives that move mankind are the same as they were three centuries ago, but the incidence of their operation is changed. The unspent force of the feelings inspired and the habits formed during generations of conflicts with masters gives popularity to the new system which proposes to supersede the old masters altogether. And men heed not of the morrow and the new master which it will bring!

Thus the Socialistic movement, while it is generated amidst the fervour of Democracy, advances towards Despotism for its perfect work. Its course is round the circle again, to absolutism in government. But as time goes on, the people of our pattern nation will begin to realise, even under the evasive half-Socialist system, that all this must be paid for. Clearly, the more we invoke the State direction of our daily lives and daily work, the less voice we can have in them ourselves. There must be government somewhere, and in so far as we abandon self-government, we must have government by somebody else. As for the citizen of the pattern nation, he soon finds that his lines are cast in statutory places. He lives not by bread alone, but by all the sections of the Act of Parliament which regulates his industry. Man goes forth to his work and to his labour, but only as the State "Boss" allows him. If the exigencies of industry call for longer hours of work for a time (at a special wage), the effort can be made, only if the Minister gives his permission. The

working man may be eased from struggle, but he finds himself surrounded by such conditions that he must always remain a working man. He may be anxious to rise out of the ruck and conscious of power, but he must not think of striking out a line for himself and becoming an employer. His vitality must deaden down to the level of the rank and file. It would be out of place for you to tell him of the strenuous life and the rewards of the strenuous life.

If nature does assert herself in the case of some energetic man, and he seeks out a new line of work, — to start some small business perhaps, — he is at once faced by the difficulties and limitations that beset the private employer. If he essays to keep a shop, he finds that the law fixes conditions as to the hours he can keep open and the wages he must pay, which well-established businesses that have fought their way under freedom may bear, but which prohibit in him those early struggles that used to mark the beginner in business, and which are necessary if he is to fight his way upward.

The industrial laws of our pattern nation claim to make the worker comfortable, but they leave him where they found him. If under any system merit is allowed to rise, it can only be by leaving mediocrity behind it. If prizes are given to some, others must go without. But it is not in the genius of the Socialist system for any one to rise above any one else, or for there to be any prizes. Its message to the worker is to rest and be thankful, but particularly to rest where he is. For an essential part of the policy of the pattern nation during its semi-Socialist period is the drastic control by the State of such industries as are still left in private hands. The private employer can carry on his business only under the conditions which the government prescribes. He can no more work upon lines of his own than can one of his men. The Paternal State directs both. It has become their Trade Union, whose behests must be implicitly obeyed, for it has the law behind it and the whole power of the Government to enforce its orders. No need now of voluntary

devotion to our own agencies : all are subject to the Statute law. In order to enforce its system of industry, the government promulgates codes of regulations, at once comprehensive and minute, and as no law can execute itself, corps of Inspectors are provided who are constantly supervising and inquiring and inspecting, compiling returns and making reports to government, considering applications for special leave to work extra time during periods of business emergencies, and announcing the scale of wages for overtime, when overtime is permitted, granting other trade concessions, and also enforcing restrictions ; at times congratulating the Minister of Labour upon the progress of humanity, at other times prosecuting employers according to law ; always zealous for the people, and for the control of the State over everybody. Further, if any business enterprise should prove to be profitable, let the private promoter beware of the vigilant Minister whose duty it is to look after the industry of the nation. Why these monopolies? Why

should not the State take over this lucrative business, and the unwieldy profits go *to* the people, instead of being wrung from them?

The longer men live under this half-system, the more they will realise what the complete rule of Socialism would be. The fact will be brought home to them, that if we are to have the collective working of the nation's industry, it can only be directed by a power that is despotic. The government of men is a hard enough thing when it is concerned only with their public conduct, and with affairs properly political. But when it is to control their daily lives and to regulate their industry, even the partial experience of the semi-Socialist period will show that freedom, and especially personal liberty, must be given up. Under it the right to do as we thought best with ourselves, to arrange our own industrial ventures in our own way, to be the architect of our own fortunes according to our own plan—in short, individual freedom—would be gradually getting more and more circumscribed. It

would become plain to all men that when Socialism undertook the whole duty of government, personal rights, individual freedom, the dissent of minorities, the friction of private rights, would throw the State machine out of gear. If we are to have in government our industrial master, we must render to it implicit obedience, or we would soon be wanting bread.

What will bring this home to people the more effectually will be the experience which will have been gained during the half-and-half period of the power of the State employees to use the ballot-box to secure their own conditions of work, and the instability in government which will be brought about owing to this disturbing element in politics. This condition of things, clearly, could continue only during the transition period. Obviously it could not be tolerated if the State had in its hands all the industries of the country to direct. If, then, you sought to mix up political rights with industrial management, the power of the elector with the subordination of the workshop, public industry

would soon get waterlogged. The parts would prove greater than the whole. Thus the loss of personal freedom would be seen by the people of the pattern nation to be the necessary consequence of the complete system which was now looming up straight before them. This awkward fact, which is kept in the background during the earlier stages of the movement, in which the responsibilities of Socialism have been evaded, while its generous concessions have been enjoyed, will then at length be realised by all men as the price that must be paid before they can enjoy the new dispensation. Experience will have taught them that you cannot have the comfort of paternalism without the power of the father as well as his care. As the Socialist authority, Mr. Sidney Webb, says: "To suppose that the industrial affairs of a complicated industrial State can be run without strict subordination and discipline, without obedience to orders, and without definite allowance for maintenance, is to dream, not of Socialism, but of Anarchism."

But when the people of our pattern nation have got thus far, a momentous question will then present itself to them—namely, what sort of government is this industrial despotism of Democracy, to which we are to commit the control of our lives, and which is to direct the industry of ourselves and our children?

While it must be despotic in its powers, in order to do its work, it will spring from the same source and be moulded by the same influences as now produce the city governments in the United States. These are the practical examples of the consequences that follow when, in the Democracy of the most advanced people in the world, the political authority takes in hand the management of industrial affairs. The style of work to be done, the largesses to be distributed, the wire-pulling necessary to maintain the Socialist autocracy will be of the same kind, only more extensive and demoralising in their scope and operation. It would be the lowest type of the Spoils system. Controlling the common

funds, allotting work, pleasant and unpleasant, to competing citizens, appointing the vast army of industrial officials, granting concessions, enforcing duties, remitting penalties,—these functions, and such as these, would represent lower strata of public affairs than even those reached under the City “Boss” in America. Notwithstanding the fictions about there being no scope for selfishness in the new social state, there would be ample opportunity for personal aggrandisement and for grasping the good things going by those who know how to work the not unforgotten game of city politics. There would be all those good turns to be sought, and those grievances to be righted by some friend at court, for which the Ward “Boss” in America, and the Member of Parliament or of the County Council in England, are now so useful. No explanation of how the thing would really work is needed by any one who has honestly observed how industrial undertakings are even now managed under the popular dispensation. And the same results

will follow in older lands whenever the same Democratic conditions are applied to State or municipal industrial work. They are already making their appearance, and similar causes will in due time be found to produce just the same effects in Europe, as they do in the advanced communities of the United States.

To have a chance of a safe life under the industrial conditions of the new system you would need to have rulers as wise as Solomon and as upright as Washington. And Socialist writers, in speculating upon their ideal state, take for granted that their powerful, all-directing, and all-paternal government will be not only wise, but honest, and they calculate upon public rectitude, and the unselfish devotion of all to the good of all, as a matter of course. No allowance is made for those distorting influences which we see before our eyes do now pervert from their proper scope institutions that are in themselves wise and just, and which, if only worked as good men should work them, would produce such results that no man would ask for any more reform.

For what can be nobler than the purpose of a free government of the whole people for the whole people, whether it be in city or State? But what now, if when we make this tremendous experiment that is proposed to our civilisation we should find that the rulers of the Socialist community were like Boss Tweed and his colleagues? What if similar causes produced the like results, and that under Socialism we awoke to the fact that not mere city matters, such as the making of our roads, the lighting of our streets, the regulation of markets, but the personal rights and the dearest interests of ourselves and our families, were in the power, not of the people, nor even of the street, but of the wire-puller?

We have not referred to the fact that before our pattern nation can go on to Socialism there must be a general and final plunder of private property. The principle is that the State is to own the land and all the instruments of production and exchange. Obviously, without this you cannot have that Socialism for which so much is promised, and which is to abolish the present unjust condi-

tions of industrial life. And without it Socialism could not accept, and cannot be expected to accept, the responsibilities of its system. Those responsibilities, in the semi-social stage of affairs, it evades. Its more cautious advocates either preserve silence, or are vague in their explanations as to the precise manner in which the property is to be secured. Gradual taxation, the pressure of which will be dissipated amid the growing prosperity of the new conditions of life; a time limit during which present proprietors and perhaps even their sons may enjoy their estates; a fading away in the value and use of the private property, as things develop;—these and such explanations as these are vaguely suggested by the wary advocates of the new movement. Its frank champions condescend to no such evasions. They say plainly that they will confiscate private property as soon as they can. It is pocket-picking made general and respectable by law. And they are truthful in their attitude, if not honest in their intentions. For where could the thousands of millions that would be

needed for compensation be got? And what use would they be to the private owners under the new dispensation? Obviously, the confiscation of property, not its transformation from one form into another, is of the very essence of the new movement. To the owners it certainly does not much matter under which operation they are robbed. The one method is avowed and direct; the other has mixed with it the element of cunning. But the important point is, that neither can be carried out unless the people of our pattern nation have become demoralised. No honest people could accept this preliminary condition of Socialism. Yet without it Socialism is impossible.

We may add that no one who considers the complete scheme which Socialists propose can fail to see that it would be impossible under it to maintain the independence of the private home and family. But this is a fact which, doubtless, many adherents to the cause do not realise, and which is left in the background for the present. But in truth were Socialism possible, it is not alone the home

and the family that must be modified. The nature of man itself must be changed, and changed for the worse. Not only would there be no more need for the stronger qualities which brace men for the struggle of life, none wanted to lead and command where none would be required to follow and obey, but there would be no further place to be found for those milder virtues which are now the sanctifying element in human nature, and under the influence of which men aspire towards the attributes of God Himself. Aiding the feeble, supplying the wants of the needy, lifting up the fallen, all the agencies of mercy which now permeate the whole of social life—often working unseen and unknown except by the rescued themselves—all the impulses which go to make men sacrifice themselves for other men—for all these there would be no place in the completed scheme of Socialism. A great portion of human literature which illustrates those virtues and rallies men to their reverence would become meaningless. Nay, much of the sublime Beatitudes of the Saviour of mankind would be as void of

purpose for the sons of men as is the idle breeze wandering over the desert. The most noble qualities of our race would die out from want of use, like the limb of a body wasted away by atrophy and inaction. Their place would be filled by the paternalism of the State "Boss," and the provision for human needs by force of law, moulded and animated by the organised selfishness of the whole people, and the political alertness of each citizen to see that he got his share of the general bounty, and as much more as wire-pulling could get him.¹

But as things develop we may expect that the real nature of the new movement and its true consequences will be exposed by rival political parties with a vigour that was wanting, so long as its followers were but a struggling sect, with votes, however, that were useful to others. When the Socialists become sufficiently numerous in Legislatures to claim government for

¹ A judicious friend called the writer's attention to the fact that in the first edition of this book he had made no reference to this serious phase of Socialism.

themselves, their projects will no longer be described as harmless, visionary, not to be seriously taken. It will then be seen that whatever others had promised and vowed on their behalf, they had all along known their own minds, and that when they were strong enough to seize the government, they would also be ready to show an energy in putting down opposition that was new to see-saw politics. The day of half-Socialists will have passed, and rival parties will declare to the pattern nation what is before it, with a force and candour that will bring home to the people the fact that once again in man's history they are in the presence of the old conflict between freedom and despotism.

When the people of our pattern nation realise this they will pause. That ultimate power in a nation's affairs, the settled public opinion of the country, though it may be slow in forming and may fluctuate till it is consolidated by the lessons of experience, yet in the end it seems to settle down, pointing instinctively in the true direction. It will

be found to gradually declare itself, and to throw light through and to dispel many early fancies that played about the earlier stages of the proposed social revolution. That a thing is wrong, is a fact hard to get on with. Popular, plausible, acclaimed as inevitable and irresistible it may be;—but if it is wrong, this damning fact comes, at first to be felt almost imperceptibly, and then to be realised by all men, just as the most unobservant must in time be sensible of the irresistible dawn of day. Men, when they have time to realise it, will be staggered by the decisive fact that if they are to have Socialism they must give up freedom. And after all, liberty is dear to the heart of man. Personal freedom, the right to live our own lives, to direct our own energies, is the source of all true progress, and all that goes to make up the personal character of the man. When people have lived through the delusive experiences of semi-Socialism, and when they have come to that state in which they will be face to face with the crisis, in which they must make

a choice between freedom and Socialism, they will choose freedom.

But if they do not, what then? If the peoples of the West do embrace the principles which the Socialists so explicitly declare, and accept them as the true remedy for the ills of life, what will be the issue? Why, in that case it will be made clear that the present era of civilisation has done its work and run its appointed course. The element of progress in it will be gone. Things move quickly in our time, and the present century will see either Socialism discredited or Europe declining. A social system, the foundation of which is the sacrifice of freedom for ease, contains within itself the conditions of decay. A nation or a civilisation can become great and strong only by the men who compose it being individually strong. We know the qualities that make men strong,—industry, self-denial, courage to grapple with the troubles of life, and if need be to bear them, the power of relying on one's self and not leaning upon others. These are not the virtues of the new dispensation. But if

these are wanting, no social conditions, however generous or cultured, will prevent men from deteriorating; as is amply shown by some among us who are born to inherit wealth and an easy life. It is all the difference between the Scotsman and the South Sea Islander. If our Democracy is to ripen into Socialism and go to seed in the form of a popular despotism embraced for comfort's sake, and to enable us to enforce by law conditions of life that men's own efforts would not entitle them to,—if this is to be the outcome of Western civilisation, then it will decline; and not only so, but it ought to decline. It would be no longer an effective instrument for developing the human race. It would have shown that its virile force was worked out. Even drowsy China would have greater freedom of life and scope for individuality than would then be left to the peoples of the West. It would not be a match in the world's battle of industry for even the stagnant civilisation of the East. It would decline; and it would only remain to us to hope that there would in time spring from

its decay a new era of human progress that would be in accord with the laws of Providence and the needs of mankind, and therefore be adapted to promote the advancement of our race.



APPENDIX

IN 1906 an important party was returned at the General Election to the Imperial Parliament of England, whose advent was warmly welcomed by members of the present Government. Among the reforms which the advanced wing of this party demand shall be carried out by law are these :—

Nationalisation of the land at the earliest opportunity.

State ownership of railways, mines, and canals.

The minimum wage.

An eight hours day of work.

Relief works at Trade Union rates of wages for all who cannot find employment.

Wholesale reduction of mining rents and royalties.

Graduated taxation of incomes.

Old age pensions.

Free education of all grades and free meals for children whose parents are unable fully to support them.

Adult male and female suffrage, and payment by the State of Members of Parliament.

One of the leaders of the party tells us that we are at "the beginning of a revolution, . . .

the struggle for supremacy betwixt the disinherited toiling millions and their lords and masters.”

It certainly is a revolution which is proposed, and the only difference between it and that which, as we have seen, Macaulay feared, is that the one would be legal and the other illegal.

THE END

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