THE SOCIAL PROBLEM

LIFE AND WORK

BY

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"JOHN RUSKIN: SOCIAL REFORMER," ETC.

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PREFACE

This volume is designed to be an informal introduction to the science and art of social progress. It does not profess to furnish any sufficient outline of sociology or politics, but seeks to ask and answer certain preliminary questions which confront thinking men and women who are interested in work of social reform, and wish to reach satisfactory intelligible principles for their guidance in such work.

Its primary object is to enforce the recognition of the organic unity of the problem of social progress by showing the interactions of the many concrete "questions" and "movements" which divide the attention of social reformers.

The subject matter is approached first from the economic side because the most pressing aspects of the problem are more clearly seen and more definitely indicated in their economic bearings. The social problem is thus first presented as an economy of social forces operating upon the industrial plane. The claim of Political Economy, in its older and its newer forms, to handle successfully the Social Problem, as a whole, or in its separate issues, is examined and found wanting. By examining the nature of its defects we learn the true requisites of a social science which can furnish a satisfactory basis for an art of social progress.

This science and art of social utility is clearly sundered

from the old utilitarianism which was individualistic and hedonist in its standard, and purely quantitative in its method or calculus. To this new utilitarianism, so ordered as to give due recognition and rightful supremacy to the higher needs and satisfactions of man in society, the rights of individual property are referred for delimitation, and are set upon a rational basis. The part played by social co-operation, in the production of all forms of wealth and the determination of all forms of value, is investigated; and upon the results of this analysis the rights of society to possess and administer property for the commonwealth are established. The primary antithesis of Work and Life, function and nutrition, is examined in its physical, economic, and moral aspects, and is applied alike to the individual and the social organism, so as to yield a scientific harmony of the claims of Socialism and Individualism. Especial attention is given to marking clearly the operation of those industrial and social forces which make for the larger and more various activities of the State in politics and industry, and those which, on the other hand, directly tend to enlarge the bounds of individual liberty and enterprise. Here the distinctions between Art and Mechanism, spontaneity and routine, qualitative and quantitative production, are found to lie at the roots of the Social Problem.

Though no rigid formulæ of universal application are pretended, certain primary laws of social growth are discerned which, when applied to the formidable issues of right economic distribution, population, public industry, imperial expansion, etc., yield convincing and intelligible tests of social utility, and present that unity of conception which is recognized as essential by all who accept the view of society as an organism or an organization. Whether or

to what extent these laws are well established, readers must judge. I would add one word addressed to those who, being close students of industrial economics, may not be fully satisfied with the assertion or assumption of the unfair and irrational character of the distribution of wealth and other opportunities under existing circumstances. Placed in the dilemma of seeking to convince economic specialists by a long and intricate analysis which would break the general current of thought, and would repel and perhaps perplex non-specialists, I have preferred the focus of the wider reading public. I may, however, venture to refer any who think that I have not adequately presented the economic analysis of distribution, or have willingly shirked it, to my technical treatment of the subject in "The Economics of Distribution" (Macmillan Company).

The substance of this volume was first delivered in the form of lectures to the London branch of the Christian Social Union, and was afterwards printed in a series of articles in *The Ethical World*. The matter, however, has been entirely recast and largely re-written for the purpose of this volume.

JOHN A. HOBSON.

March, 1901.

NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Since the first publication of this book my attention has been called to the fact that certain passages quoted from an early edition of Professor Marshall's "Principles of

Economics," and subjected to criticism, do not appear in the more recent editions of his work. I desire, therefore, to withdraw the criticism of Professor Marshall's views upon pp. 20, 52, and 72 as no longer applicable, and to express my regret that passages originally written before the later editions of his work appeared were not corrected to correspond with the change of views there indicated.

Nov. 1901.

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THE SOCIAL PROBLEM

CHAPTER I

IS THERE A SOCIAL QUESTION?

The ineffable vagueness of the Social Question has so powerfully impressed the general imagination that few seem able to believe that there must be an answer, or even that the so-called Question can be put in any intelligible form. The academic person who seeks precision by minute specialization denies that there is a Social Question—there are only social questions; the practical reformer has narrowed the phrase to connote Drink, Sex Relations, Population, or even Money. Socialists, whose name might indicate a large handling of the theme, commonly confine it to schemes for the manipulation of material goods with a variety of indefinite and wholly unexplored implications. The average thoughtful, level-headed man is so certain that those who talk about the Social Question are either pedants or faddists, or vague fanatical enthusiasts, that he has long since closed his head and heart to it. Yet this attitude is both novel and indefensible. The world's great thinkers have never denied the unity of the Social Question, or sought to shelve it; many of them, impelled by other-worldliness, have removed the centre of its gravity, content to seek a true society in heaven, and willing to condone the crudities of earth; but all the great philosophers, prophets, and poets have sought, in their several fashions,

to "see life steadily, and see it whole," and, recognizing some central spirit of humanity which drives towards an ideal, have presented to themselves and to the world a Social Question.

The present century seemed at one time to be giving definite modern shape and import to it. Great representative thinkers, such as Bentham, Robert Owen, Comte, J. S. Mill, Mazzini, Spencer, Ruskin, strove to enforce and to express the intellectual and moral unity of social progress, each according to his light, and to resist the paralyzing tendency of feeble or timid minds to lose "the one" in "the many," and, on the plea of being practical, to become sectarian reformers, vigorous in marking time and in cancelling each other's progress. Buoyant confidence and magnificent conceptions of social progress no longer sway men's minds; it is a day of small things, and men actually glory in the smallness of their thoughts and hopes, as indicative of safety and thoroughness, forgetting that great nations and great men have ever "hitched their waggon to a star," taking all knowledge for their province, and reaching with a reckless amplitude of grasp after some dearly-loved, but dimly-seen, ideal. But this disillusionment is only temporal and partial; the brilliant anticipations of a miraculously rapid entrance into "the land of promise," which earlier prophets in this century held forth, have, indeed, been overcast by the modern doctrine of evolution, and falsified by the tenor of history; while the unprecedented growth of new forms of material comfort has absorbed the energy and almost monopolized the very name of progress. But the unity and force of the Social ideal is not dead—it is only sleeping; and there are many signs of its awakening into new life.

The demand for order in our thought and conduct is invincible; it may be swamped for a season by a surging sea of external changes, but it comes up again, for it is implied in the rational nature of man. But it comes up in new

forms with new conditions. As it is taking shape to-day two new elements assert themselves. The organic conception of society and the historic conception of continuity are two chief products of modern thinking which have modified profoundly—if they have not, indeed, transformed—the conception of social progress. The new face they have given to the Social Question takes time for its clear recognition. Meanwhile it is vague and indefinite. But powerful forces are at work. The passion of Wholeness, or Holiness, which is in the blood of man, urges to a new attempt to formulate social order. Not merely does the decay of supernaturalism among the thinking minority throw the stress of interest upon this life—"Hath man no second life, pitch this one high," but sociality has so far penetrated the religious world as to demand that society in this life shall form a necessary preparation for society in another life. Here, also, the doctrine of continuous development has triumphed over and expelled the doctrine of miraculous transformation. The City of God requires us to be good citizens on earth, and enjoins that we secure for all the conditions of good citizenship. Thus, everywhere the spiritual individualism of selfish soul-saving, with the attendant neglect of this world's sanctity, shows signs of perishing from the more enlightened Churches; everywhere the ideas of continuity and of organic society are forcing their way, imposing a new value and a new meaning upon life. All this is vague enough, and may form the floating material of a vague philosophy, a new mysticism. Of such a mysticism, a new philosophic cult with an esoteric terminology, by which a few erudite initiates may communicate with one another, there are many indications. For any intelligible formulation of the Social Question is evidently in some sort a demand for a new philosophy of life. But a Social Question which is left to professed philosophers can never be answered. A satisfactory answer cannot consist in the theoretic solution of a problem; it must lie in the

region of social conduct. Not merely the saying what should be done, but the doing, is the solution. The reins of Science and Practice are drawn together; a theory of social conduct which shall take cognizance of all the factors will be likewise the art of social conduct.

The first requisite of a really profitable setting of the Social Question under its new conditions is that such setting shall be intelligible to all persons possessed of a moderate literary education and average capacities of thought. Such a setting must probably, in the nature of words and things, fail fully to conform to the metaphysical niceties. But the latter cannot, and will not, be apprehended by any considerable section of a society, and will not, either directly or indirectly, wield any great influence on social conduct. The inherent deceitfulness of philosophy leads such a man as Tolstoy to maintain that in the unlettered peasant's ideas and language we must seek the most satisfactory statement of problems of life. But this is merely one implication of the ultimately false logic of "no compromise." There is nothing absolute in language, or even in ideas; if we wish to secure an end, we must select those which are most convenient to our purpose. In the present case, seeking to formulate the Social Question in a practically serviceable form, it is essential to adopt a middle course, shunning alike the refinement of philosophic specialism and the equally defective simplicity of common speech: the one sterilizes action, the other understanding.

The best apprehension of the greatest number being taken for our intellectual focus, it follows that our setting must be in the full sense of the word, "utilitarian." The premature abandonment of the utilitarian setting by many thinkers, through pique arising from the narrow and degrading interpretation given to the term, has not been justified. English people are habituated to conceive and express the "desired" and "the desirable" in terms of utility; and even

philosophers, like the late Professor Green, who are stoutest in repudiating Utilitarianism, invariably return to that terminology to express their final judgment on a concrete moral issue. The revolt of a few superior minds against the general conceptions and expressions of a nation embodied in a language is always futile and commonly mischievous. The particular vices of some special form of utilitarianism, the insistence that desirability was entirely to be measured by quantity and never by quality, the stress upon physical enjoyment, and the short range of measurement, which were somewhat incorrectly attributed to Bentham's system, are not inherent in utilitarianism, and need not deter us from using its convenient language. Thus much in preface; the real justification of this form of stating the Social Question is its success.

One further explanation is essential. It is not my purpose to offer what would be rightly called a philosophy of social life—in other words, a full solution to the Social Question. It is rather the setting of the question which forms my direct object. We shall be concerned less with the contents than with the form of the solution. That these are practically separable may be shown by an illustration from industry. Industrial science may indicate the business forms that are most suitable for the production of the largest quantities of material wealth; but whether a particular society shall adopt all these forms, or in what proportion they shall be adopted, will depend upon the particular estimates it assigns to these kinds of wealth. So, in our setting of the wider Social Question, allowance must be made for temperament of individual, class, and race. A common form or conception of social progress may be made, but the actual endeavours of a society to conform to it will largely depend upon particular valuations and focus. Valuations may be affected by experience and education; but, at any given time, the same course of conduct will not be equally

desired by, or equally desirable for, two different individuals or natures. Time-focus also plays a most important part. Economists know how the rate of interest and the expenditure of incomes hinge upon the appreciation of a more or less distant future. Historians know that politics are chiefly a matter of time-adjustment, and that a focus of the next election, a generation, or ten centuries, would impose totally different policies upon a Government or a nation.

It is evidently idle to dogmatize upon this valuation and focus, or to insist that desirable things shall have an absolute and unchangeable value. But it is not idle to try to arrange our thoughts so as to give unity and harmony within these limits, so that any one of us, given his temperamental valuation and his range of vision, may view as a complete rational whole, "the socially desirable."

There are two modes of this setting—one positive, the other negative. The social problem may be set in terms of wealth or terms of want, the convex and the concave aspects of social economy. The early political economists and social reformers assumed the positive attitude concerning themselves primarily with wealth in a narrower or wider sense; but it is significant of our more critical age that a Social Question has become almost synonymous with the treatment of want, the cure of disease rather than the enlargement of health.

The positive setting of the question, however, gave indication of an antithesis which is fundamental throughout our study, between effort and satisfaction, human work and human life. Many other oppositions will disclose themselves —the opposition of Producer and Consumer, Individual and Society, Cost and Utility, Employer and Worker, Income and Expenditure, and others; but it will be found that all these antitheses which give rise to various problems of their own are resoluble into or dependant on the basic antithesis of effort and satisfaction. At the outset of our inquiry it

is convenient to assume the reality of this antithesis, though we shall find that in the end a solution of the Social Question will be satisfactory in just proportion as it fuses the opposition in making manifest the art of social life.

Intellectually considered, it seems at first indifferent whether we take the positive or the negative setting. Taken in the former way, the Social Question assumes this shape: "Given a number of human beings, with a certain development of physical and mental faculties and of social institutions, in command of given natural resources, how can they best utilize these powers for the attainment of the most complete satisfaction?" This statement of the social end does not really beg any question, though it may seem to do so, for it purposely leaves open the interpretation of the term "satisfaction," and the question of quality *versus* quantity in measurement of "completeness." If, however, it seemed a more definite statement of the end, no harm would be done by adopting Ruskin's words, "The largest number of happy and healthy human beings."

The negative setting of the Social Question may be allowed in the beginning to assume an even broader shape after the words of a recent writer,* who says: "The history of progress is the record of a gradual diminution of Waste." From this standpoint the Social Question will find its essential unity in the problem how to deal with human waste.

* Prof. D. G. Ritchie.

CHAPTER II

WASTE IN WORK AND LIFE

A BRIEF inventory of the chief factors of the Social Question, set in terms of waste of work and life, is indispensable. All measurement by defect is apt to repel by an appearance of caricature, as when we mark the character of a book or a friend by a series of black dots; but it is often the best method of securing a distinct impression. In treating the Social Question habit confirms this manner of approach, and has illicitly confined the term economy, in its popular use, to the provision against waste.

Turning first to "work," we are confronted by the largest and most palpable waste in that accumulation of industrial disorder known as "unemployment." For long periods of time large stagnant pools of adult effective labour-power lie rotting in the bodies of their owners, unable to become productive of any form of wealth, because they cannot get access to the material of production. Facing them in equal idleness are unemployed or under-employed masses of land and capital, mills, mines, etc., which, taken in conjunction with this labour-power, are theoretically competent to produce wealth for the satisfaction of human wants. At certain brief periods of industrial prosperity these "pools" are nearly dry in the higher fields of skilled labour; but in the lower grounds of industry they form a perpetual swamp.

Countless minor waves of industrial change—some periodically recurrent, some essentially irregular—continually enhance the waste of "unemployment."

While numbers of strong men stand workless, weaker women—the present or future mothers of the race—are driven in ever-growing numbers to take on them an excessive burden of wage-work, wearing themselves out prematurely in a struggle for an inadequate subsistence under conditions which injure the vitality of the race.

Wherever the law permits, machinery and other industrial conditions are adapted so as to use the immature labour-power of children and young persons, in order to displace the mature working strength of men. Net economy of profitable business commonly tends this way.

Irregularity and mal-apportionment of labour-time constitute a separate source of waste of labour-power. The constant over-strain of long hours in some trades, the alternation of overtime with short time in others, by injuring the working life, causes a net waste alike to the worker and to society. The enormous increase of certain orders of productive power by modern machinery, and the rapid expansion of the area of markets, impose a larger amount of unforeseen irregularity upon industry. The hold of the average employer upon a definite market, the hold of an average worker upon a particular employment, are weaker than they were; and this weakness is not yet adequately compensated by increased security of gaining another market or another "place."

Closely and causally related to this waste is the lack of any adequate and comprehensive system for discovering, educating, and utilizing for social purposes the best productive powers with which nature has endowed each member of society. The slow progress of discriminative education and of true equality of opportunity implies the neglect of modern society consciously to adapt itself to the utilization of the one great "economy" which modern science has most powerfully impressed upon us as a means of progress—division of labour, or "differentiation of functions."

Little trouble is yet taken to discover the special aptitudes of citizens in relation to the special needs of society, the best methods of training these aptitudes, and of furnishing, not negative and empty "freedom" to undertake this work, but the positive freedom of opportunity. A whole cluster of "education" problems, manual and mental, demanding, not a separate empirical solution, but a related organic solution, with direct regard to full economy of social work, appears as part of the Social Question. Every failure to put the right man or woman in the right place, with the best faculty of filling that place, involves social waste.

Conditions of work form another factor. The unsanitary, dangerous, degrading character imposed upon much work, not by the inherent nature of the necessary processes, but by considerations of individual profit, is a known source of incalculable injury. The employment of white-lead workers, the needlessly brutalizing work of iron-puddlers and stokers, the whole system of slum workshops, mean a shortening and enfeebling of the working-life. The fact that an average town manual worker lives some fifteen years less than an average member of the well-to-do classes is, perhaps, the largest measurable leakage of social working-power with which we are confronted. Its bearing on the "life" side of the problem will receive further consideration.

The wasteful disposition of the labour that is done requires separate notice. I have alluded to an apparent excess of productive power which suffers periodic idleness. But the social waste involved by the growing proportion of energy put into competition, the effort to get work, orders, markets, is the unique feature of present industry. It is testified in every civilized community by the alarming growth in the proportion of the population engaged in work of distribution, the number of agents, canvassers, touts, and other persons "pushing" trade, the energy put into

advertising, shop-dressing, and other arts of selling. The social worth of all this work is exceedingly small; it is mostly occupied in determining, not whether or what goods shall be made or sold, but who shall make and sell these goods—a matter of social indifference. This is not a denial of social gain from competition, but simply a recognition of the waste involved by keeping twelve instead of two competing grocers in one street.

One other definite waste of working-power must be named —that vested in the upper class of unemployed, the quarter of a million men in England and Wales, between the age of twenty and sixty-five, who, in 1891, were not even nominal members of any trade or profession. A large proportion of these men, and many more women, whose domestic work is practically *nil*, are quite capable of rendering social service; and the dissipation of their energy in sport, or in what are humorously termed "social duties," constitutes a large item of waste. To these must be added a large number of merely nominal members of professions and persons whose only occupation is some amateur and generally incompetent work of a volunteer character.

Thus, then, the most general forms assumed by social problems relating to waste of work are these—

1. Many are not working.

2. Many are overworking or underworking.

3. Most are not doing that work which it is the interest of society they should do, or are not doing it in the best way they might.

The most convenient bridge by which to pass from the work side to the life side is that class of considerations which relates to the quality of work.

The absorption of the whole working-power of large classes by an ever minuter division of labour, unless balanced by increased freedom and leisure, tends to degrade the character of the worker, to injure the all-round development

of his nature, and thereby to impair his faculties of enjoyment and non-industrial use.

The dominance of specialized routine impresses the character of machine-work upon the life, robs it of those elements of individuality and spontaneity which make existence rational and enjoyable. The machine is thus apt to make a class of machine-citizens, and to place them in towns made for machine purposes, and not for healthy social life. The element of order which modern factories and machine-processes introduce into the life of workers is not without its educative value; but made, as it is, the dominant factor in their lives, it is an immense source of degradation and of physical, æsthetic, and spiritual retardation.

No one can seriously examine the life of the "prosperous" northern manufacturing towns, which are typical of our present civilization, without recognizing the evil influences of the present dominion of machinery in thus degrading and retarding progress. This statement does not ignore the sterling qualities of northern Englishmen, struggling against these tendencies, and even utilizing the elements of social contact furnished by their organized workshops and their crowded cities for wholesome political, social, and recreative movements. From the standpoint of healthy human life the modern industrial town is, in spite of all that is done for it, a failure. It has given new and difficult aspects to many social questions.

It is in these towns that poverty presents its most dismal and perplexing character. The vast increase of productive power owned by modern societies is yet used so wastefully that in London to-day one-third of the population are estimated to be living in chronic poverty, unable to satisfy properly the prime needs of animal life, and owning no appreciable share of the vast social inheritance which the progress of the last century and a half has won for our nation.

The life of these people is not worth living, so far as measurements of life are possible; they are living a life definitely worse in almost all respects than that of "savages" in any fairly fertile land, and with hardly more hope of escape or advancement. Take this statement of a recent traveller in Bechuanaland, only one of many similar testimonies: "I have visited nearly every native town of consequence in Bechuanaland, and I say unhesitatingly that these people are at this moment physically and morally far better off than many thousands of the population of our great cities in Great Britain, living happier and healthier lives by far than seven-tenths of our poor folk at home."* Whether this condition still remains after we have begun to "civilize" the Bechuanas may perhaps be doubted.†

It is, of course, easy to exaggerate the amount of physical poverty, for no absolute measure is possible. There is reason to believe that a considerably smaller proportion of our people suffer from lack of the food, clothing, etc., required to support life than was the case half a century ago. But there is little to indicate that the actual number of the poor is diminishing.

If poverty is not more intense, it is more congested, and more difficult to relieve by ordinary means. Poverty in a poor country is one thing; poverty in a rich country another. Moreover, it is becoming more self-conscious, and consequently more restless. There is much in modern towns to account for this—the contrast of luxury, which mocks their misery; innumerable means of education, which sow the seeds of new wants without supplying the opportunities to satisfy them. The difference between the number of felt wants and the power to satisfy them constitutes poverty in its present conscious state; and, though physiological or

* A. Bryden, "Gun and Camera in South Africa," p. 129.

† Still more striking is the testimony from Burmah. See H. Fielding's remarkable work, "The Soul of a People."

absolute poverty may be diminishing, this felt poverty is growing.

Again, we are rapidly becoming a nation of town-dwellers. The new condition of town life, comprising now more than three-quarters of our population, presses upon every phase of the Social Problem. It is no mere sentimental grievance. A life fed upon bad air, overcrowded at home and at work, deprived of wholesome recreation, passed amid ugly and dirty surroundings, has little chance of physical or moral health. In spite of all efforts of municipal reform, successful as many of them have been in improving the sanitation of our cities, there remains the awkward fact that the modern rush into city life means a transfer to an area where mortality is nearly twenty per cent. higher than it is in rural parts.* This difference of health conditions, applied to the choicest strength, energy, and ability of the people (for these are the people selected for town life), unless it can be overcome, signifies a deterioration of the physique of the race. If this is an effect of town life, the intimate relations between physical health and other aspects of social progress require us to see in congested town life one of the most serious factors in our problem.

Moreover, modern civilization not merely draws the mass of workers from a fixed habitation upon the soil, with those attachments of place which have helped so much to build the character of great nations; it has not planted them firmly in city life. Vast numbers are fated to a life of wandering over the face of a great city, driven hither and thither by the shifting tide of employment, and substituting for the constant Home a narrow temporary Shelter. The material structure of sound family life is thus grievously

* This statement is based upon a comparison of Urban and Rural Sanitary Districts. If we compare the mortality of any large industrial town with that of an agricultural district of Southern England, we find a far wider difference.

impaired; the economic power of landlordism, in narrowing the shelter of the workers, plays into the hands of the publican, whose premises form a natural, almost a necessary, annex of the worker's home for the husband and father, as the slum-street is for the children. The soil of sound neighbourhood is vitiated in a floating population, and healthy plants of social life are unable to spring up and flourish.

The Social Question finds its most directly moral significance in the growing sense of antagonism between classes and masses. Mere theoretic declarations of economic and social harmony between the two do not suffice. The deep-felt antagonism cannot be ignored; it constitutes a grave injury to moral life.

By the whole structure and working of our industrial system this waste is maintained in the directly anti-social strain of conflict—α, between business and business; β, between capital and labour; γ, between labourer and labourer. This involves no absolute condemnation of competition, which, as Toynbee said, "is neither good nor bad in itself; it is a force which has to be studied and controlled." The point for consideration is that at present it is neither adequately studied nor effectively controlled.

The loss in quality as distinct from quantity of work and life thus caused is, from the nature of the case, incalculable. Social and industrial disorders, which degrade the character of any class of human beings, lowering their quality of work and life, cannot be offset by any increase in the mass of material wealth. There is no way of striking a balance between quantity and quality. "All that a man hath will he give for his life," and any damage to the quality of life defies quantitative compensation.

I have chosen to lay stress upon the industrial and physical aspects of these factors of the Social Question; but a separate study of the economy of intellectual and spiritual

energies exhibits the same kinds of waste, though they are more difficult to discriminate, and the intricacies of the "questions" they provoke are greater. In confining immediate attention more to the physical aspects I least of all desire to assign priority in logical order or importance to these, rather selecting the simpler concrete issues, because it is easier to advance from them to the subtler analogous forms in higher planes of life and work than to set the latter directly in a co-ordinate position.

There is historical justification for this order, laying stress first on those aspects of the Social Question which relate to physical environment. Workers in the more definitely intellectual or moral fields, religious missionaries, temperance workers, school teachers, æsthetic and recreational reformers, political propagandists, are all coming more and more to recognize that bad environment of work and physical life blocks the way for their particular reforms. To acknowledge this is by no means to prejudge the just relations between character and social environment. Rather does its merit consist in this, that it best enables us, as we inevitably turn from industrial to moral and intellectual forces, to perceive more clearly and convincingly the identity of what at first appear separate industrial and moral causes.

The deepest spirit of social discontent is distinctively a moral force, and may be summed up in the words of J. S. Mill: "The very idea of distributive justice, or any proportionality between success and merit, or between success and exertion, is, in the present state of society, so manifestly chimerical as to be relegated to the region of romance." *

* *Fortnightly Review*, 1879.

CHAPTER III

THE OLD POLITICAL ECONOMY

What is the system of thought, the science competent to grapple with all the essential facts of the Social Question, so as to discover the best means of minimizing social waste or, conversely, of maximizing social satisfaction? Let us first examine the credentials of Political Economy for such a task. It is not unnatural that we should look first to this science, for most of the leading features in our setting of the issue appeared to have a distinctly economic character. Many of the specific evils upon which I touched are the direct historical products of the Industrial Revolution, and are directly associated with four great changes :—

1. The development of machine-production.

2. Free Trade, or division of labour among nations, causing for most advanced industrial nations a decay of agriculture and of country life.

3. Expansion of market areas and the related growth of a complex financial system.

4. Severance or weakening of the personal nexus—(*a*) between employers and employed; (*b*) between sellers and buyers.

Now these are distinctively commercial facts, and we naturally turn to commercial science for some light upon their results.

What satisfactory diagnosis does Political Economy give of the Social Question thus presented in its distinctively

economic aspect? Frankly, none. For certain good reasons, which we shall shortly understand, Political Economy offers a dumb mouth to the Social Question. Men of humane culture, smitten with social compunction, and hard-headed, self-educated, working men, have turned for light and leading to text-books of economic science, and have found darkness; have gone for bread, and have received the stones of arid, barren, academic judgments. Professors of Economics resent this criticism, and reply, "What you ask does not fall within our province. You come saying, 'Prophesy unto us. Here is depressed trade; diagnose the case and prescribe.' Or: 'Here is a mass of unemployed; tell us some safe way of utilizing their labour. Here is a dead-lock between Labour and Capital; suggest fair terms of settlement.'" Of late the Political Economist has been in the habit of rubbing his hands in deprecating fashion, and telling us, "Political Economy is a science; we are not practitioners." Now, without denying the distinctions of science, art, and practice, we are at liberty to point out that the chief builders of economic studies never assumed this attitude. The science grew out of the art, and never separated itself. Men like Adam Smith, Malthus, Ricardo, and, even later, J. S. Mill and Jevons, gained authority by claiming to give direction upon issues of international trade, finance, and labour combinations. It is not too much to say that, had it not been for the part which scientific economists played in the Free Trade movement there would have been no separate study claiming to be a science of Political Economy. The founders of this study never contemplated a science which should stay in the clouds, refusing to yield a right basis of social policy. Nay, even among economic authorities of to-day the attitude is not one of consistent abstinence; commonly refusing to commit themselves upon weightier issues of social reform, they dabble in Bimetallism, Sliding Scales, and Poor Law Reform.

The claim is not that Political Economy shall devise Utopias or prescribe Morrison's Pills to cure all social ills, but that it shall clearly diagnose diseases which seem to be of a distinctively industrial nature, and shall assess the value of proposed remedies. Instead of doing this, it treads delicately in the intricate mazes of historical research and currency, and does much subtle theorizing about terminology and method. All this should doubtless be done, but not the other left undone—without good reason shown.

Why does Political Economy throw no light upon our darkness? Briefly, because it cannot. Though our presentation of the Social Question seemed distinctively "economic," no one of its graver issues is soluble by "economic science." Take two instances—the Eight Hours' Movement and Free Trade; does the satisfactory treatment of either of these questions fall within Political Economy? No. The most important factors of the Eight Hours' Question are not the compressibility of labour, the absorption of the unemployed, the effect upon the wages-bill, and so forth, but the growing need of leisure from the strain of machine production for recreation of physical powers, for family life and the education of the higher faculties, and for the production of various forms of individual and social satisfaction, not directly measurable as economic quantities. Economics does not, indeed, ignore the use of leisure, but only considers it so far as it relates to the cost of production by affecting the efficiency of labour; the essential unity of the issue as a "social problem," in which all forms of satisfaction count for their own sake, lies outside its scope.

So with Free Trade, the most essentially economic subject, as it might seem. One chief effect of our Free Trade policy has been to remove workers from good air, ample space, sunshine, and other bounties of nature, and place them in circumstances where they can produce a larger quantity of industrial wealth. Free Trade as an "economic" movement

is judged entirely by its influence on marketable wealth; Free Trade as a social question requires that the total effects—hygienic, intellectual, and moral—arising from town and factory life shall receive full consideration, not separately, but in organic relation to the direct gains of increased industrial wealth.

But, in order to recognize the full nature of the social economics we require, it will be profitable to enter upon a more explicit investigation of the defects of Political Economy for this purpose.

If we turn to the leading English text-book of to-day to ascertain the scope of the science, we read the following admirable words: "Political Economy, or Economics, is a study of man's actions in the ordinary business of life."* What broader or more liberal treatment is possible? What is "the ordinary business of life?" Surely, to live well? Alas! not at all. In the next sentence Professor Marshall proceeds to say: "It inquires how he gets his income and how he uses it." A strange assumption this, that the getting and spending of money is "the ordinary business of life!" Yet it correctly marks out the limits of current Political Economy, though we shall presently observe how feebly developed the "spending" side is as compared with the "getting," so that Ruskin's taunt about "the science of acquisitiveness" is not without point.

The history of Political Economy in England, from Adam Smith onwards, forms an admirable commentary upon our intellectual treatment of the Social Question. Earlier "economic" studies were mostly speculations of political philosophers regarding property, or essays upon concrete issues in politics or business, relating to agriculture, international trade, currency and taxation, population, and so forth. From these sources, gathering together scattered facts, principles, and speculations, a philosopher—a man of

* "Principles of Economics," vol. i. bk. i. ch. i.

broad humane culture, with the Scottish capacity for acquiring and marshalling knowledge—formed a large and liberal conception of a "Wealth of Nations." In its main structure it was distinctly an industrial science, but endowed with a freedom, humanity, and discursiveness most favourable to expansion. "Wealth" was not rigidly confined to marketable goods or money; knowledge, freedom, health, and character, the higher human goods, though not adequately represented, were not excluded from the "Wealth of Nations." A sense of social justice inspired the work. A friend of labour, a stout advocate of liberty and equality of opportunities, an enemy of landed and capitalist monopoly, as he understood them, Adam Smith was a true pioneer in the development of social economy. Unfortunately, the political and industrial expediencies of the age were strongly hostile to the wider human treatment of economics. The vague but praiseworthy attempts of men like Paine and Godwin to impress larger designs of social reform were unable to stem the force of the narrower utilitarians, who soon seized the field of Political Economy. From Adam Smith's broad platform smaller men borrowed a few planks, to improvise a neat, convenient little system of their own. Mostly hard-headed men, with a narrow outlook, financiers, manufacturers, academic professors, political managers, they took the principles of industrial freedom with which Adam Smith sought to break down old forms of tyranny, and to secure genuine liberty for labourers, in an age when labour was still of paramount importance in production, and applied these principles to secure the domination of rising capitalism. Adam Smith wrote in an age before machinery, when small producers controlled industry, capitalist-artisans who worked hard with their own hands, whose effective labour was hampered by all sorts of antiquated and absurd restrictions, dictating where they should live, what trade they should follow, where and how they should sell their goods, artificially

enhancing the price of food and raw materials, while it narrowed their markets. *Laissez-faire* was a policy of social progress then. In the hands and mouths of a subsequent generation of mill-owners, financiers, and their intellectual henchmen, it became a policy of despotism and degradation. It was primarily used to procure the cheapening of labour, in order to feed the new machine factories with large quantities of low-grade human force (regardless of sex or age), to be worked into goods which should be thrust upon rapidly-expanding markets, to gain the hundreds per cent. which built up the fortunes of Lancashire.

For this purpose it was necessary—

First, to acquire cheap food to support a large working population upon the fields of the new industries. It is no cynicism to state that this manufacturing interest was a more potent force in the anti-corn-law movement than the genuine spirit of philanthropy and of intellectual conviction with which it co-operated. A similar combination of motives attacked the Law of Settlement, in order to give the required "fluidity" to labour—a process artificially stimulated by bargains with Poor Law authorities to furnish child labour to northern mills.

Secondly, to secure a continual expansion of foreign and colonial markets. What to Adam Smith was a distinct utility became to the next generation of manufacturers and merchants an overpowering necessity. The main motive of national Free Trade was to force markets, just as the failure of Free Trade adequately to secure this expansion is visibly remoulding our foreign policy to-day. England was destined to be the workshop of the world, and Free Trade was to be the sufficient instrument of this destiny.

Thirdly, it was necessary to keep wages low. For this purpose anti-combination laws were enforced, and political economy was required to prove the futility of attempts of workers to raise wages by combination. Hence the insistence

of political economists on treating labour as a "commodity" rightly subject to the law of supply and demand determining its price; hence the theory of "natural wages," supported by a Law of Population and a Wage-Fund theory commonly used to prove that the general level of wages could not rise.

Two other doctrines were selected from the "Wealth of Nations" for the service of a class of utilitarian economists. One was the doctrine of Parsimony, which served the double purpose of stimulating saving at a time when the demand for capital was practically unlimited, and of supporting the common class notion, prevalent up to the present day, that the capitalist class, by their abstinence and subsequent investment of capital, support the working-classes, providing employment and advancing wages. The other was a doctrine of the origin and nature of rent, largely true, which served the manufacturing classes well in this battle against the Land Laws and the old social aristocracy, and which survives up to the present day as the one genuinely revolutionary element in the older economic teaching.

Let us realize the external situation. It was a truly dramatic one. After a long war, which had strained to the utmost the vital powers of the nation, the full import of that Industrial Revolution, which had been slowly taking shape in the background of the national consciousness, suddenly burst upon England. She began to realize herself in command of new and incalculable resources of nature, with capacities of producing wealth beyond the dreams of avarice, in the new machinery and steam motor, the great strides of mechanics, chemistry, and other departments of science, with a monopoly of these forces so complete as to place her beyond all thought of competition from other nations.

A large conception of the "Wealth of Nations" might have ordered and utilized these prodigious "social" forces for the common good, applying the new productive powers

to secure for all a stable basis of physical life and comfort, and using machinery to "save" labour, and so to set free the time and energy of all for the enjoyment of a fuller human life.

Such ideas of social economy seized the imaginations of a few lofty thinkers, and men like Fourier, Owen, Comte, laboured to found upon the new industrial dispensation a reformed structure of society which should elevate the race. Unfortunately, both the economic and the moral basis of realization were lacking. Not merely was the present practicability of such dreams denied, but the intellectual and moral conception which lay behind them, the very idea that the powers of man and nature ought to be utilized for the good of society as an organic whole, and that they should be studied with this end in view, was rejected as foolish and unprofitable.

The grand and fundamentally scientific conception of a New Moral World was ruthlessly crushed by the dominance of a narrow, dogmatic commercial economy. For the actual disposition of these vast new industrial resources had come into the hands of a few, the owners of land, money, or certain sorts of organizing power, pluck, intelligence, or cunning. The new discoveries were a national education in avarice and materialism. Greed for rapidly acquiring wealth became a national mania. Every powerful material interest bought intellect to serve it. Men of the requisite gifts of mind were paid, persuaded, and cajoled into furnishing a science of Political Economy which should afford an intellectual and even a moral justification for the ruling passion. So it came to pass that brilliant practical and speculative intellects set themselves to degrade the "Wealth of Nations" into a Trader's science.

Do not mistake me. I am far from suggesting that such men as Ricardo, Senior, James Mill, were actuated by any conscious intellectual dishonesty. But it is impossible to

study any department of philosophy, theology, history, or sociology, without detecting everywhere the moulding force of dominant class-prejudices, interests, passions, selecting and rejecting among the ideas, theories, phrases, formulæ which come into being, and driving the intellectual workers to build convenient systems. Men of powerful original force sometimes hold out, but generally the steady and persistent secret pressure of class bias, working through "the spirit of the age," is successful in getting what it wants.

In dwelling upon bias of temperament or material interests as a ruling force in Political Economy, I bring no special charge against the character of a single class. Theorists of the proletariat, like Marx and Henry George, are victims of a similar bias, and mould, in the interests of an agricultural or manufacturing class of workers, an economics scarcely less defective in theory, and only less detrimental for practice because the larger classes whose interests it serves are economically weaker than those whose interests moulded the classical Political Economy in England.

Taking the latter as it left the hands of its most striking exponent, Ricardo, we find it far superior, as a system, to the teaching of the "Wealth of Nations." It had become a rigid, superficially consistent, intelligible set of doctrines, a serviceable, intellectual instrument for the rising manufacturers and financiers. Though this system underwent many slight modifications and accretions as it passed through the hands of James Mill, McCulloch, Senior, and others, no radical change took place, even in the original text-book of J. S. Mill. This theory is called Manchesterism by Germans; and, though recent English writers have adduced various erudite reasons for rejecting the term, it is a substantially correct title for a science designed to suit that view of life which the prodigious activity and prosperity of the northern manufacturing towns had impressed upon the national consciousness.

Certain fixed characters deeply mark the entire body of this Manchester Economy, in studying which we come to understand how the trained economist, by his very training, usually incapacitates himself for the comprehension or solution of a Social Question.

1. Not merely is the survey of the study confined to marketable wealth; it is the accumulation of material forms of wealth, not the using but the getting, that is made the end of industrial activity. The production and accumulation of goods form the corner-stone of the edifice. Occasionally, in the older writers, we meet a perfunctory reference to use and enjoyment, as if they were the goal; but the actual treatment never assigns that place to them. Jevons, later on, points out that, though earlier writers often acknowledged three or four departments—Production, Distribution, Exchange, Consumption—they had next to nothing to say about the last. It might even be said that the three latter processes are all regarded as subsidiary to the first. Examine the structure of the "science," and you will find everywhere evidence that it is built with a single eye to the accumulation of marketable goods.

Take as crucial instances the parts assigned to Capital and Consumption.

The common understanding and consistent usage of the business world clearly marks off capital from consumption-goods, confining capital in its material forms to those materials and instruments which a man uses in the trade or occupation by which he earns his income. The economists perversely distorted the term so as to include the food and other necessaries in the possessions of productive workers, introducing all sorts of casuistic questions as to whether particular commodities were "destined" to assist production. This utterly indefensible view of capital * still blocks the way to a clear comprehension of economic structure,

* Professor Marshall has only recently decided to abandon it.

regarding, as it does, consumption merely as a means to further production.

The maintenance of this same position required another equally futile distinction to be made between productive and unproductive consumption. The latter constitutes, in the stricter text-books, the unpardonable sin of Political Economy. What was this heinous offence? Did it mean riotous living, unwholesome luxury, reckless extravagance? Not at all. These things by no means cover the term. All the conveniences and comforts of life—books, music, entertainment, education, the supply of all intellectual and moral needs—formed, in the strict interpretation, unproductive consumption, and were considered to militate against the wealth of nations. The reasoning is simplicity itself. The be-all and the end-all is capital in the form of vast numbers of mills and machinery, raw material, and stock. The amassing of increased quantities of capital by "saving" was thus the point to which all energy should be directed. Capital was also essential because it maintained labour, gave employment, and so furthered new production and accumulation. This being so, consumption was to be regarded with suspicion. The presumption was always against it, for it diminished saving. [The earlier economists had not yet developed the riper absurdity which held that saving did not reduce consumption.] Consumption may exculpate itself by showing that it serves a useful end—*i.e.* helps to maintain efficiency of labour-power in the bodies of labourers.

"Unproductive consumption," however much it might claim to contribute to enjoyment, health, intellectual and moral elevation, was scouted by the stricter doctrinaires in their "scientific aspect," though sometimes, when off their guard, they lapse into humane *obiter dicta*. This theory, not only narrow, but illogical, won credence and support because it exploited certain just and wholesome feelings of

protest against luxury, unmasking the insidious fallacy that luxurious living of the rich is desirable in the interests of the workers—a fallacy always utilized to screen extravagance, and to avert inquiries into the unjust origins of riches. The old political economist, taunted as the prophet of a selfish and degrading gospel, got considerable moral *kudos* from the redeeming virtue of his encouragement of thrift in all classes.

Trading upon this virtuous demeanour, the huxter science bent its structure and deformed its terminology to serve the art of commercial production, shedding all the more liberal and humane associations it had gathered from the "moral philosophy" of Adam Smith.

2. This narrow standard, confining the interest of political economists to quantity of marketable matter, constrained them to take a narrow view of human life and character. For this they have been unduly blamed by some, who, like Carlyle and Ruskin, charge them with a deliberate preference and support of materialistic ends and selfish modes of reaching them. But, while such charges are unfair, and can easily be refuted, it cannot be denied that a constant addiction to the study of any special order of phenomena is liable to distort the vision, and even to induce false moral valuations. Though it was no part of the duty of scientific writers to impute praise and blame, no one can fail to see that the appreciative, and often enthusiastic, language in which the operations of self-interest in industry are described, and the beneficent operation of competition between individuals and nations is illustrated, did powerfully convey approval, and gave a strong practical defence of current business practices.

The narrow individualistic utilitarianism of James Mill and those who came under his influence did, in fact, afford a moral support of the enlightened self-interest of the business man. When, therefore, it is claimed that this political

economy is immune from censure because it only professed to deal with men *as they are*, not *as they ought to be*, we must receive this exculpation with reserve. Approval was not the aim, but approval was conveyed; and the whole tone of the teaching regarded ruthless self-assertion of individuals and nations as wholesome energy, which made for the greatest good of the greatest number.

It is, however, more germane to our purpose to call attention to the nature of man and his operations as regarded by the early political economist. "Free" competition, directed towards the acquisition of the greatest quantity of material wealth, underlay the "economic" conception of man and of industrial society. For the purposes of their study thinkers made an abstraction of the self-seeking motives in the industrial world. The "economic man" was a creature who always moved accurately along the line of greatest personal gain —as labourer, planting himself in the trade and place where wages are highest, endowed with a chameleon-like capacity of adaptation, trammelled by no bonds of attachment which would retard the perfect fluidity of his movements in the labour-market; as capitalist, making with unerring instinct for the highest rate of profit, unfettered by foolish scruples about sweating, adulteration, or any malpractice which attached to "investments"; as merchant, shopkeeper, or as consumer, knowing one law only—viz. "to buy in the cheapest, to sell in the dearest market." No gain which the ignorance or weakness of another placed in his way would he reject; no sentiment of compassion or generosity would be allowed to blunt the edge of his cupidity.

Industrial society was conceived of as a society of these self-seekers. Such society would attain the maximum of wealth, for each man, in accurately following his private gain, would be driven to use his labour, capital, or land, in such way as to contribute most to the aggregate wealth. Certain operations of economic forces would prevent the

economic man from keeping to himself (as he would like to do) the whole advantage of his selfish dealings; by necessary competition, some of the gain would filter down to other members of the community. Thus would the interest of each conduce to the interest of all. This law of harmony between "each" and "all" underlay the theory and practice of *laissez-faire*.

Applied logically, this doctrine of "freedom" is revolutionary, demanding access for all to land and capital. But "the tools to him who can use them" is an inconvenient doctrine for owners of tools who wish to get other folk to use them. So this positive "freedom" was emptied of its economic contents, and came to mean freedom qualified by vested interests—a very different sort of "freedom" for the labouring classes.

However, even this negative conception of freedom was fruitful of reforms. By helping to break down guild restrictions, old rules of apprenticeship, the law of settlement, it facilitated adaptation of labour to new industrial conditions. Improvements of Banking and the Credit System, and of Joint Stock and Co-operative enterprise, enabled capital to move more freely, and work more effectively. Various land reforms, but partially accomplished, abolition of primogeniture and entail, cheapening of transfer, freedom of cultivation, etc., still lie along the paths of *laissez-faire*.

Two fundamental defects in this ideal of Industrial Harmony will claim attention later on: (*a*) the notion that Industrial Freedom is attained by mere removal of legal restrictions; (*b*) the notion that the added self-interests of each make the common interest of all, even in the field of material production.

3. The third characteristic of Manchesterism is already made manifest. It takes a purely statical and mechanical view of society. The conviction that there is one structure of industrial society right for all nations and all ages was

generally accepted. Once get a truly competitive society of intelligent self-seekers, and all was accomplished.

The evolutionary idea had not yet been assimilated, either from the study of history or of the natural sciences. Even to-day the tendency to construct rigid and absolute "ideals," and to seek to impose them upon the world of phenomena as practical reforms, is the commonest of errors.

The real strength of the Political Economy I have described consisted in the fact that it intellectually financed the Free Trade Movement, and struck one powerful blow for the practical freedom of the people in securing a "cheap loaf." Free Trade meant that each nation would employ itself in producing the goods for which it had the greatest natural advantages, and that thus the largest aggregate of world wealth would be produced. It also meant for England that, by cheapening the price of food, labour could be subsisted cheaply and wages kept low, while raw materials of manufacture would also be cheap.

The economic man as manufacturer was chiefly influenced by these business motives, though we know that Cobden and other leaders were genuinely inspired by wider and humaner sentiments, believing that Free Trade meant the triumph of truth and justice, and dreaming golden dreams of an age when the economic harmony should bind nations as it bound individuals in the holy bonds of a competitive brotherhood.

Upon this loaf and this vision of peace the Manchester economics has lived ever since, until a time has come when the loaf (in grain, at any rate) has become so cheap that many are turning on Free Trade as the murderer of English agriculture, while the vision of peace grows ever dimmer in face of the ruthless fact that "modern wars are all for markets."

Considered as an account of the older economics, this summary is unavoidably defective. It gives too hard, too rigidly mechanical, a view, and does some injustice to the

humanity and kindliness of men who in their time were genuine social reformers. The points upon which stress has here been laid do not appear so prominently in the writings and speeches of these men. Yet for our purpose such treatment is right and necessary. It is with the inability of the older economics to meet the modern demands of the Social Question that we are concerned, and for that reason it was essential to insist upon the "inhumanity" of this school of thought. The economic man, and the scheme of life into which he fits, are not, as is sometimes suggested, figments of the modern critical imagination; they are true logical contents of the economic thought of the makers of English political economy.

CHAPTER IV

THE NEW POLITICAL ECONOMY

THE "old political economy" is often supposed to have passed away. More modern teachers—J. S. Mill, Cairnes, Jevons, Marshall—are believed to have "humanized" the study, and made it no longer a vulgar tradesman's science, but a many-sided, cultured, gentlemanly science, which conjoins accuracy of thought and expression with the most generous sentiments, which has ever a good word for education, patronizes trade unionism and co-operation, and even admits that the clergy are producers.

So liberal a study might even be competent to confront the Social Question! But is it? I think that a closer scrutiny of the modern writers will show that, in its essential character, the old structure is still retained, the old dogmas still dominant. There is not what religious people call "a change of heart." Some considerable changes are, indeed, perceptible. The simplicity and rigour of the old fabric have gone; pieces have been built on to hide the bareness; it has been painted and decorated to recommend it to more modern tastes.

But the scope and method of political economy still render it quite inadequate to our task. It is not really "humanized." It is no easy thing to reform an individual thoroughly. To reform a science is still more difficult. Half conscious of the insufficiencies of the older study, our "moderns" have not yet ventured upon "structural repairs," but have rather

tinkered at the gaps and crevices. Some portions they have enlarged and elaborated—*e.g.* laws of supply and demand, theory of rent; other portions they have so altered and built over that it is hard to say whether the old part stands or not. For instance, you may ask the modern economist whether wages are advanced out of capital, whether rent ever enters into price, or whether demand for commodities is demand for labour. He will wriggle and shuffle with complicated verbiage, but will give no straight, intelligible answer.

The "Manchester" character of the science still survives in the following essential features.

1. It is still a commercial science, with material, marketable wealth as its main and dominant consideration. But, whereas the older economists had commonly confined themselves to material wealth, the moderns usually admit some non-material forms, floundering about hopelessly to get a logical footing for them. The general idea is to extend "wealth" so as to include all "marketable" goods. Yet, curiously enough, none of the representative writers takes the complete step. J. S. Mill, after defining wealth as "all useful or agreeable things which possess exchangeable value," and including human skill, persisted in excluding non-material services which are bought and sold—*e.g.* a musical performance, or professional advice—on the ground that political economy concerns itself only with "permanent utilities." *

Professor Marshall includes certain kinds of non-material goods in the wealth of a person—"those immaterial goods which belong to him, are external to him, and serve directly as the means of enabling him to acquire material goods." † This last proviso curiously illustrates the survival of the material standpoint. Marshall, moreover, definitely excludes certain classes of saleable articles. Skill he excludes on the ground that it is not "external," though he admits it may

* "Political Economy" (People's edition), Introduction, p. 6.

† "Principles of Political Economy," bk. ii. ch. ii.

be included in a "broader definition of wealth, which has indeed to be taken for certain purposes," though what purposes he does not here or anywhere explain. Marshall also excludes "services and other goods which pass out of existence in the same moment that they come into it." Thus, while the materials of a dinner are wealth, the cooking and the attendance are not, though the price paid for a dinner lumps them together inseparably.

The notion of "permanency" as a condition of economic wealth is a peculiarly weak survival of the narrower materialistic basis, lending itself to the most illogical distinctions. There is clearly no such thing as permanency of economic values, and any attempt to force definitions by laying stress upon duration fails utterly to serve even the narrowest purpose of commercial science. Is a cheese wealth, and an omelette, which perishes as soon as it is made, not wealth? Sidgwick is open to discover the illogic of excluding all personal services: "There would seem to be a certain absurdity in saying that people are poorer because they cure their diseases by medical advice, instead of drugs; improve their minds by hearing lectures, instead of reading books; guard their property by policemen, instead of man-traps and spring-guns; or amuse themselves by hearing songs, instead of looking at pictures."* But Sidgwick, on grounds of usage, excludes "culture" from wealth, even when regarded as a saleable commodity to be bought from teachers, thus cutting out the whole of intellectual wealth. And so, having quitted the narrow standpoint of material, marketable goods, economists fail to obtain a sound logical foothold by making wealth cover all kinds of saleable goods.

Their only agreement is in the definite exclusion of non-marketable goods. As Sidgwick expressly excludes "culture," so Marshall excludes "moral wealth," remarking that "the affection of friends, for instance, is a good, but it is not

* "Principles of Political Economy," bk. ii. ch. iii. sect. iv.

ever reckoned as wealth, except by a poetic licence."* As comment upon this, let me recall Matthew Arnold's words: "Now, poetry is nothing else than the most perfect speech of man—that in which he comes nearest to being able to utter the truth."

It must suffice to say that, even in the new and more humane political economy, leisure, health, friendship, freedom, love, knowledge, intellect, and virtue are excluded from wealth, and are only taken account of as far as they are means to the production of certain sorts of marketable wares.

2. Other motives besides the purely self-seeking ones of the old "economic man" are generally admitted into the modern scheme. Man is no longer regarded merely as a "covetous machine" driven by greed and idleness.

But how is he treated? Professor Cairnes shall tell us: "Moral and religious considerations are to be taken into account by the economist precisely in so far as they are found, in fact, to affect the conduct of men in the pursuit of wealth."† In other words, "allowance" is demanded for the friction of non-economic forces in working out an economic problem. With the logic of this method of "allowances" I shall deal presently. Here it is enough to reflect that moral and religious considerations are not to be treated as having any meaning or worth in themselves, but only as affecting "the pursuit of wealth." Does this place economics on a human basis?

3. Production or accumulation of marketable wealth still remains the backbone of "economics." This statement will probably be disputed, and reference made to the formal emphasis laid upon and the space assigned to distribution in the current text-books. But this is quite illusory. No consistent, no intelligible organic theory of distribution of wealth is to be found in the modern English text-books.

* "Principles," bk. ii. ch. ii.'

† "Logical Method of Political Economy," p. 44.

Taking Marshall and Nicholson as types of the ablest and most advanced modern work, one may yet defy any reader to find a unified theory of distribution which shall relate the laws which are given to explain the several forces regulating wages, rent, interest, and remuneration of management. No general theory of the determination of the proportion of produce falling to the several claimants is there set forth. Nor is there any definite attempt to ascertain the bearing of consumption upon production and distribution, either in a quantitative or a qualitative way. We are sometimes told —as, for instance, by Jevons and his followers—that "consumption is the keystone of economic thinking;" but beyond a few platitudinous *obiter dicta* in favour of "plain living" and in condemnation of luxury, or some quite general discussion about the influence of a good standard of comfort upon efficiency, there is no attempt to go behind the market value of desires to the organic results of different sorts and quantities of consumption.

The theory of production is still the only strongly and closely wrought portion of economic science. The attainment of a large quantity of commercial goods is still the real standpoint of what remains a distinctively industrial science.

If the modern text-books give some attention, as they often do, to the human claims of workers, to the character of labour, and the influence of industrial facts upon human happiness or worth, this treatment is purely parenthetic, and is not built into the body of the science. Taking economic science as it stands in current English thought, the changes of the last generation have not made it capable of human service in the solution of the Social Question.

Regarded even as commercial science, it is very defective. Consisting of a number of separate little theories—some deductively, some inductively derived—it furnishes a singularly ill-fitted and disjointed whole. The intellectual man, or the reflecting business man, gets little satisfaction from

it, for he cannot find the organic unity he seeks, and the "laws" which are given do not show him commercial society as a "going concern." There is neither logical consistency nor actuality. Its very efforts to humanize itself have been injurious. The old system was far more convincing. It had a well-jointed system and a specious intellectuality, which charmed so keen a mind as De Quincey's.

The Manchester framework still survives, but in a rickety condition. The standard of wealth and value is still commercial. Man still poses, along with capital and land, simply as a factor of production—a means and not an end.

In face of these facts, there is something half-humorous, half-pathetic in the efforts made by modern political economy to assume a refined and cultivated aspect, like the successful retired trader who buys pictures, grows orchids, subscribes to the hunt, and does other polite and public-spirited things to make himself agreeable. It has been a dismal failure. Political economy has not succeeded in convincing and winning the attention either of the cultured class or of the practical reformer, because it has not really changed its nature.

Half-civilized, like the inhabitants of some remote island just known to foreign ships, it has stuck on bits of refinement and humanity, and wears them like "foreign ornaments"—a mortal offence to true æsthetic taste. A science which still takes money as its standard of value, and regards man as a means of making money, is, in the nature of the case, incapable of facing the deep and complex human problems which compose the Social Question.

CHAPTER V

REQUISITES OF A SCIENCE OF WEALTH—DEPOSITION OF THE MONEY STANDARD

In order to transform political economy into a science of human wealth, two vital changes are essential. The first consists in the deposition of money and the substitution of social utility as the standard of wealth. This can only be achieved by several steps, the separate character of which demands clear recognition. First we must substitute for the objective commercial standard of money the subjective human standard of efforts and satisfactions according to the valuation of present individual feelings; next, we must adjust this imperfect valuation by reference to the real good or worth of the individual life considered as a whole; finally, we must harmonize the good of the individual with the good of society, taking social utility or satisfaction as a final criterion. In working out the theory of valuation, we shall not have to take these last two steps separately, if we hold, as we surely must, that the real and total worth of the individual life is determined by, and forms part of, the worth of the larger social life; but in concrete cases of economy it is sometimes convenient to treat the individual good as offering a possible standard of value.

The attempt to convert political economy into a calculus of pleasures and pains in production and consumption has been made several times, but has completely failed to shake the supremacy of money as the standard of economic value.

The part played by money in economic theory is scarcely less important than the part played in economic practice. As the business man is primarily engaged in "making money," so the modern economist is engaged in making money theories. Almost all the subtlest reasoning of modern economists is devoted to this work: their chief energy is spent in perfecting, by means of a fresh combination of the cotton spinner and the academic professor, a new Manchesterism in which bimetallism takes the place of free trade as the cure for all the ills that trade is heir to. All the diverse efforts given out by man in his daily work, along with the results they yield, are referred to the yellow metal to gauge their worth; motives and achievements which cannot be expressed in gold are ignored. The "fortune" of an individual, the "prosperity" of a nation, is always thought and estimated in terms of this same metal.

At the outset it may be well to realize how exceedingly faulty money is, even regarded as a standard measure of commercial values.

The so-called "appreciation" and "depreciation" are, in reality, the least important of the defects which impair the scientific worth of money as a commercial standard.

By including under wealth only things which are measured by money, we make the concrete sphere of industrial science a constantly shifting one. Whole classes of commodities which, under one set of circumstances, rank as wealth, are, under other circumstances, excluded, though the energy which goes into their production and the use made of them are the same. Domestic goods constantly pass into the condition of commercial goods. Weaving, baking, brewing, and a great number of home industries of last century have now become definite branches of industry. In every society important changes of this kind are always going on: goods formerly made for private use are now made for sale. The continual transfer of domestic to commercial wares makes

a wholly fictitious increase of wealth when represented in money.

Again, by taking the money standard, political economists are practically obliged to ignore some of the most important forms of public wealth. A private road may be valued by the toll it can take; a public road cannot be valued. The river Thames, one of the largest assets of our national wealth for purely commercial uses, is incapable of value.

But a still graver fallacy is exhibited in the case of what are called "free goods." "Those goods are 'free' which are not appropriated, and are afforded by nature without requiring the effort of man."* Air, sunshine, scenery—so far as they are accessible—certain fragments of land, are still "free." Should we not be disposed to say that the more of these "free goods" a nation has, the wealthier it is, *cæteris paribus?* Yet the poorer it is, according to political economy. For when a free good ceases to be free, and to serve the use and enjoyment of all, and becomes private property, it ranks for the first time as wealth and swells the national assets! The squire who filches a piece of common land, the Scotch-American millionaire who encloses a mountain and charges travellers for a right of way, has increased the wealth of the community. "The land in its original state," says Marshall, "was a free gift of nature."† Yet each withdrawal of this free gift, each assertion of exclusive property in land, has made the nation richer in terms of economic measurement!

Since the owner of land is *ipso facto*, as well as legally, the owner of air and water, sunshine and scenery, these things are everywhere becoming commercial goods; pure air and sunlight are taken out of the lives of the mass of industrial workers; from being "free goods" accessible to all they have become luxuries utterly beyond the purse of

* Mill, "Principles of Political Economy," bk. ii. ch. ii.

† "Principles," p. 107.

the poorer dwellers in our cities. We derive but a cold "economic" comfort from knowing that the value of the city lands (and rents) has grown in just proportion as the access to air and sunshine is diminished.

This opens up a root-fallacy. The money value of a thing is what one must pay to get it. This sum depends directly upon the importance to a person of getting the particular article he buys. Now, if there exists great plenty of a commodity—say bread—it is a matter of comparative indifference to him whether he gets a particular loaf (for he can easily get another); so he will not have to pay much for it; he will get it cheap. If, on the other hand, there is scarcity, it is a matter of importance to get a particular loaf (for the supply may run out); therefore, he will pay high.

Yet a loaf may have "cost" no more to make, may yield no more use in consumption, in one case than in the other. Where "scarcity" enters in to determine value, a small stock may be worth as much money as a large stock. Economically, in terms of commercial wealth, the destruction of tons of fish or fruit at Billingsgate or Covent Garden, so as not "to spoil the market," at a time when thousands are starving, is a matter of indifference.

Can we, then, reasonably take money as a true standard of objective commercial wealth? Rightly speaking, money measures, not wealth, but want. Convert free goods into commercial goods, competitive commercial goods into monopolies; make it more difficult for those who need a commodity to get hold of it; you are thereby increasing the money value of each article of supply.

An assessment of individual or national possessions in money values, therefore, gives no information whatever as to the actual quantities of consumable goods which are thus valued. When, therefore, we are told that the wealth of England has increased so many fold during this century, or when a comparison is made in money between the commercial

prosperity of England and some other country, the accuracy supposed to adhere to rightly-ordered statistics is wholly illusory. We are engaged in measuring widely different things by a standard which can by its nature furnish no indication of the extent of its inadequacy to the task.

These defects of the money standard lie upon the threshold of our inquiry.

Let us suppose none of these difficulties to arise, and that the yellow metal was a faithful register of changes of all sorts of commercial goods.

We should then have a true commercial standard, but we should be hardly any nearer to the standard we need for social purposes. Statistics of money values would present no record of any human facts. In 1770 Arthur Young reckoned the income of England to be £120,000,000; in 1901 the income may be roughly set down at £1,600,000,000. Making correct allowances for population and for prices, this growth of income would signify a large increase of commodities per head; but would it tell us that we are working and living so much better than our ancestors? Or, confining our attention to the first step of the humanizing process, would it tell us that the balance of pleasures over pains for the average man was greater?

It could give us no such information. The figures might imply that we were simply making greater drudges of ourselves, toiling harder than before after commercial goods under conditions of work which disabled us from making a more pleasant or a more profitable use of our increased possessions than our forefathers made of their smaller stock. I do not suggest that this is so; the presumption may be to the contrary. My point is that the figures can form no basis of judgment.

The same will hold of individual incomes; the knowledge that a man's income has increased from £1000 to £5000 a year tells us nothing of his gain, even according to the

narrowest utilitarian calculus. The very effort of getting a larger fortune may be the cause of a corresponding disability to get pleasure from its use.

In order to estimate the human value, in the narrowest connotation of the term, attaching to the national income of £1,600,000,000, we must identify this sum of money, not with the commercial goods and services to which it refers, but with the pains and pleasures involved in their production and consumption. The prices of separate goods and services which form the items of the national income, and out of which it is paid to those who receive it as personal income, are determined, according to political economy, by the relations between cost of production and utility of consumption. But neither of these terms has any direct reference to human feelings of pleasure and pain, still less to any standard of true human life.

Our first requisite is to reduce them to these terms.

First, let us deal with cost. "Cost" in business, and often still in political economy, means merely the monetary expenses of production, the quantity of money workers were able to insist on getting as a condition of giving their labour, and capitalists as a condition of giving use of capital. Even where "cost" is distinguished from "expenses," and is applied to measure directly the amount of labour-force given out in production, as distinguished from the price paid for it, that labour-force is still estimated by references to some non-human objective standard, so many horse-power, so many foot-tons, so many labour-hours. This does not give us what we need. If I know how many foot-tons or average working-days have gone into a particular piece of work, the building of a wall, the making of an engine, I am still no nearer to knowing the actual painful effort, or the waste of life, which this amount represents. The measure is not yet a subjective one.

In order to humanize a bill of "costs," to reduce the

statement in terms of cash to terms of life, we require three pieces of information, none of which is ascertainable by the objective quantitative method which political economy generally applies.

The steps needed to convert "costs" and "utilities" from terms of cash into terms of human life are the following:—

1. The character of the work or effort which goes into the making of the "goods" must be known. Some work is essentially degrading and brutalizing in the nature of the effort it requires, like that of the iron-puddler. Other work is so dangerous to health or so injurious to character that only ignorance or penury induces workers to undertake it. Such "cost" it ought not to be possible to buy. In the human sense this work never "pays"—*i.e.* the true "cost" always outweighs the utility of the product. Political economists draw up estimates of the expenses of different qualities of supply, and so form a schedule of supply-prices, the prices at which various quantities of a given class of goods can be put upon the market. On this plan they will draw you a scale of supply-prices for white lead or phosphorus matches, so much for one hundredweight, so much for two hundredweight, and so on. But does this method yield any serviceable information as to human cost?

It is, indeed, suggested in economic text-books that the inconvenient or dangerous element in a trade is represented by a higher rate of wages. The suggestion is not a whit borne out by facts. But, if it were, it would not be possible by any higher scale of wages to pay the cost of necrosis in the match trade, or the cost of phthisis in the Belfast linen trade. No true equation is possible between money and life. The most careful statist cannot construct the schedule of human supply-prices. No man or woman economically competent to enter a "free" contract would work under existing conditions in white lead or linen. The lives of these unfortunate workers are simply not paid for; they do

not rank among expenses of production. There is no parity of cost between such work and the labour of the skilled craftsman working under wholesome conditions upon material whose handling evokes his genuine interest and skill—work which is in its nature educating and humanizing. Take the highest form of work, that of the artist or the literary creator; the effort of production here, though taxing the vital powers, may be in itself a pleasurable and ennobling exercise. Between these two extremes lies the bulk of work. But the wages which the different classes of workers respectively receive tell next to nothing of the human cost.

2. In order to know the real cost represented by £1000 of textile goods, we must know not only the quantity of labour power (measured objectively) and the conditions under which it is given out, but how it is distributed among the workers. If it is shared among a large number of able-bodied men or women during a reasonably short working-day, the cost may be light. If it is sweated out of a small number of enfeebled workers, driven to a high intensity of effort during a long working day, supplemented by overtime, the cost is immeasurably greater. The most interesting work becomes a painful toil if continued too long; the most toilsome work is comparatively light and wholesome if given out in small quantities.

3. The industrial nature, strength, skill, etc., of the workers must be known. Labour which involves but a slight painful effort on adult males during a normal working-day may involve a far heavier subjective "cost" if it is executed under similar conditions by women or children. In practice this consideration would involve considerable complexity of treatment. Race, sex, age, are only three of the most important factors in the problem. Some of the gravest social questions depend for their solution upon a recognition of these factors in subjective cost—as, for example, the right apportionment of work between the sexes and between adult

and child labour. Where labour which might fall lightly upon adult shoulders is for some consideration of individual gain imposed upon the stunted bodies and the unripened strength of half-timers, the social cost is incalculably great. But this cost does not appear in the price of cotton-cloth. Not only sex and age, but individual differences of strength and skill, will of course involve a difference in the subjective "cost" which a given quantity of objective cost imposes.

If a manufacturer shows you a quantity of goods, and tells you how much they cost to produce, he gives you no information of human interest; even if he told you how many hours of labour were represented in the cost, you would still know nothing. You would want to know how heavily the burden actually fell upon each of those who contributed, how many men, women, and children worked, what the hours of labour and other conditions were in each case.

"Cost" must be reduced to terms of life. Only when it is recognized that all cost is expenditure of life, and that every consumer, by each act of purchase, is exerting a direct power of life or death over a class of producers, shall we get a truly scientific grasp of the relations between producer and consumer in industrial society. To reduce economic cost to human cost you require therefore to know—

1. The character and condition of the work.
2. The distribution of the work.
3. The capacities of the workers.

A corresponding analysis must be applied to economic "utility." The knowledge that the "utilities" contained in the mass of goods and services which constitutes the national income are estimated at £1,600,000,000 has no human content.

1. We must first refer these goods and services to some standard of wealth or "illth" in Ruskin's sense. In this £1,600,000,000 are included large masses of adulterated foods, shoddy clothing, bad books, pernicious art, snobbish

personal services. These rank as economic wealth, and political economy does not profess to go behind their money values. So long as there are persons who are ignorant, or vicious, or vulgar, and who are willing and able to back their ignorance, vice, or vulgarity, by the use of money, these things rank as wealth. Ruskin presses this point with keen and accurate insistence, that the human value or true worth of a thing consists in, and is measured by, its life-sustaining and life-improving qualities. But it must be admitted that Ruskin is too absolute in his declaration of the inherent and invariable nature of wealth:—

"The value of a thing is independent of opinion and of quantity. Think what you will of it, gain how much you may of it, the value of the thing itself is neither greater nor less. For ever it avails, or avails not; no estimate can raise, no disdain repress, the power which it holds from the Maker of things and of men." *

By thus making value attach as a permanent immutable property, Ruskin falls into an error similar to that which he assails, and one inconsistent with the tenor of his teaching. The value of a thing, in the sense of its power of contributing to human welfare, is not "independent" either of opinion or of quantity. Although the opinion of a low-class toper, that fusel-oil is an admirable beverage, may not make it so, or rightly entitle it to rank as a "value," it is also evident that the "value" of a thing will depend upon how much good the consumers are able to get out of it, and that this is no fixed quantity. Many articles of consumption which, in a highly-cultivated society, might rank as "illth," implying tendencies which are retrograde, might help to raise and educate a society of a much less developed sort. Low-class books or theatres, low-class forms of religion, which may injure people who have attained a certain standard of life, may be a genuine means of enlightenment to a people

* "Unto this Last," p. 118.

living at a lower level. Ruskin ignored the evolutionary character of society.

2. Utility, like cost, will vary according to distribution. Food will vary in true utility from infinity to a minus quantity, according as it goes to feed a starving person or a glutton. Estimating the whole bread supply according to human "utility," it is evident that, while the first portion of the supply has an infinite value, the last portion has no value, since servants throw it into the dustbin. It is, therefore, evident that Ruskin is inaccurate when he urges that the human "value" of a thing is independent of quantity.

Turning, then, to the £1,600,000,000, we see that we can make no estimate of the human welfare it contains until we know how the goods it represents are apportioned among the different members of the community. The value of each portion depends on the nature and intensity of the want it goes to satisfy. If any portion goes to satisfy the most real and urgent want, then it attains its maximum value in a given condition of society; if it goes otherwise, there is waste. Thus it is evident that, so long as any member of the community is without a "necessary," the distribution which assigns to any other member a "comfort" involves *primâ facie* a net waste from the social standpoint. A given quantity of commercial wealth will thus vary in utility indefinitely with the mode of its apportionment.

3. In order to ascertain the real "utility" contained in a stock of commodities, we must know not merely how they are to be distributed, but what kind of persons they are who will consume them. None of the higher or more refined kinds of modern commodities would have any "value" for a barbarous race, however rightly distributed. You may increase the wealth of a nation far more effectively by educating the consumer than by increasing the efficiency of the producer. All true education raises value by increasing

the vital service to be got out of something. This commonplace is often overlooked by political economy. The utility of higher forms of wealth depends almost wholly upon the number and character of the "consumers." Take a picture which ranks as an asset of £1000 in the national wealth. If it is bought up by a vulgar plutocrat for his private gallery, it may be no "wealth," but "illth," serving to feed certain evil propensities of greed and ostentation. If it hangs in the public gallery of a money-ridden people, uneducated in the enjoyment of forms of beauty, their finer feelings blunted by coarse lives, its utility may still be very small. But if such a people can be educated, refined, and endowed with the sense of beauty, a value or utility is imparted to the picture which is incalculably great, as it becomes a formative influence of national character. It surely belongs to political economy to ascertain how far there is a tendency for these concrete potentialities of wealth to pass into the possession of those who are able to use them or into the hands of those who are "inherently and eternally incapable of wealth"?

In order, then, to know how much real "utility" or human satisfaction is represented by the concrete "utilities" of the national income, we require to know—

1. What the goods and services are?

2. Who will get the use of them?

3. How far the actual consumers are capable of getting the highest use out of them?

CHAPTER VI

THE TRANSITION FROM "IS" TO "OUGHT"

Our search for a science and an art competent to face the Social Question has required us to depose the objective money standard adopted by political economy, and to substitute a subjective standard of human feelings. It has, furthermore, obliged us to refer current feelings of individuals for their true valuation to a standard of true or absolute utility regarded from the social standpoint. The significance of the earlier of these two steps and its defence are already patent; the validity, and perhaps the feasibility, of the latter step, which have for convenience been assumed in the foregoing analysis, will be gravely questioned by many who will perceive that it imports into "economic science," as commonly understood, some wider standard which is either biological or ethical, or both. It is one thing, they will allege, to reduce "costs" and "utilities" from terms of money to terms of human feeling. That is, indeed, a step which there is a growing inclination among "philosophical" economists to take. It is quite another thing to introduce a standard of valuation from outside—to refer every "is" to an "ought."

Now, though it is not difficult to perceive at a glance that any science competent to touch the Social Question, or indeed any question conceived as social, must introduce some test for the worth of feelings which will be regarded as ethical, this express subordination of the sphere of economics to a wider science deserves a separate justification upon theoretic grounds. Such justification, however, will be

more completely undertaken when a statement has first been made of the nature of the second of the two radical changes in the scope of political economy required for our purpose—viz. the enlargement from a science of "getting and spending" to a comprehensive science of human efforts and satisfactions interpreted in terms of social good.

Professor Marshall does not, of course, deny that the activities of getting and spending overlap and commingle with other activities of human life; but he defends his detachment of them, so as to make them the subject-matter of a separate science, on the ground that they form "a fairly homogeneous group."* Now, we have here a clear issue of fact. Are these phenomena of getting and spending so "fairly homogeneous"—*i.e.* so much like one another and so unlike other phenomena—that a study claiming to be a separate science can be conveniently made of them? It must be allowed, at the outset, to be entirely a matter of "convenience," for, to the philosophic mind, there can be only one science—the science of everything.

> "Little flower, but and if I understood
> What thou art, root and all, and all in all,
> I should know what God and man are."

When any group of closely-related phenomena is detached for treatment in a specialized science, this detachment, though essential for detailed accuracy of investigation, always involves an unknown sacrifice of wider exactitude by the break-up of organic unity required for the specialization. In some instances the sacrifice is justified by the results; in other cases it is not. Is the specialization of the phenomena of "getting and spending" so justified? An answer to such a question almost necessarily implies an act of individual judgment, the full ground of which cannot be stated. It appears to me that, for the purposes of a commercial science, in which either the accumulation of money-measured goods

* "Principles," bk. i. ch. v. sect. iv. (edn. ii.).

or the accumulation of money is taken as an end, and the phenomena to be studied are considered in relation to this end, such a segregation is distinctly valid. Man can reasonably, for these particular purposes, be regarded as a self-seeking, an "economic" man, buying in the cheapest, selling in the dearest, markets. The allowances of non-economic motives required will be comparatively trivial, and can be measured in their effect upon economic actions, while the whole set of phenomena for the purpose in hand can be quantitatively expressed.

Such an "economic science" can investigate the economy of manufactures and of all productive activities which take definite "business" forms. It can collect and order under laws the groups of facts which relate to the structure and functions of different trades and markets, of businesses within the trade, and can examine, from the purely economic standpoint, the relations of the capital, labour, and organizing power which constitute the business. Even in these inquiries some difficulties of allowance and of reduction of non-economic factors which interfere will recur so frequently as to hamper the "accuracy" of the results. It is only when we turn from industrial facts to their reflection in book-keeping or money that we get the semblance of an exact science. It is the craving for exactitude, and a reluctant admission that it can only be satisfied in the monetary side of "economics," that is driving most specialists in the science to devote themselves to questions of currency, prices, and taxation.

There is a monetary science which, when its foggy principles are made clear and its statistical facts well ascertained (a probably remote consummation), will be "exact." There is also a science of industry which is far less exact, because industry merges on one side into certain fine arts, on the other into certain domestic or personal productive activities, which cannot be separated from it, and which keep the

edges of industry, as a department of life, continually blurred and changing in outline. It may even be admitted that these industrial and monetary facts and their laws are sufficiently nearly related to one another, and sufficiently separate from other facts and laws, to form the basis of a science of economics.

This is all that some economists would claim. But one thing must be made plain. Such a science by its necessary limits can afford no satisfaction to any "human" curiosity, can contribute no answer to a social question. It must adhere closely to the monetary valuation.

The attempt which is made in some quarters to frame a Science of Social Economics by retaining the present scope of economic subject-matter, and reducing the industrial and financial facts to their true "social" import, is of very dubious validity.

For, though we may legitimately detach the "business life" of a community for separate study, taking the objective view of business and the monetary standard, as soon as we interpret "business" in subjective terms of effort and satisfaction, or vital value, we are confronted with serious difficulties in effecting the detachment of the phenomena from the other parts of human life. So long as we confine our attention to the processes of earning and spending money-incomes, a Science of Business is possible. But when we proceed to explore the inner bearings and reactions of these processes, to ask, How does this kind of work affect the health and character of the worker and his family? how does this kind of consumption affect the moral life of the consumer? the larger unity of the human organism, both in its physiological and its psychological aspects, everywhere intrudes.

Even in the objective Science of Business the task is not easy when we pass outside the more sordid industrial or commercial activities.

An artist, for example, is necessarily engaged in getting

and in spending money. In this capacity he is amenable to mercenary motives. But is there any right way of separating, for purposes of economic science, his business aspect of life from his intellectual and spiritual aspects? Would the closest study of facts in art or literature, or in any of the highest forms of work, enable us to apply the law of supply and demand so as to draw a schedule indicating the effect of an increase of ten, twenty, or thirty per cent. respectively in the amount of money spent in books or pictures? If it were possible to do this with some rough approach to accuracy in a monetary business science, it would be quite impossible to do so if the results with which you were concerned were the pleasure of the artist and of the public, or the real social service in good work and good enjoyment, which accrued from the increased expenditure of money. It is not here a question of a mere quantitative change: everything depends on the kind of work evoked by the increased expenditure, and the kind of satisfaction it yields in its production and its enjoyment. We are here concerned with reactions upon the whole nature of individuals and of society resulting from the subjective influences of an external business force. The science of getting and spending will be very difficult to work where idleness and greed are not the dominant motives, where they may even come to be merely qualifying influences which temper the desire to do good work or to get fame. But when we penetrate more deeply beneath the monetary valuations of "cost" and "utility" in works of art to the subjective facts that are involved, the utter inadequacy of the application of such an economic science becomes apparent. When we examine costs and utilities as vital values, we cannot examine them apart from the organic complexes in which they inhere. This applies not only to the case of works of art or other production in itself interesting, lovable, and educative, but to every part of industry. The money-getting and spending as objective activities may be conveniently

separated from others, and may be the subject of a separate science; but the conscious life which they express, the real subjective import which they bear, does not show them separate or separable, but organically interwoven with other feelings and other intellectual activities. Even the worker compelled by circumstances to confine his energies most closely to money-getting is yet constantly engaged in conscious processes where the mercenary motive is combined with and modified by others. The love of leisure, fealty to comrades, some sense of duty, some malice against an employer, co-operate with the desire to earn money. So, in consumption, there is a constant balancing of free against commercial goods; the free library competes with the public-house, the County Council band with the music-hall, home duties with gambling.

It is possible for a purely commercial science with a monetary standard to insist upon including all these forces just in so far as they are expressible in money. Wonderful things can doubtless be done in the way of money measurement. Love of natural scenery may be very accurately measured against proximity to a railway-station in the rent of houses; piety, as attested by subscription to a mission, may be very closely compared with the relish of a dinner. Most complicated combinations of advantages or disadvantages can thus be reduced to a common measure.

So long as we take the money standard as final, the "allowance" system which the economists support may succeed. But when we come to the intrinsic wealth, or "illth," this "separatist" policy utterly breaks down. Not merely shall we regard "the affection of friends" as one of the highest forms of wealth, but, in considering industrial changes, we shall find one of the chief gains of a better industrial order in the increase of this affectional wealth by the removal of bitter business antagonisms and their degrading influence upon the character. Looking to human

costs and utilities, we shall everywhere perceive free and uncommercial elements commingling and fusing with the commercial elements both in work and life. Can we, then, in a true social economy maintain the separation of getting and spending from other vital parts of conduct, and recognize its phenomena as comprising a "fairly homogeneous group"?

My contention is, that so long as Economics confines itself to the study of industry as a group of objective phenomena, valued by a monetary standard, its status as a science is justified; but as soon as it affects to go behind these industrial phenomena to a direct consideration of human motives and human welfare, its separatist status breaks down. A scientific treatment of human costs and utilities, whether the measure be passing desirability, as attested by present pleasures and pains, or some wider standard of good life, requires that an attempt be made to treat simultaneously the whole of the vital factors involved. In dealing with human motives, or the inner side of conduct, the "allowance system" will not work. You cannot say: "We will first settle this issue as an economic problem—a question of *£ s. d.*; then we will take into consideration other circumstances — political, hygienic, æsthetic, moral, in their turn; and, bringing the results together, work out a solution."

Let us clearly state the issue. It is this: Can the science and art of social life be broken up into several sciences and arts, or must its unity be preserved, if true knowledge and sound policy are to be attained?

The domination which the physical sciences have obtained over scientific method has imposed the idea that the separatist or specialist method is both valid and profitable, with the result that the process of intellectual segmentation has no limits set upon it, the "science" of one generation becoming the several sciences of the next,

and these again splitting each into smaller separate sciences.

This is often represented as right and inevitable. "This is the mode in which science must necessarily proceed," wrote J. S. Mill. Professor Marshall, whose hankerings after humanity continually break the rigour of his mathematical proclivities, seems at times half-conscious of the weakness of the separatist method. His pamphlet upon "The Present Position of Economics," gives away the whole logical position with ingenuous felicity. "It is vain to speak of the higher authority of a unified social science. No doubt, if that existed, economics would gladly find shelter under its wing. But it does not exist; it shows no signs of coming into existence. There is no use in waiting idly for it; we must do what we can with our present resources." * The denial of the existence of a Social Science is somewhat peremptory; surely some ordered knowledge of social structure and social growth has emerged from the "great deep sacred infinitude of nescience." If, as is suggested, the knowledge of certain groups of social facts—to wit, economic facts—has advanced further than the knowledge of certain other groups, it by no means follows that this vanguard can march safely on in cheerful self-reliance, leaving far behind other groups of facts with which it is organically related. May it not be more profitable, even so far as economic knowledge is concerned, to labour at bringing up the rear-guard of obscurer knowledge into line with the more advanced section? Not a few earnest seekers after economic truth believe that "what we can do with our present resources" is very little, and that the reason why it is so little is the insistence which Economics makes in separating itself from its more backward friends, and endeavouring to make for itself a selfish and a fundamentally illicit career in the intellectual

* Page 35.

world. In the passage quoted, Professor Marshall puts the separation as a mere matter of convenience, not denying the superior logical validity of the wider treatment. But, proceeding, he waxes bolder, and insists that the breaking-up of social science into sciences is the right order of procedure. "For common sense does not deal with a complex problem as a whole. Its first step is *to break the problem up into its several parts; it then discusses one set of considerations after another, and finally it sums up and gives its conclusions.* The fact which Comte seems to have ignored is that *the human mind has no other method of inquiry than this:* that a complex problem is broken up into its component parts—less methodically, indeed, but no less completely, by common sense than by formal inquiry. When it is broken up, each separate part offers a foothold to treatment by a special scientific organon, if there be one ready." *

Now, the fallacy of this reasoning may be indicated by saying that it proposes a purely mechanical treatment of a distinctively organic problem. The method of breaking a problem up into parts, discussing one set of circumstances after another, and "summing up," indicates that the problem is regarded as a mechanical composition of forces. In investigating the working of a machine you can take it to pieces, examine each part separately, observe its single function, make allowance for the friction of each process, then fit it together and examine its action as a whole.

You can do this with a mechanism, but not with an organism, when your business is to consider it as an organism; for the very first process of breaking it into its several parts destroys the very object of your investigation. The "considerations" are not arranged in separate "sets" as Marshall requires; and generically different factors, constituting an organic whole, cannot be "summed up" as

* Page 36.

if they were mathematical quantities. It is distinctly untrue that "the human mind has no other method of inquiry." Oliver Wendell Holmes says that "mathematics breed a despotic way of thinking." In the present instance this despotism of mathematics has developed into monopoly. Of a greedy man the Americans say, "he wants the earth." Professor Marshall wants the whole intellectual world for his quantitative method. So far as economics is a getting and spending of money, his method will apply; but social science cannot be treated in this fashion. The method cannot be applied to man, as an individual, or to society, because these are organisms, the organic unity of which is involved in every action of each part. The first act of breaking off a single part for separate investigation destroys the validity of the inquiry by altering, to an extent which is *ex hypothesi* unknown, the nature of the very object of special investigation. No doubt "common sense" does try to deal with a complex problem in this way, and that is precisely why, whenever the problem is of an organic character, common sense lamentably fails.

Comte was a philosopher, and, like all who have attained a philosophic grasp of the social problem, he refused to split it into component parts, knowing that by so doing he would commit philosophic suicide. The inorganic sciences admit the segregation of fairly homogeneous facts, giving us astronomy, geology, chemistry, physics, etc., though everywhere overlapping qualifies the legitimacy of the breaking into parts. In dealing with organic life we may assign to separate departments certain groups of facts which do not directly or chiefly involve the organic life—as, for example, agricultural chemistry, or even anatomy. But when we enter the organic studies we must adopt the biological standpoint, and study the life as a whole, the only specialism which is logically justifiable being the separation of genera, or species, the interdependence of

which is not too close. The highest order of organism, human life in society, must be studied as a whole for distinctively scientific results to be attained. The constant minute interaction of all the parts in social life renders their separate investigation impossible where the inquiry is related to the oneness of the organism, as is the case where conduct is involved. This does not mean that we may not study separate groups of human facts. Such a conclusion would, indeed, be absurd. We may, and obviously must, conduct special inquiries into separate parts of an organism. But it is, I think, unwise to call such separate investigations of conveniently-selected groups of facts "sciences." In human physiology we may make a separate study of the more intricate phenomena of the alimentary or the respiratory system, but we shall be wise not to speak of a science of the alimentary or of the respiratory organs, because the organic relation between the two, and the connection with other orders of physiological phenomena, is so close that the only classification of "fairly homogeneous" facts is under the science of human physiology. So, in studying man as a conscious organism (assuming that conscious may be fairly separated from unconscious factors), separate investigation and collection of groups of phenomena distinctively æsthetic, political, moral, economic, may be usefully conducted, and laws of their occurrence traced; but the need of bringing together and conducting as a whole the wider inquiry for the purposes of science is paramount. To pretend that separate *sciences* exist of economics, ethics, politics, æsthetics, relating to the subjective side of the phenomena, is a most unfortunate pretence, which has proved most prejudicial to the utility of science in directing human conduct. The conspicuous failure to keep boundaries is admitted by every clear-headed student of ethics, æsthetics, politics, etc. — each of these is incessantly apologetic for stepping *ultra vires*. Such transgression is

essential to preserve any semblance of actuality. So economists are frequently found pressing considerations of moral import, discussing the influence of work on character, the injustice appertaining to industrial practices, the non-economic effects of leisure and education, etc., quite independently of their bearing upon "getting and spending." The verbal boundaries put up by specialist treatises on ethics and politics are passed over on every page wherever conduct is in question. Perhaps the best testimony to the utter inadequacy of the separatist method for "economic science" in its human character is an appeal to the economic treatises which have addressed themselves to influence conduct. The writings of Arnold Toynbee, or, still more conspicuously, the admirable treatment of "The Slave Power" by Cairnes, indicate the necessity of fusing the "social sciences" where any social problem of a practical nature is to be faced.

No doubt "common sense" and Professor Marshall find it more convenient to break up an organic whole into a number of inorganic parts for study. It is so much simpler, so much easier. Let us, then, pretend that man is actuated by one or two strong dominant motives (though we know he is not). Let us pretend commerce is a department by itself (though we know it is not). This is, no doubt, the way to simplify science. But it is also the way to falsify it. Because a "unified social science" is so much more difficult, that is no reason for neglecting it, but is rather a reason for putting more intellectual energy into its pursuit.

Considered as a sociological study, the old economics, dealing with "economic" men who had no existence, and could have had none, was thoroughly false science, bearing somewhat the same relation to science as mediæval romance to a genuine literary presentation of life. Simplicity and "exactitude" were purchased by perverting nature. Modern economics has admitted the greater complexity of economic

man; but, while no longer regarding him as a single-motived creature, persists in regarding him as a creature with a single class of conduct.

Now, man is not a mechanical, but an organic, composition of forces. Neither breaking a human problem into parts, nor an application of the "allowance system," is possible in dealing with it. A man is not a business man and a father and a student and a politician and a moralist. He is all these together in one. As human being, every part of his conduct affects him in every one of these capacities.

So long as "getting and spending" are regarded as purely objective phenomena, we may study in a rough, quantitative way these operations by themselves, and may even make an economic science of the results. But if we endow them with human significance, reducing them from terms of money to terms of life, we can no longer adopt this method.

The false science of getting and spending must, then, be expanded into a true science of social efforts and satisfactions.

Many of those who are prepared to admit the necessity of breaking down the barrier between "getting and spending" and other departments of human conduct in the consideration of the Social Question, will still be loth to admit the validity of substituting a standard of valuation based upon true social utility for the standard of current individual desires. Not a few who would abandon the notion of a separate science of economics and who would subsume industrial phenomena under a wider social science, would at the same time insist upon a purely inductive treatment of existing facts, interpreted in accordance with the immediate valuation set on them by those directly affected, and excluding all reference to any ulterior or wider standard of ethics or utility.

The economist and the Benthamite utilitarian are contented with the quantitative measurement and expression of individual efforts and satisfactions as they actually arise; each action or event is taken on its own merits as estimated by the current feeling of those directly and consciously affected. Taking economic phenomena in their direct effect on man, they value effort of production by the reluctance of the producer to undergo the particular effort, not by the net aggregate of pain or injury actually caused to this individual or to society by his effort; and satisfaction of consumption they similarly value by the desirability attributed by the consumer to the particular act of consumption.

Now, it is absolutely essential to our purpose to abandon the fleeting, and often mistaken, estimates which individuals set upon efforts and satisfactions, regarded as passing separate phenomena, and to firmly establish, as an objective standard of reference, social utility. As I have already indicated, this term, properly explained, seems the most convenient description of the social good regarded as the desirable goal of action. But if any preference exists for some other term free from the narrower associations of utilitarianism, such as "social satisfaction" or "the self-realization of society," or if, as Professor Mackenzie suggests, the final reference be to the "essential needs or ultimate demands of our nature,"* the adoption of such terminology does not materially affect the issue. My preference for "social utility," as already indicated, is based primarily upon the fact that political philosophers, to whatever school or phraseology they profess allegiance, inevitably drift into language of "utility," whenever they are confronted with a practical issue of conduct the desirability of which is the subject of consideration.

Whatever be the language used to describe this outside

* J. S. Mackenzie, "Introduction to Social Philosophy" (ed. i.), p. 202.

and ultimate standard of reference, its holder will be indicted by the devotee of an inductive social science, on the ground that it illicitly imports *à priori* ethics or teleology of some description into politics or economics. But this strict ruling out of *à priorism* is quite untenable. The first and simplest step in every "inductive science" is directed *à priori*; no collection and ordering of crude facts is possible without importing from outside some principles of collection and order which embody the objects or ends of the process of investigation in a hypothetical way. You cannot investigate phenomena effectively without possessing some clear motive for investigation, and this motive will be related to a wider motive, which will eventually relate to some large speculative idea. Take a simple example from descriptive sociology. A student sets himself to collect facts of the rates of mortality in a given town; if these facts are to be of scientific service they must be collected and grouped in a method which is imposed *à priori*. For example, various districts are taken, and mortality rates are arranged as they vary according to density of population, or again, the figures will be set in relation to other facts than locality—*e.g.* to rents or to family incomes—or a comparison may be effected between the rate of city born and country born. Whatever the direct object and the result of this investigation of crude fact may be, this prime object and result have no scientific finality. If the object of investigation is to ascertain the proportionate mortality at different ages in different social strata between town and country born, this object is itself suggested and dictated by some larger object relating to the respective advantages and disadvantages of different pressures of population. Driven far back, the whole series of investigations and reasonings at different foci will be found to relate to and to be dependent on some hypothesis of political or social good, which is the "end," hidden, doubtless, as a conscious motive for the detailed student buried in his tiny group of facts, but none

the less permeating the whole process with "teleology." Not merely is purely inductive science impossible, but close scrutiny of scientific method assigns the actual sovereignty and directing force to an idea which is outside the range of knowledge except in the shadowy form of an ideal. There is no independence of the inductive method; induction always rests upon the support of principles derived *à priori*, and this *à priorism* points towards a standard which, alike for knowledge and for conduct, is ideal. Hence, if we are to take a scientific view of human efforts and satisfactions, such as shall furnish a basis of social reform, we must have a social ideal constructed to accord with human facts and human possibilities, but transcending existing facts, and furnishing a test for conduct.

Now, it is objected that this course of procedure confuses a science of *what is* with a science of what *ought to be*, and it is urged that we should confine ourselves to one thing at a time. Dr. Keynes, in his "Scope and Method of Political Economy," clearly voices this objection: "The attempt to fuse together the inquiries into what is and what ought to be is likely to stand in the way of our giving a clear and unbiased answer to either question. Our investigations, for instance, of the laws that determine competitive wages cannot but be seriously hampered if the very same discussion is to serve for a solution of the problem whether wages so determined are fair wages" (p. 47). Dr. Keynes claims that, by separating the economic and the ethical inquiries, he is "doing one thing at a time," and is therefore working more thoroughly. But if we look closely at the matter, we shall see that "one thing" is precisely what he is not doing. He is artificially breaking up a true unity of fact. The "ought" is not something separable and distinct from the "is;" on the contrary, an "ought" is everywhere the highest aspect or relation of an "is." If a "fact" has a moral import (as, in strictness, every fact of human significance

must have, though, for convenience, we may often ignore it), that moral import is part of the nature of the fact, and the fact cannot be fully known as fact without taking it into consideration. We may, of course, institute an inquiry which ignores the "ought," and which so leaves out of view the net social consequences for good and evil of any fact; it may often be convenient to pursue this course; but do not let us deceive ourselves into believing that we are investigating all the fact and excluding something which is not fact. This is only another instance of the protean fallacy of individualism, which feigns the existence of separate individuals by abstracting and neglecting the social relations which belong to them and make them what they are. To abstract from any fact those relations of cause and consequence which give it moral significance is to make it less of a fact than it is. No fact can be fully known as such without regarding it as belonging to a system of facts ordered by a principle which, by common acceptance, is regarded as ethical. There is nothing whatever "mystical" in this; it simply means you do not know a fact until and unless you know how it is affected by and affects other facts, and have applied some standard of valuation to these influences.

Dr. Keynes proceeds: "But while the ultimate aim may be to guide human conduct, the immediate aim to be kept in view is knowledge of positive facts" (p. 48). This is, doubtless, true. But it is a ground for distinguishing the science of society from the art, not for excluding from the science a study of highly relevant aspects of the facts. The knowledge of "positive facts" is not forwarded by a policy of moral emasculation.

Turn to Dr. Keynes's own illustration. Can the law of the determination of competitive wages be kept clear of all consideration of "fairness" of wages, as he suggests it can? Only by a shallow and wholly insufficient explanation of

the "economic laws" which govern the forces that determine wages. A close investigation of the actual processes of bargaining among buyers and sellers of labour-power will disclose, as a residual fact, an economic power which distributes the real gain of each bargain unequally between the two parties, assigning to the stronger bargainer a gain which is no necessary inducement to his industrial activity, and which constitutes so much "unfairness" and social waste.* This discovery of social or moral truth will, of necessity, emerge in the process of a strict inquiry into facts. You cannot exclude the discovery of moral truths from inquiries into facts. What you can do is to shut your eyes to the moral issues as they begin to emerge. Plenty of economists, actuated by this motive, have so conducted inquiries into the operations of "the law of supply and demand" as to utterly ignore the testimony afforded by the economic conditions of the sale of labour-power to the injustice and the social waste of competition as a mode of determining the reward of productive effort. This cultivated blindness of false specialism in science is, as we have already seen, due in part to a desire to confine attention to falsely-abstracted facets of truth, which pose as "positive facts," and to ignore the more dazzling and elusive facets of the same truth. Thus Dr. Keynes: "There is a further reason why a positive science of political economy should receive distinct and independent recognition. With the advance of knowledge, it may be possible to come to a general agreement in regard to what is or what may be in the economic world, sooner than any similar agreement is attainable in regard to the rules by which the economic activities of individuals and communities should be guided" (p. 51). This, of course, is simply a bold cutting of the knot, assuming, as it does, the very point at issue—the existence of a separate "economic

* A detailed analysis of bargaining which discloses these results is given in the author's "The Economics of Distribution." Macmillan Company.

world" where the facts are not "moral facts," but only economic. Like Professor Marshall, Dr. Keynes wants to simplify by falsification. "The intrusion of ethics into economics cannot but multiply and perpetuate sources of disagreement." Very possibly, but you are not at liberty to make a false severance for convenience. Ethics do not "intrude" into economic facts; the same facts are ethical and economic.

In taking Social Utility for a standard of reference for the values of effort and satisfaction, we labour under no illusion as to definiteness or permanency. As a working hypothesis for the regulation of conduct, Social Utility is an ever-changing standard, nor is it precisely the same for any two individuals. It will be the function of ethics constantly to re-form and re-state the substance of Social Utility, and to readjust the standard to accord with a rising and more rational interpretation of "the essential needs or ultimate demands of our nature." But, though Social Utility may not mean precisely the same for any two persons, and may differ widely for two societies, or for one society in two ages, this is no valid objection to its adoption. Some agreement as to the meaning of Social Utility at any given time exists in every society, for otherwise the "general will" could not operate. In so far as the members of a society own the same nature, habits, education, institutions, and range of vision, they possess a common grasp of what is for the good of society, and growing experience and wisdom render it a more practically serviceable rule. A more definite and far-sighted interpretation of the term Social Utility is the first aim of all ethical inquiry, and such an inquiry will be found to be at the same time economic and political.

CHAPTER VII

THE QUANTITATIVE METHOD IN SOCIAL SCIENCE

If we are to have a science of human costs and utilities, of true efforts and satisfactions, will the method be mathematical? This is an inquiry of the first practical importance. The chief desire of a large order of economists, as we have seen, is to make an exact science, which, in their sense, implies a science based on quantitative measurements.

The mathematical impulse has always been strong in Political Economy. The phrase of Edmund Burke in which he denounces "an age of sophisters, calculators, and economists" has a deep significance. The very word "economy" has come to imply figures and precise computations.

Now, this endeavour to enroll "economics" in the ranks of "Applied Mathematics" is valid just in proportion as true human valuations are eliminated from the problems which are presented. It has been admitted that a "Calculus of desires" is possible, within certain limits, always provided that the current monetary estimate of individuals be taken as the standard of reference, without appeal to any deeper and truer valuation. In this narrow fragmentary way we are continually balancing the desirability of one line of action against another, comparing the pleasures and pains involved, and choosing the course which yields the largest balance of pleasure.

Whether we can be rightly said to measure one sort or

size of pleasure against another sort or size directly, or whether the measure is of something which we may call the "present desirability" of two pleasures, is a subtle philosophic question with which we need not here concern ourselves. It is difficult to understand how it is possible to reduce to common terms two pleasures, or the valuation of them, so as to measure them and say which is the larger. But the "economist" is surely right when he insists that somehow we are actually able to achieve this feat, and that we do so in all the operations of spending money upon a variety of different commodities.

There is no warrant for saying that the hunger for knowledge is of the same kind as the hunger for physical food; and yet, taking present desirability as the standard, a quantitative equation may easily be made. We may assert that the one taste is not merely stronger but "higher" than the other taste; yet somehow this "preference," which seems to involve *qualitative* choice, can be reduced to terms of *quantitative* choice. The ability to make a comparison expressible in money implies the capacity to represent different objects of desire, as containing different quantities of some one quality which is an object of choice.

But the point which it is essential for us to observe is, that this mathematical measurement is not of universal application even for current preferences, and that it is totally inapplicable to preferences based upon true social utility. When we pass from a standard of present individual satisfaction or desirability to a standard of intrinsic social worth, we pass from a quantitative to a qualitative estimate.

First note the limitation of mathematical or monetary estimates of passing desires.

Two false assumptions underlie the claims of the mathematical treatment.

The first is that all preference is of quantity.

The second is that apparent differences of quality can

always be reduced to quantity; better and worse, higher and lower, to more and less.

Yet the mathematical economist may be easily convicted of error out of his own mouth.

Take once more Professor Marshall: "It may be objected that the higher motives are so different in quality from the lower that the one cannot be weighed against the other. There is some validity in this objection; for the pain which it would afford an earnest and good man to do deliberately a wrong action is *so great* that no pleasure can compensate for it; it cannot be weighed or measured. But, even here, what hindered the pain from being measured is not its quality, but its amount; the pain is *practically infinite*." *

Now, my complaint here is that, in the two phrases I have placed in italics, Professor Marshall begs the whole question. Adapting the utilitarian language, I should insist that the good man repudiated the wrong action, not on account of the size of the pain involved, but on account of its quality, or intrinsic nature. The admission of the closing words of the quoted passage seems to prove this. What is the ground of preference? It is that "the pain is practically infinite." Now, mathematicians are—no doubt legitimately for their purpose—in the habit of treating "infinity" as if it were a positive quantity, only other than any quantity which could be named. In strict logic it is not a quantity at all, but just the negation of quantity. In fact, if I say this pleasure is infinitely greater than that, I mean that the difference is incapable of quantitative expression—that, in other words, it is of kind or quality.

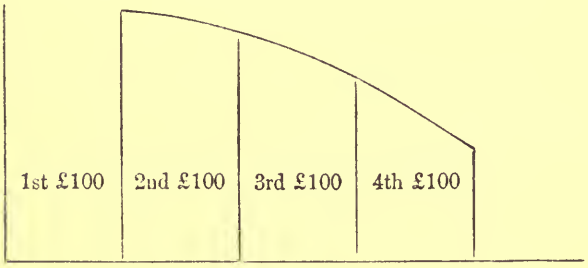
Similarly, the more enlightened modern theologians deal with the term which in "time" corresponds to "infinity" in space, insisting that "eternal," as applied to life or death, reward or punishment, signifies not duration but quality of happiness or suffering.

* "Principles," ed. ii. 78, note.

Economists themselves indeed are not wholly comfortable in their application of the quantitative method. Its insufficiency is, for instance, always admitted when it is applied to the measurement of "utilities" obtained by the consumption of commodities.

The commonest example of the economic text-book is the diagram which affects to represent by a geometrical figure the total utility or satisfaction imputed by a consumer to the different portions of his expenditure.

A man with £400 a year spends the first £100 on necessaries, the second £100 on conveniences, the third £100 on luxuries, the fourth he saves. It seems evident to the economist that we have a descending scale of utility, as we pass from the expenditure on necessaries to the less pressing expenditure and the "savings." Yet, in constructing the figure intended to illustrate this fact, he is obliged to leave it uncompleted, thus—



Why? Because he is obliged to admit that the "utility" of the expenditure upon necessaries is "infinite"—*i.e.* that the quantity of money spent on them is no index or possible measure of the good got out of them. Now, why is this? I take it the reason is that, in the case of necessaries, the "utility" imputed by the economist is based upon the supposition that the consumer "knows what he is doing," and that the valuation he imputes to the first £100 expenditure is not governed merely by passing desire, but by

some rough reference to a true and wider standard of utility —not, perhaps, social utility in the full sense, but the true utility of his individual life. If the standard taken here were merely that of current desire, it is quite possible that, living like the beast of the field, with no forethought, he might neglect to give a true valuation to some "necessary," and so might perish. Indeed, it is not always true that the utility actually imputed by a man to his necessaries is "infinite." The case of the Chinaman who sells his life, as a substitute for a criminal condemned to death, is precisely to the point. He makes what we should deem an error, by reducing the valuation of his life to definite quantitative terms reckoned in money, and measured against some quantity of comforts to be consumed in his final days, or to be bequeathed to his family. There might, of course, be a case where we should say man might legitimately sell his life in order to preserve the life of others; but that would be a sacrifice undergone for a utility which was regarded as "infinite" in value, though it might be secured by a definite amount of payment.

But the admission of economists, that the "curve" measuring "utility" cannot be rightly completed so as to include necessaries, is really based on the supposition that a sane man does accord to the utility of this part of his expenditure an "infinite" value—that is to say, excludes it from any quantitative comparison with the "utility" he imputes to mere comforts or luxuries. This admission in itself invalidates the service of the whole mathematical treatment of "utility;" for the relation between the "necessary" and the "unnecessary" parts of expenditure is quite the most important thing for us to know, and if quantitative measures cannot help us here they are of little use in a human application of laws of wealth.

It may, however, seem that quantitative comparisons are valid, at any rate, for all other "utilities" except necessaries.

But is this so? I think it is, just in so far as we consent to take a separate, passing, and purely hedonistic, valuation of each item of expenditure, regarding it as it appeals to our fleeting sense of satisfaction, and not as it forms an organic contribution to the making of a satisfactory life.

The distinction is all-important. Viewed as a detached piece of pleasure, or as a source of present satisfaction and "utility," whether a convenience, a comfort, or a luxury, it figures as a quantity which may be preferred or postponed to another quantity of a different hedonistic order. This separatist view cuts each "utility" clean off from all its effects upon our future life save those immediately present to our consciousness. So, to take an extreme instance, the diseased consciousness of a drunkard gives a large quantitative value to a glass of gin before him, considering only the definite immediate fund of satisfaction it represents; whereas, if he were capable of reckoning its full effects, even those of a purely hygienic nature, it would be unable to give any quantitative expression to the harm it inflicted.

It may appear as if we could rightly balance conveniences against luxuries, reckoning so much of the one class against so much of the other. We practically do this in "spending" our income, and so long as the science of getting and spending is strictly confined to present individual valuations of current sensations (to Dr. Keynes's "what is"), the process is legitimate. But the moment we endeavour to apply some standard of social utility or "the ultimate demands of our nature," this legitimacy of quantitative comparison lapses. It only needs a little reflection to perceive that, just as the "utility" of necessaries is "infinitely"—*i.e.* qualitatively—greater than that of conveniences, so the utility of conveniences is *infinitely* greater than that of luxuries. The difficulty in realizing this arises from a false distinction between the "wants" which are satisfied by those utilities

which, for certain purpose, we class as necessaries, conveniences, luxuries, etc.

Let us treat life as a whole, and briefly review it in relation to the evolution of want and satisfaction, and the sharp separation alike of classes of utilities and of individual items, which make them measurable as exact quantities, will disappear.

The briefest outline of this view must here suffice. Taking the life of an individual in society, and regarding that life as constituted of an organized complex of functions—physical, intellectual, moral, etc.—we find a continuous evolution of wants and satisfactions. In a general historical review of this development, there will arise first the want of foods, clothing, shelter, absolutely necessary to support the continuance of physical life. Certain improvements in quantity, character, and variety of these prime physical satisfactions will follow. Complementary food appealing to taste, ornamental elements in clothing, commodiousness and dignity of dwelling, may come next. Gradually, higher or more delicate sensations are educated, craving satisfaction; crude arts grow, providing utilities which were "unnecessary" to primeval man. The beginnings of æsthetic, intellectual, and moral needs are manifested; a general widening of life, bringing a conscious and continuous process of developing new wants whose satisfaction gives increased value to life, ensues.

Now, since, relatively to any race or any individual, there is a necessary order of this evolution of needs and satisfactions, how shall we rightly regard the classes of "utilities" which satisfy these needs? We admit that prime, physical necessaries are worth *infinitely* more than conveniences. Shall we not, by parity of reasoning, be obliged to admit that each class, in its necessary order of development, has *infinite* real utility as compared with subsequent orders which are conditioned in their development by its priority?

Certain physical necessaries are first conditions of all

further life. Their true utility thus regarded must immeasurably outweigh all other possible increments of life; but the same is true of the next order of purely physical satisfactions, which must emerge before any distinctively æsthetic, intellectual, or moral needs emerge. Once grasp clearly the true conception of the historical relation of needs in an individual life, each new want directly growing out of one already satisfied, and forming, in its turn, the soil from which other new wants grow, we then come to recognize that each utility which satisfies an earlier want is *infinitely* more important than the one which follows, since it is an indispensable condition of all further life.

Specific and individual aberrations do not, of course, affect the validity of this criticism. The man who should adopt the maxim, "Give me the luxuries of life, and I will do without the necessaries"—the man who even approximately follows such a scheme of life—we condemn as one who, from nature or from depravity of choice, takes a false view of the total utility of individual and social life.

CHAPTER VIII

NECESSARIES AND LUXURIES

As soon as we take the organic view of the building up of wants and satisfactions into life, we perceive the futility and irrationality of imputing a separate quantitative value to each of them. A rational treatment of the wants and satisfactions in a completely ordered life will assign an infinite—*i.e.* an unquantitative—value to each of them, because it will regard each as a vitally necessary part of an infinitely valuable whole.

It is true that this idea is foreign to our common thought and speech, which sets the so-called "necessaries" of life apart from other satisfactions. The notion that certain forms of food and other physical supports must rank separately as necessary to life and work, whilst other consumption, however desirable, may be distinguished as unnecessary, has not only played a large part in economic literature, where "productive consumption" is distinguished from "unproductive consumption," but is a stock ingredient of the commonplace philosophy of life.

Yet this distinction between necessaries, conveniences, comfort, luxuries, convenient enough for rough, practical purposes, will not stand the slightest strain of criticism, and utterly breaks down in an accurate analysis.

What is "necessary"? Something that is essential to support life. But what life? "Physical life" is the common reply. If, however, we endeavour to apply a bare

physiological test, it does not avail. What are the physical necessaries of life? Are they the food, clothing, shelter, of the low-skilled town labourer, that which was comprised in the "necessary" or "bare subsistence" wage of the economists, that which was just enough to maintain the efficiency of labour, and to enable them to replace themselves by their children in the labour market? Not so. The full physical life of these people is not thus secured. On the contrary, vital statistics show that they are robbed, on an average, of eighteen years of the life which they might reasonably expect to have if they enjoyed the physical conditions of the class above them. Their children, moreover, have much less than half the chance of growing to maturity possessed by the children of professional men.

Good air, large sanitary houses, plenty of wholesome, well-cooked food, adequate changes of clothing for our climate, ample opportunities of recreation—is there any one of these things that does not sensibly assist to lengthen the term of physical life? Yet most, if not all, of these things would be classed among comforts or even luxuries for labourers, though members of the well-to-do classes would readily admit that they were necessaries for them.

Again, take art, music, travel, education, social intercourse, such "goods" as would generally be classed as luxuries. Does not physiology itself insist that these and all other things which make for happiness react upon physical health and help to maintain life? The wage of a London seamstress we rightly reckon as slow starvation; if we added increment after increment, where should we stop? There are plenty of professional and commercial people who spend a large portion of their own summer golfing, or in Switzerland, who are, nevertheless, genuinely indignant at the "luxurious waste" which is creeping into the life of our better-paid mechanics, who demand a week at the seaside for themselves and their families.

The true economy of leisure, change, and enjoyment, even in their effects upon duration of physical life, is only beginning to find recognition in our theory of consumption.

But suppose that we had ascertained what particular sum of money sufficed to maintain full length of life, does this exhaust "necessaries"? Are we to reckon life by mere duration, and take no account of intensiveness and character, the education and use of all its powers and faculties? Is not the valuation of life by length of years the crudest and most patent instance of the root-fallacy of quantitative analysis?

We have spoken so far of physical life, and tested "necessaries" on this basis. But physical, moral, intellectual, are not watertight compartments of humanity. Whether we regard the organic interaction of all these vital powers, or take into our consideration the moral and intellectual needs and satisfactions as claims of nature which emerge later on, there is no excuse for refusing to admit the latter as necessary to life, considered as the whole which it rightly is. Thus we break down the distinction between "goods" which are necessary and "goods" which are unnecessary. All good satisfaction consists of necessaries; all things which are rightly convenient or comfortable are necessary to the best life. If we desire to retain and to justify the distinction of necessary and luxury, the latter term should be used in one or two ways. Either it should be taken to cover all forms of wasteful or injurious consumption, including excess of things which are, in moderation "necessary," things which, though serviceable to some, are useless or injurious to their present possessors, and things which are essentially, in Ruskin's well-known term, "illth," being in all quantities, at all times, and for all persons, injurious; or else, treating "goods" objectively, we should insist on reserving it for this last class only.

Now, turn once more to the organic growth of needs

and satisfactions in a life. The effect of each new increment must be held not merely to increase the quantity of life, if indeed it does this, but to alter the character or quality by its action upon life as an organic whole, making it better, fuller, and more complex.

The "real utility" of such a change, whether regarded from an individual or a social standpoint, cannot be compassed by a "curve." The mathematical schedule of expenditure cannot tell us anything about this real use got out of a particular expenditure of money. It can only yield a passing sensational estimate, based upon a separation which is physiologically and psychologically false.

Failure to recognize the order or the organic relation in the growth of human wants and satisfactions has exercised a most detrimental influence upon the practical work of social reform, causing a confusion of two distinct methods of valuation.

In tracing the historical process of development of wants and satisfactions, each earlier element seems more important than each succeeding one, the need of food and physical protection being more pressing and essential than the needs of "the higher nature." Logically, however—or in the order of nature, considered as a complete system, not as a process—each subsequent need or satisfaction is more important and more valuable than the preceding one in time, because it represents a higher type of life. From this latter standpoint the early functions are valued chiefly as the means, or material basis, of a higher spiritual life.

Now, in the practical work of social reform the confusion of these two standards of valuation has greatly retarded progress. Partly from a genuine conviction that "things of the mind" and "things of the soul," being intrinsically more important, should receive attention first; partly from a drift of philanthropic energy in these directions, through a reluctance to face the inconveniences of drastic reforms of

economic structure, a continual tendency has been manifested to endeavour to supply higher wants before the lower wants are satisfied. This has been the set policy, not only of private charity, but of State action, in many instances.

Philanthropists have often argued thus: "We have only so much energy or enthusiasm available in work, cash, time; we must, therefore, devote it to satisfy the wants which are intrinsically of highest human importance; and it is more important to save a man's soul, or even to train his intelligence, than to assist him to get higher wages or a better dwelling."

This is, of course, only one more instance of the monadist or separatist fallacy—the refusal to see life as an organic whole. The higher need, and its satisfaction—the soul saving, or intellectual education—only seems more important when viewed by itself, torn away from relations and conditions which attach it to other aspects of life.

Let us see the life as a whole, with the organic interdependency and the historical sequence of needs and desires, we shall find that, for the practical reformer, the satisfaction of the lower material need is always more urgent and important than the satisfaction of a higher need, because the latter is historically non-existent, having as yet no soil out of which to grow. No artificial stimulation and supply of higher needs can be other than a wasteful expenditure of energy. The historical, not the logical, order of importance rightly dominates reform movements, which are processes in time, and must be bound by time conditions of development.

Attempts of philanthropists to evade this natural order, and to supply higher wants before lower wants, unfelt wants before felt wants, attempts of the State to force intellectual nourishment upon minds dependent upon bodies not yet adequately nourished, represent a fundamentally unsound "economy," involving huge waste of social energy.

Take, as a concrete example, Class B in Mr. Charles Booth's classification of the people of London. Here is a class, unable by their utmost efforts to obtain such regular wage as will afford any security of decent animal existence; disabled by their bringing-up, and by the whole industrial condition of their life from getting regular remunerative work, or from doing such work if they could get it; compelled to live and bring up families under conditions which preclude the possibility of a sound mind in a sound body. All endeavours to deal with these people, in their existing economic environment, and to make them religious, moral, intellectual, or even cleanly, are little else than wanton misdirection of reform energy, attempts to solve higher problems before lower ones, attempts to grow the ripe flowers of civilization before we have grown the stalk, or even furnished soil out of which the stalk may grow.

This waste of energy is due to careless, or sometimes wilful, neglect of the order of the evolution of human wants. It may, of course, be possible sometimes to stimulate, and even to satisfy, wants in individuals out of their healthy natural order; moral miracles may be performed in slum life; "forcing" is possible in the growth of human beings, as of plants, but it is always a wasteful and a weakening process. The sound economical disposition of reform energy in dealing with Class B will involve, first, a concentrated attention to the industrial supports of its evil material environment, the questions of low wages, irregularity and insufficiency of employment, the housing problem, and the several aspects of "sweating." The various philanthropic energies thrown into spiritual and moral work among this class would gain, each its particular object, far more effectively, if its possessors recognized the historical priority of the economic problems, and concentrated first on their solution, reserving their specific forms of higher missionary

work for those social grades where these specific needs were just beginning to emerge in the development of life.

There may be some who think that this view errs by representing the slum-dweller too much as the slave of his environment, and are disposed to insist that education and moral stimulus, applied to individual members of Class B. may induce them to make a successful effort to improve their own material and economic condition. To such I would reply, firstly, that such cases constitute the "moral miracles" to which reference is already made, and their rare existence abates but slightly the waste of reform energy; and, secondly, that the ability of one, or any, individual to get out of his class no more implies the ability of a whole class, or of any considerable proportion of a class, to get out of its condition than the fact that any boy in America is able to become President of the United States implies the ability of all the boys living at any given time to attain this position. To impute this power to a class involves a total misunderstanding of the nature of individual and class competition in industrial society.

BOOK II

THE ART OF SOCIAL PROGRESS

CHAPTER I

THE RIGHTS OF MAN

To some the treatment of the Social Question, contained in these first eight chapters, may have seemed too purely critical in the loose sense in which that term is opposed to the term constructive. I may turn the edge of this objection by indicating, in a single paragraph, the positive advance which we have made towards a systematic study of our subject.

Starting, for convenience, from a consideration of the claim that current political economy is a science capable of handling the Social Question, we have found it radically defective for this purpose in scope, method, and standard of valuation. The requisite scope of our study, we have discovered, must include all conscious activities of man expressed subjectively in terms of effort and satisfaction. The method must be that of an organic science, recognizing organic interaction and qualitative differences, not the purely mathematical or quantitative method which current economic science tends more and more to employ. The standard of valuation must be abiding social utility, not present individual satisfaction.

Now, how far does such a study enable us to confront the Social Question in the concrete form of our opening statement? "Given a number of human beings, with a certain development of physical and mental faculties, and of social institutions, in command of given natural resources,

how can they best utilize these powers for the attainment of the greatest satisfaction?"

It will be evident that, in building a scientific superstructure upon the foundation we have laid, the burden of labour lies in ascertaining and in stating the true nature of the relations between efforts and satisfactions as organic factors of human nature.

Two common antitheses stand directly in the path of this inquiry, and, even at the risk of seeming to be needlessly discursive, we must examine them. These are the familiar oppositions between rights and duties, society and the individual.

Among modern social reformers of a philosophical training and an ethical temperament there is a tendency to carry the revolt against the theory of natural and inalienable rights of individuals, upon which the eighteenth-century political philosophy was built, so far as to deny the utility of recognizing any rights of the individual as a basis of social reform.

Now, the doctrine of "natural rights" evolved in the books of such thinkers as Locke, Rousseau, and Paine, and embodied as a theoretic basis of reform in the Declaration of Independence, and in the Declaration of the Rights of Man, the "rights" to life, liberty, property, security, etc., which are supposed to be born with every man, and which no "society" may justly abolish or abridge, scarcely requires a formal refutation.

If an individual is living a solitary, self-sufficient life out of society, the attribution of these natural rights is an empty form; the word "right" has here no content or significance. If he is living as a member of society, since he is an organic being in an organic society, no action of his can be considered purely self-regarding or wholly void of social import. Some individual actions may be so indirect, so slight, or so incalculable in their social effects, that we speak of them and

treat them as "self-regarding," and hold it foolish for society, either through the State or otherwise, to interfere with individual liberty with respect to them. But such "individual rights" can have no natural or absolute validity; for society, and not the individual, must clearly claim, in the social interest, to determine what actions shall fall within this "self-regarding" class. Thus these rights, if rights they be called, are sanctioned and bounded by society. Social utility must be paramount and absolute in marking the limits of such "rights."

Take the strongest of these supposed "rights"—the right to life. Is that an absolute individual right? To a man living out of society, the *power* to live is his concern; the *right* to live is wholly void of meaning. If a man is living in society, his life affects the life of others; and if it affects them injuriously, society may determine that he has no right to live. Upon what other principle can society act? If it be urged that society has no right to take away a life, but only to expel from society—to desocialize a detrimental member—that only means that general considerations of regard for human life may make it socially expedient to expel rather than to kill, and by no means impairs the right of society to take the more drastic measure, if expulsion or segregation is too costly or too difficult.

If this is true of the right to life, it is true *à fortiori* of all lesser rights—to liberty, property, etc. But, though all individual rights thus derive their validity from the supreme obligation of society to protect and promote the social welfare, they are none the less to be recognized as "rights," and to receive their due attention. "The right to life" is not a foolish or a useless phrase. It implies a recognition that it is the supreme duty of society to secure the life of all serviceable members, together with an implication that the life of every member shall be deemed serviceable, unless known to be otherwise. So there is a clear individual right

to property in all "necessaries" of life implied in the right to life, for "you do take my life when you do take the means by which I live." This social recognition of individual rights to "property" carries important implications, not wholly acceptable to the modern self-constituted guardians of "individual rights." The application of our human standard to the measurement of economic "wealth" makes it evident that the consumption of luxuries, or even of "higher necessaries," by any class or individual of a society when another class or individuals are in need of a prime requisite of life, involves social waste or disutility, unless it be deemed socially desirable that some should starve. Applying now our "rights philosophy," we should say that, where one is starving, another has no "right" in his luxury. Fichte makes this declaration with no uncertain voice: "From the moment that any one is in want there belongs to no one that part of his property which is required to save the needy one from want, but it *rightly* belongs to him who is in want."

The full bearing of this doctrine can only be grasped when we keep in mind the result of our analysis of the term "necessaries." It will then be perceived that the doctrine of rights of property conformable to "social utility" tends to undermine radically existing notions of those rights, by enforcing individual needs as a basis of individual property, not merely in the case of the absolute necessaries of bare subsistence, but of other goods, which, rightly regarded, are "necessary to life."

It is true that the sole force of "need" as the standard of reference for "rights of property" is based on a defective view of the matter, presupposing property to exist, and taking a purely statical view of the problem of distribution. Whatever answer we may finally decide to give to the question, "How far does social utility require property to be distributed according to needs, how far according to

efforts?" we shall find ourselves unable to exclude the influence of the latter, if we are to provide for the continuous creation of fresh forms of "property."

Fichte's doctrine can, therefore, only be held to be absolutely binding in extreme cases, and is simply a more dramatic rendering of the principle that the preservation of life is paramount over every other "right of property," which underlies the public policy of our Poor Law.

Partly to avoid the old entanglements of doctrines of individual rights, partly from a sentimental conception of morality which makes "duty" more respectable than "right," a certain conspiracy has arisen to lay exclusive stress on duties, and to shove "rights" into the background, or even to ignore their claims altogether. Mazzini is in part responsible for this view among political thinkers, with his well-meant but thoroughly defective formula: "Principles instead of Interests, Duties instead of Rights." "Take care of Duties, and Rights will take care of themselves" is the suggestion. But, because people have always been more apt to neglect duties than rights, it does not follow that we should attempt to drive them to an opposite extreme. It is essential to assert the co-existence and the identity of contents between rights and duties. Where rights are ignored on account of the superior nobility supposed to attach to duties as motives of conduct, there is always some injury or degradation lurking underneath. If we leave conduct to be directed by sole reference to duty, we are, for example, liable at every turn to have "mercy" and "charity" foisted on us in the place of justice, claiming merit for some defective act of restitution.

I may illustrate this danger from the typically academic treatment of social questions in a recent publication of Professor Flint.* This writer explicitly denies the co-extensiveness of rights and duties, assigning to the latter a far

* "Socialism."

broader scope. He holds, for instance, that it is the duty of the State to provide education for all its citizens; but he denies the "right" of those citizens to demand education. Now this can, without difficulty, be shown to be a mischievous verbal juggle. One evidently has a "right" to perform one's duties. Since, then, it is the duty of the State to provide education, such education is a "right" of the State. Now, this is in substance the very "right" which the citizen claims when he says that education is his "right." He has a claim upon the State to do its duty and exercise its right.

Again, Professor Flint, while admitting the social utility of a Poor Law providing maintenance, denies that it involves any right. "Society," he says, "as at present organized, has entered into no contract, come under no obligation which binds it as a matter of right to support any of its members. It is their duty to support themselves, and they are left free to do so in any rightful way, and to go to any part of the world where they can do so." This view, pressed to its logical conclusion, allows no basis whatever for the social utility which even Flint admits to attach to Poor Laws. But it carries its own refutation. If it is every man's duty to support himself, it is a duty which no man living in society is able to fulfil. Take any man you choose, remove from him all direct and indirect support of society, and see what will become of him, and what freedom is left to him to "go to any part of the world"? Depend upon it, whenever any one seeks to persuade us to dispense with rights and to assume the higher standpoint of duties, we shall find them endowed with a very defective notion of duties. Grave dangers inhere in such attempts of moralists and philanthropists to wheedle people out of "rights," and to give them what falsely purports to be the same or even better things under the guise of duties. Though social utility implies the duty of society to its members, and of its members

to society, it likewise implies a reciprocity of rights. If one man owes to another even so intangible a thing as "consideration," the man to whom he owes it has a right to it.

Misunderstanding upon this point frequently arises from losing sight of the fact that the ultimate sanction of both rights and duties is social. If A has a duty towards B, may B always claim the fulfilment of this duty as a right? Casuistry will set this difficulty in a specious case. The gravest blot on Clive's reputation was the forged treaty by which he tricked Omichund. The defence that Omichund was himself engaged at the very time in an attempt to cheat Clive is rejected by moralists as unsound. But though honourable men will insist that it was Clive's duty to treat Omichund fairly, will they likewise insist that Omichund, who was cheating, could claim as a right that the other should not cheat in return? But the apparent failure of correspondence between right and duty which the case presents rests upon the implication that the claim or right attributed to the individual belongs to him as an individual instead of as the representative of the ultimate right of society in the particular case. If A steals from B, he has still a right that B shall not steal from him, because the fact that A has stolen does not abrogate the social utility of protecting A's own property against the attack of B or any other person. B's claim or right in a civilized society is that society shall enforce the restitution of what is stolen from him, not that he himself shall steal either from A or from anybody else. Even Omichund retained a right that Clive should treat him honourably, though this right was based upon no merits of his own, but was delegated to him as the person towards whom Clive ought to perform a social duty in the particular case. The extreme circumstances of the case, by reducing to a minimum the individual nature of the right, do not destroy the right

or the convenience of attributing the right as an individual possession when we are engaged merely in discussing the relation between the individuals concerned. Putting the matter in its most general terms, we should say, "My duty (what I 'ought') is ultimately what I owe, not to the individual, but to society." *Per contra*, a Right is not ultimately the right of the individual, but the right of society. The knave cannot complain upon his own account of being cheated, but only on behalf of society. But this ultimate derivation of all rights and duties from society does not impair the utility or convenience of regarding them as appertaining to individuals in specific cases; for in most cases of conduct individuals, and they alone, are directly involved, and the interests of society are fought out in their persons. There is, therefore, no more reason for denying rights to individuals than for denying duties.

It is a fatal error to abandon altogether, or even to disparage, the standpoint of rights, which is so closely associated with the idea of justice. The support which a writer of such keen progressive sympathies as Professor Ritchie has given to the abandonment of individual rights is greatly to be regretted. It is true that the brunt of his attack is directed against the old individualist conception of these rights as "natural," in the sense that they were orginal and inalienable; but the trend of his arguments makes for the annihilation of all individual rights, even regarded as derivative, or *media axiomata*.

CHAPTER II

NATURAL RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY

It may reasonably be doubted whether thinkers like Rousseau and Paine ever deceived themselves into the belief that the "state of nature" of which they wrote was ever a real historical condition of mankind. When Paine spoke of the new Government of France as "the most ancient in principle of all that have existed, being founded on the original inherent rights of man," we need not understand him to suppose that such a constitution had actually existed in ancient societies. These men were poets in the dramatic presentation of their ideas. What they meant was that their social ideas were conformable to a sense of justice and of reason; and, gathering them into an ideal, they projected their Golden Age upon the past as we project ours upon the future. It is, rather, to be looked upon as a method of education—a literary means of generating reform-energy, rendered possible, no doubt, by vague, unscientific views of the past, but not designed as a serious contribution to history. Discarding the "monadist" philosophy, which indisputably underlay this theory of natural rights, we yet may find a use in the older forms of thought, and in the phrases which embody them. If we have any conception of a rationally-ordered society of men and women, as we regard them in their individual capacities, we shall assign them their "rights," or their separate ordered spheres of activity. May we not even speak of these as "natural

rights," and of the ideal society as a "natural state" or condition? For what is nature but reason working itself out in the universe? The rational society will be the natural society.

But why, it may be said, adhere to language which has gathered round it such false implications and associations? The answer is that these old phrases of the rights of man are by no means vacant of service to us. Endowed with their proper contents, the "rights" set down in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the American "Declaration of Independence" form a true foundation of that fuller edifice of "rights" which a rational society, guided by social utility, will assign to its individual members.

The French Declaration named four "Natural Rights of Man"—"Liberty, Property, Security, and Resistance of Oppression." Now, all these may be legitimately brought under a single head. It is evident, at the outset, that the last two cover the same fact: the right to be secure involves the right to resist oppression. It is equally obvious that the right to "security" is included in the right to liberty and property, for a breach of security is an actual or threatened assault on liberty or property. We may, moreover, take the further step of asking: Are liberty and property separate rights? Endowed with full significance, are they not the negative and positive aspects of the same rights? Liberty conceived *in vacuo*—the mere right of not being interfered with in respect of what one has or does—is a wholly unsubstantial right. It has been well said that "it is not in the absence of restraint, but in the presence of opportunity, that freedom really consists." If we press the argument one step further, inquiring wherein this "presence of opportunity" consists, we find it signifies the existence of a special sphere of activity, a scope of work and life, which is apportioned to the individual, and which may

not be invaded by another. And what else is this private sphere of activity but "property," the *proprium* of each person—that domain in which he may freely express himself?

Though this presence of opportunity for self-expression, which is the essence of true "property," does not always imply the exclusive possession of some objective good, it does imply exclusive use. So, even in the public street, the space occupied by an individual is recognized as his "right" so long as he occupies it, though time and other limits be assigned to this occupation. The essence of property, then, is exclusive right of use. My property consists of "what is mine, and not yours" to use.

Where any class of goods capable of use exists in great abundance, the right of exclusive use of any portion involves no difficulty. Not merely the higher intellectual and moral goods, but "free" goods of every kind, become the property of those who possess them, without involving any real restriction upon the activity of others. No clash of individual wills can arise over property in knowledge or in goodness. The domain of intellectual and spiritual opportunities is infinite; the noblest forms of property always go a-begging. The best economy of social power will always be directed towards securing the largest outlay of social energy in the production of those forms of wealth over which "the law of diminishing returns" and the "niggardliness of nature" have no control, and where the gain of one does not imply the loss of another.

Common language, by confining "property" to certain limited forms of material opportunity, and law, by the grim humour attaching to its use of the term "real" in "real property," show where the shoe pinches, where the social problem presses. It is the restriction of food and of other material opportunities, bounded by inexorable limits of matter and space, which make "rights of property" so important in their issues. Individuals find that they cannot

all obtain full means of satisfaction for their animal wants. The same material goods are wanted by several persons at the same time for their "property." Under conditions of actual life there is not enough of the best material opportunities to "go round."

This is the root from which the most pressing economic and social problems spring. How much shall each have? Does nature throw no light upon this question? Is there any natural basis of the relations of efforts and satisfactions for the guidance of society in determining the socially expedient "rights of property"?

In answering this question in the affirmative, we are by no means confined to that broad philosophic interpretation of "natural" which identifies it with "rational." The "rights" of property may be described as "natural," because certain laws of the physical and moral nature of man mark out the true limits of property in any given conditions of society.

In approaching the problem of property in material objects it is most expedient to start from the standpoint of the individual. For, as an animal, the possessor of a body, the individual stands most distinctly apart from his fellows, and property for the satisfaction of his animal needs is most definitely allocated to his private individual use.

Physiology assigns certain laws of individual property in tracing necessary relations between the output of vital energy in work and the replacement of that energy through nutrition. Every kind of human effort given out in the production of material or non-material wealth must be attended by a consumption of material forms, adjusted both in quantity and in character to the expenditure of force. The "appropriation" to the individual of a certain quantity of food, clothing, and shelter, in order to repair the waste of tissue involved by a working life, is a first assignment of "property" by natural law. This "property" in the

simplest condition of society would consist in the whole or part of the actual product of the energy given out. This is what Adam Smith meant by saying: "The produce of labour constitutes natural recompense." Taking a somewhat more advanced state of industrial society, we should express this natural law by saying that nature assigns to every producer, as his separate property, that portion of his product, or of some equivalent in exchange, required to sustain his productive energy. This first "right of property," sometimes spoken of as a "subsistence wage," is generally secured even to a slave, supposing his owner to be an intelligent man who understands his own interest.

The natural basis of the relations between quantity and character of work on the one hand, and consumption on the other, has received some recognition from economists and business men; but the slow progress of dietetics, and the difficulties attending scientific experiments, still keep this important study in a state of crude empiricism. Indeed, the conditions of industrial competitive societies are such that great organizers of labour, who alone are in the position to experiment upon an adequate scale, are seldom obliged to trouble themselves to discover whether the real wages they pay are or are not sufficient fully to sustain the working powers of the employees. Wherever there exists an over-supply of available labour, the employer who seeks profit is not compelled to consider whether the wage he pays secures to the worker a "property" in consumption-goods sufficient to prevent his labour-power from "running out." Provided that he is able to obtain at a low price a constant replenishment of the kind of labour he requires, it may "pay" him to draw upon the capital of working energy stored in young men and women, and by paying wages insufficient for the maintenance of vital energy, or by drawing out the labour-power too rapidly through excessive duration or intensity

of labour, or by a combination of both processes, to exhaust their vital capital, and throw their prematurely exhausted bodies upon public or private charity to keep. This is the economy of "sweating." It does not always "pay." Where highly-skilled, regular, or responsible labour is required, the economy of high wages is valid up to a certain point. It is admittedly a short-sighted policy for a master in the finer textile processes, or in engineering work, which demands combined skill and power, to force wages down below a certain standard, because such decrements of wages would be "naturally" attended by corresponding or larger decrements of working efficiency. In other words, what a greedy employer sought to take in extra profit would not be created. The attempt to take a form of "natural property" prevents that property from coming into being. Even in low-skilled or common labour of certain sorts the same natural laws are observed by capable employers. Mr. Brassey, in the execution of railway contracts in different countries of the world, collected valuable experience indicating the direct relations between a high standard of food and a large output of energy among navvies and other railway and road-workers, and maintained, so far as these branches of labour were concerned, the economy of high wages. But it must be admitted that the economy of sweating has equal validity as a "profitable" mode of business in cases where great personal skill, or power, or other high qualities, are not essential to the processes, and where the labour market enables prematurely used-up bodies to be readily replaced.

No general acceptance can be assigned to the contention of such men as Dr. Schulze-Gævernitz and Mr. Rae, who suggest that, since high wages, short hours, and good hygienic conditions evoke more productivity, the self-interest of employers tends to a complete harmony of interests between employers and employed. This harmony exists only in

certain industries, and there only within certain limits. Though intelligent and humane employers do often secure to labour a full "natural" property in their product, there exists no adequate security that they will do so. It is not necessarily to the employer's interest to pay wages sufficient to maintain properly the vital energies given out in work; still less to increase wages with the view of raising the standard of efficiency. Whether or how far he will do so depends upon a great variety of conditions. Even Mr. Brassey never contemplated the economy of paying a Hindoo navvy the same wage as a British navvy, under the expectation that the rise of wage would evoke a corresponding rise of working energy. On the contrary, he recognized that the Hindoo, if wages rose beyond a certain point, would take it out in more leisure and increased torpor. Race, sex, age, personal habits, climate, in relation to each particular kind of work, will make the problem a different one in every case, and the character and intensity of industrial competition introduce bewildering perplexities.

None the less, though difficult to trace, there exists a right natural basis of property in the physiological relations of function and nutrition. Perhaps the most serviceable attempts at scientific measurements have been undertaken in connection with modern armies. Here, so far as food and exercise are concerned, German scientists have conducted most elaborate investigations in order to discover the quantities and proportions of foods which will produce the maximum of soldierly efficiency at the lowest money cost. If similar inquiries, based on even fuller knowledge of nutrition, could be conducted with relation to all the different classes of workers and kinds of work, we should then obtain a correct measure of the first "natural right" of property. Of course, it would still be true that, though social utility would demand that this property should be secured to every worker, the immediate self-interest of

competing employers of labour need not conform to social utility, and that wages based on the superior profitableness of a sweating policy might still be paid.

It must, however, be remembered that there are obvious limits to "sweating." Apart from the inhumanity of a direct degradation of the working life, the encroachment on "rights of individual property," is strictly limited by the fact that "sweating" does not so much consist in transferring "property" from its rightful owner to the employer in high profits, or to the consumer in low prices, as in preventing the "property" from coming into being. The supreme wrong of "sweating" is in narrowing and starving the productive powers of the worker. We are often told that the wretched women who slave all the week at making shirts or cheap trousers are not worth more than the miserable pittance, the 4*s.* or 5*s.* which they receive. And, taking the technical meaning of "worth," this may well be true. No one is physically capable of efficient work when competition fixes wages at or below starvation point. Hasty meals of bread and butter and weak tea snatched out of a sixteen-hours' working day, spent in a sedentary occupation and an unwholesome atmosphere, render good work impossible. The seamstress gets 4*s.* a week because she is a low-skilled, inefficient worker; but she must be low-skilled and inefficient so long as she gets 4*s.* a week. Physique, spirit, enterprise, are requisite for the performance of strong, skilled, effective work of any kind. When there is no security of sustenance sufficient to support and stimulate such work it cannot be done. The "sweating system" is thus a terrible encroachment upon rights of property, because, by denying to a worker "the natural property" in the results of his labour, it destroys the capacity of production.

This "natural property" extends further than the bare subsistence wage. An English navvy cannot give out his maximum strength unless he is well fed with meat and other

expensive foods. Out of his product whatever is necessary to purchase this food is his "natural" property. A man engaged in close intellectual work is supposed to need a still higher standard of consumption. If this is true, then, out of the product of his labour, this must be secured to him. This natural right of property thus indicated may be summed up by saying that, out of the current production of wealth, whatever portion is required to maintain the productive power of workers is their natural property—*i.e.* a property which considerations of social utility will secure as a right in accordance with natural laws.

When society leaves some individuals free, through the action of competitive industry, to encroach upon this property when it is produced, or to prevent its being produced, by depressing the physical efficiency of workers, it fails to maintain "social utility," and condones infractions of a natural right of property.

Nature marks out still further the individual rights of property. The human will is a part of nature and the motives which operate through it conform to "natural" laws. Consideration of this factor directs Social Utility, in many instances, to secure an ampler right of property to the individual worker than is represented by his bare wage of subsistence or of working efficiency. Where a man is able, by voluntary exertion of his powers, to produce more than his bare subsistence or wage of efficiency, he commonly requires a portion of this surplus as his property. If the conditions of industrial employment are such as enable him to get it, any attempt to withhold it would operate through his will as a natural check upon production, for he will not consent to create this surplus-product unless he receives his "proper" portion of it.

When an Irish tenant knows that the personal exertion he may put into the improvement of his land is likely to be confiscated by his landlord in rack-rent, he refuses to

give forth this exertion, and confines himself to a smaller quantity of productive labour, the results of which cannot easily be taken from him. Similarly with our sweated seamstress. If she were able to put better work into her shirts or trousers, she has no security of getting a higher rate of pay, so that the natural incentive to this better work is lacking. Under well organized industry, it is an important function of the employer to order his wage system so as to operate upon the will of each worker by a skilfully graded inducement which shall evoke his best effort, or, more accurately, that effort which, transmuted into productivity, will yield the largest surplus of profit over pay. Different methods of "progressive wages," profit-sharing schemes, commissions and bonuses, securing to the worker a certain amount of property in the product of his labour over and above the physiological wage of sustenance, are devised so as to stimulate the action of the will. Thus there is superimposed upon the first natural right of property of the worker in his subsistence another "natural right" to such portion of any extra-product he may produce as is required to stimulate the necessary effort of production. Sometimes a genuine antagonism is created between the two, in cases where the will of the worker is over-stimulated by an excessive appeal to present greed which succeeds in evoking an injurious intensity of labour-power. This is the evil practice known as "driving," whereby a worker is partly persuaded, partly coerced, into giving out so much effort in a given time, or into working so much overtime, as shortens the duration or injures the character of his working life as a whole.

The property claimed by the worker in this extra-product bears, of course, no fixed relation to the total value of that product. Much will depend upon the amount of painful exertion involved in the extra-work, the inertia, and the desires of the worker. A man inured to a low customary

consumption, already provided by his ordinary day's wage paid for heavy and monotonous manual labour, will require the maximum inducement, in the shape of a property in his extra-product, in order to induce him to work overtime. On the other hand, an educated man constantly growing new "wants," who is engaged in interesting work that does not exhaust his energy in the course of an ordinary day's work, will undertake extra work for a minimum property in the product.

But, while the limits of this "natural right" will vary far more widely than the limits of the subsistence wage, some right of property will always be claimed which is "natural" in the sense that, unless it is conceded, human nature will refuse the effort that is asked of it.

These two elements of natural property, one controlled by purely physiological conditions, the other by operations of the human will, may be taken together to represent the normal standard of comfort for an individual or a class. Or, if we take a closer view of the unity of the organic nature of man, we may regard the former element of property as natural, in that it provides for the conservative demands of his nature, the maintenance of life according to a fixed standard; whereas the latter is natural in that it is necessary to make provision for the progressive demands of his nature which constantly puts forth new wants that press for satisfaction. Rational man feels a continual impulse towards a fuller life; he will, therefore, not be content with a "property" just sufficient to maintain his present efficiency of work and life, but will require an ever-expanding margin wherewith to live a larger and a better life. This "right" of property a community guided by "social utility" will also secure to the individual, for it is the essential of that growth of individual and of social character which is the most convincing aspect of "progress."

All that portion of a product necessary to evoke the

effort of producing it is, then, the natural property of the person who exerts the effort. In a state of society where endeavours are made to infringe this right, the result is a restriction of productive energy given out, and a consequent diminution of the functional activity of the producer, an impairment of vitality, and of incentive to development. Man desires not merely to live, but to live more abundantly, and for that end will undergo increased effort. But where more abundant life is not secured, nature withholds the effort; under such conditions torpor sets in, activity becomes inured to a low routine, and soon the very possibility of progress disappears by atrophy of the will and the intelligence. A systematic process of infringement of these natural rights of property will gradually reduce the life of an individual or of a class to its lowest terms—the starved, hopeless, helpless inefficiency of the unskilled casual labourers in our large towns. It is not so much that these people are robbed of their property by their superiors in economic strength, but rather that they are prevented from producing property which they can have no security of holding for their own uses. In these hidden organized infringements of the security of property we find the true explanation of most of that inefficiency of life and work which shallow thinkers, posing as moralists, impute to moral defects of the individual nature as root-causes.

But how far do these rights of property, based upon consideration of the physical and moral nature of man, extend? Even confining ourselves to the property needed to maintain physical efficiency of labour power, we find no fixity of limits. The "supply" of labour in any trade is constantly changing character; younger workers ousting older ones, women taking the place of men, foreigners replacing natives, and so forth; while unceasing changes of industrial processes affect the nature and intensity of the work to be done. Each one of these changes means an

alteration in the proportion of the product which figures as "the property" of the worker in the sense of wage of physical efficiency.

Still deeper considerations affect the rights of property dependent upon the stimulus of the individual will of workers. Here the question is of motive. The crude current treatment of industrial economy is based upon two assumptions of the permanency of certain forces operative upon human motives. The first assumption relates to human nature in itself, imputing to man inherent idleness and infinite greed; the second relates to industrial processes, assuming their inherent repulsiveness. Thoroughly selfish men required to do disagreeable and uninteresting work will insist upon a large "property" in the result of this work as a condition of undertaking it.

Now, just where and in so far as these assumptions are valid, individual rights of property attain their maximum. The dominance of machine-production and minute division of labour over large tracts of the industrial world have had their worst effects in diminishing the inherent attractiveness of work, and in emphasizing the force of selfish greed as the sole stimulus to labour. But, for all that, it is not any eternal law of nature that idleness and greed are the sole directing powers of industry, and that man figures as a "covetous machine." The root issue is this: Must the worker necessarily, and in all cases, find his motive to labour in the desire to possess as his "property" the product of his labour, or may he find it in the satisfaction afforded by the process?

The answer evidently depends largely on the character of the process. If the process is utterly unattractive, the worker can only look to property in the product for his motive, and, unless he gets a large share for his property, he will refuse to produce. If, on the other hand, the process is itself desirable, a far smaller property in the product is necessary

—perhaps no more than is required to maintain the balance of physical efficiency. An artist will often work for what seems to the "business man" a totally inadequate reward. It is not true that man "naturally" refuses effort unless he can secure a full selfish enjoyment of the product. Man is the owner of a recurrent fund of superfluous vital energy, over and above what is needed to procure the necessaries of physical life, and he is willing to use this energy for pleasurable activities of self-expression, without demanding that all the matter which he may inform with this superfluous energy shall be earmarked for his private property. The activity, or "virtue," of an artist is in a large degree its own reward. So far as an artist (using the term here in its most comprehensive sense) is rightly said to work for "art's sake," he does not work for money. The product, or concrete "work of art," in so far as the artist would be willing to produce it even if he had to present it gratis to an appreciative public, is not strictly the "property" of the artist. His "nature" does not require that he should possess it, and wide considerations of social utility require that he should not monopolize it. His property, the scope of his private activity and satisfaction, here resides in the exercise of the creative or artistic faculty itself; even if his poems or his pictures were taken from him as he produced them, and were transferred to the public service, he would still continue to produce. This is, of course, only true of the poet or the painter in so far as he is free in his choice of work, and not a hack, harnessed to the chariot of industrial society, and obliged to slave, cheat, and wrangle for a living. The concrete embodiment of true free artistic power—the poem, the play, the picture—is not the property of its creator in the same sense, or to the same extent, as the crop of wheat is the property of the farmer, or the shoes of the shoemaker. Where the process contains within itself no balance of satisfaction to yield sufficient motive

to production, adequate "property" in the product must be secured; where the process yields full measure of satisfaction, no such property in the product is essential. The best property of the artist is in the pleasurable use of his art-power; the detached abiding product must be regarded, not as the end or necessary motive of his activity, but, rather, as the material condition of environment in which the functional activity takes place.

It is true that many artists are very greedy, and jealous of property in their product. The musician and the painter, as we find them, are often preternaturally eager to secure the full market value of their picture or their opera. The great poet who expressed so happily the complete detachment of his art from ordinary mundane motives, "I do but sing because I must," was notorious for the hard bargains he drove with publishers. Dr. Johnson rudely caricatured the prevailing sentiment of his profession when he declared that "no man but a fool wrote except for money."

Now, it is true that the poet and the painter may rack-rent the educated public, by extorting a full economic value for the reading of their poems or the sight of their pictures, and this conduct, being consonant with ordinary business practices, may not seem reprehensible. But, rightly judged, the poet has not the same natural right to the full market value of his poem as the weaver or the shoemaker to the value of his product. The rack-rent is not his "property"; he is simply abusing his power as monopolist.

Of course, if the "artist" is really motived by greed of gain, and not in any appreciable degree by desire for self-expression, love of art, or even fame, he will demand his "property" in the product, like other business men. A certain legitimate self-love and pride of handicraft may also—at any rate in the arts which take material shapes—stimulate a certain desire for property in the product. But, making all allowances, the vital difference between

the artist and the mechanic, or routine-labourer, remains. Just in proportion as work is itself lovable as a means of wholesome and agreeable self-expression, the "natural" right of full private property in the product is weaker. True work is self-expression. Where the process is injurious, painful, or degrading, the "self" can find no genuine expression in it, but is concentrated in desire for the product or its money-value. This latter is the goal at which the "self" aims, and, since the producer finds no fruit of his activity in the process, he must have it in the product. Social Utility will secure this to him, in so far as it adjudges the value of the product to be due to the voluntary effort of the individual producer. Those who perceive that no product or its value is rightly attributable as a whole to any merely individual effort will recognize that even a greedy man, doing disagreeable work, has no claim to property in the whole of what he terms "his product"; but the limitations of private property here indicated are reserved for discussion later on.

The real importance of the distinction between property in process and property in product is that it points out one of the most profitable paths of social reform. If social progress be interpreted in purely quantitative terms, and taken to consist in the multiplication of human life at a low level of character, using an increased control over natural resources merely, or mainly, to supply larger quantities of common routine goods for the fuller satisfaction of the lower grades of animal wants, under these conditions an increasing quantity of work will be void of intrinsic worth, the rights of individual property will continually grow, and the instincts of personal greed hold unabated sway. But, if social progress implies higher individuation of tastes and a growing demand for qualitative satisfaction, measuring the greatness of a man or a nation

by refinement of wants and growing complexity of character, such life will react as a demand for finer and more "artistic" qualities of work, restricting the rights of individual property in products, and continually educating worthier motives of work.

CHAPTER III

INFRINGEMENTS OF RIGHTS OF PROPERTY

It has been shown that, where economic or other social conditions prevent individuals from obtaining the physical subsistence or the moral stimulus requisite to evoke efficient productivity, such conditions must be held to constitute an infringement of "natural" rights of property by placing barriers against the attainment of "social utility."

But if it is an infringement of these rights of property for an individual to be unable to secure these requisites, it is equally an infringement for another individual to enjoy "goods" in excess of these requisites. This wrong, on the first blush, may seem less obvious than the other. If I am underpaid for my work, I shall refuse to work; but if I am overpaid, it might seem that, though the surplus may be of no use to make me work harder or better, it will not prevent me from working as well as if I received my bare "rights." The answer is, however: "Yes, it will; the surplus wage, consisting of a 'property' which is not your earning, but some one else's, will hang like a millstone round your neck, numbing your energy and paralyzing your effort. Every pound which is paid to you of another's earning is a bribe not to work. Every enjoyment given without exacting some correspondent effort, every act of consumption which involves no previous act of production, is a 'natural' and, in the long run, an inevitable check upon future

effort, and is represented in a net reduction of efficiency in the recipient."

This may sound a hard saying; but let us test it.

The economist of the Charity Organization Society justly dwells upon the evil effects of distributing sixpences to a promiscuous crowd of beggars. Just as money paid to workers acts as a demand for labour, so the same money paid to non-workers acts as a demand for idleness. It enables men to live idle, induces them to remain idle, and persuades others to qualify for this charity by becoming idlers. Now, this result follows, not from the fact that the sixpences are distributed by the caprice of a benevolent stranger to persons he knows nothing about. The disposition of the donor, the regularity of his charitable action, and even the character of the recipients, are not the chief circumstances which determine whether the net result of such action is good or evil. It is money given without corresponding service rendered, power of enjoyment detached from its natural antecedent of human effort, that constitutes the wrong. But, strangely enough, well-to-do people, who clearly comprehend the force of this argument when it applies to the poor, fail to grasp its application to themselves. If it is the unnatural detachment of enjoyment from effort which makes charity injurious, then all wealth enjoyed without effort is equally injurious. The pauperization and degradation which follow charitable gifts to the poor attach equally to them, if they receive gifts or inheritances from relatives and friends, or live upon rent and interest of capital which has required of them no painful abstinence; or if in any other way they reap where they have not sown. Yet we have seldom known any of this stern order of philanthropists to refuse a legacy on the ground that it would degrade his character if he received it.

This abrupt denial of the social utility of inheritance requires some explanation or qualification. It must be kept

in mind that we are engaged at present in constructing the ideal relation which should subsist in a society guided by true considerations of Social Utility. In a society which neglects its first duty of affording to all members whose existence it has endorsed, security of work and of adequate payment for the same, it is not unreasonable that parents and other relatives should seek by gifts or bequests to secure their young against undeserved and injurious hardships. Within reasonable limits of amount this private endowment of security in life may not do the harm which it would do in a properly constituted society. Moreover, so long as these undeserved and terrible risks continue to be possible the power so to bequeath property may be, and in some cases will be, a genuine, or, as we should say, a "natural" stimulus to productive exertion. But these qualifications of the wrongfulness of bequest and inheritance under existing circumstances must not lead us to assign to them any ultimate social validity, or to ignore the grave abuses which attend their present operation. A well-ordered society will not find it socially useful to permit any bequest or inheritance which will enable the recipient to withhold any of his working energy from social service, nor will regard for the security or prosperity of relatives or friends continue to form a natural stimulus to the productive energy which seeks to amass property, when this security and prosperity can be attained by the reasonable exertions of each member of society.

In a word, bequest and inheritance, like other forms of charity, can only be defended as palliatives of social disease, not as wholesome social institutions. Even considered in the light of palliatives the tendency of enlightened societies will be to place closer restrictions upon them.

"We find that atrophy is both more rapid and more complete among parasites than elsewhere. Plants lose their roots and even their leaves. Among animals, the points of

contact with the world are minimized in proportion to the degree of parasitism; the nervous system tends to disappear so completely, indeed, that in some species the individual ends in being little more than a sac with reproductive organs. In the world of human life, parasitic degeneration is, above all, cerebral. The intellectual faculties are the first to atrophy from disease; physical degeneration is a later and almost a reflex process."*

This slow working of the natural law in modern industrial societies is chiefly attributable to two causes. The first is that, so far as rent-drawers, sinecurists, and other "proprietary parasites" are concerned, they are frequently inheritors of an originally vigorous constitution which is transmitted to them but slightly, if at all, impaired by the parasitic life of their parents. This good start in life, favoured by a healthy environment in childhood, enables them to stand out sometimes for a long time against the natural tendencies of the parasitic life. Then, again, parasitism does not, save in extreme cases, impose or admit complete inertia. Most parasites must either find a "host" or, if it be provided, as by inheritance to the human parasite, some activity is enjoined in the very processes of feeding on him. Take, for instance, the landowner. A fine humour lurks in the common defence of landlordism upon the ground of the laborious energy the landlord must display in order to extract his full economic rents and administer his property for this purpose—the labour of "managing his estate." Such activity, of course, though no defence against the charge of parasitism, is often efficacious in postponing or abating the natural results upon the parasite. It may indeed be conceded that the parasitism of the landlord is not perfected until he has reached the haven of absenteeism, and from a collector of rents has passed into a mere receiver,

* "Parasitism, Organic and Social," by J. Mussart and Émile Vandervelde, p. 75 (Sonnenschein).

opening his mouth to receive for food the fruit of others' toil. The same process of change is visible in other departments of industrial society. The big capitalist-employer, energetic in building up and ordering his business during youth, tends constantly to reduce active co-operation; for a time he will busy himself in the office checking accounts, so as to ascertain that he is getting his full share of profit, but gradually he passes into a condition which, discarding all pretence to serious work, feigns to justify itself by talk of general "direction" and "responsibility;" the business is converted into a company, and he assumes the post of director, which becomes more and more of a sinecure as time passes on, until in effect, if not in name, he becomes a mere drawer of dividends. It may even be suggested that the facilitation of this parasitic tendency is a chief economic motive of the growth of the Joint Stock Company, which is the leading type of business structure to-day. But even when a landowner is "absentee" and a business man "retired," the administration of their property, or, at any rate, of their income, involves some exercise of brain and nerve which mitigates and retards the numbing tendency of the parasitic habit.

These considerations, hiding or mitigating the nature and effects of economic parasitism, prevent the persons of "independent means" from perceiving or admitting that their "independence" is infected with the same malady as the spurious charity which they condemn when it is directed to the relief of the poor.

To live upon the energy of other people, through rents, dividends, inheritance or gift involves, however, certain natural injuries of parasitism. Indeed I do not hesitate to say that, for a man who is rich or who is capable by his personal exertion of enjoying a property of his own making, to receive an inheritance is productive of the evils of which I speak in a higher degree than in

the case where charity is bestowed upon the poor. For in the case of poor persons, whose evil plight is often a result of an habitual invasion by others upon their natural right of property and a consequent narrowing of their productive energy, one wrong may be in a certain clumsy way a correction of the other wrong. But, in the case of the richer person, the result of receiving a property which is in no sense his, because none of his vital energy has gone into its making, is an unqualified wrong. A man who receives and uses a property which is not his own making is paid to withhold so much of his personal energy in production, is paid to give out a smaller amount of organized and directed activity than he would otherwise have given. If he receive a series of such gifts, or one gift, the numbing influence of which is spread over a long period of time, he becomes an idler or an anarchist. If the bribe acts directly, it gradually saps all the roots of active energy which are not centred in desire of personal display or other form of self-love. The "independent gentleman," for so with unconscious humour he styles himself, will practise for a while such forms of active self-expression as are fashionable, stir his emulation, and are not degraded by having attached to them any useful end; he may hunt, play golf, sit on the bench, enter Parliament, or even collect some sort of knowledge which shows well, and involves no arduous effort of attainment.

But the property of another which he uses will gradually crush his own property, his capacity of vigorous self-expression. Relieved of the necessity of painful effort, he will only undergo such efforts as are easy; so the habit of hard work disappears, and with it the zest of enjoyment which the reaction from hard work brings. The higher kinds of concentrated mental effort, with their corresponding enjoyments, go first; then the lower; even the physical exercises involving skill, constant practice, and play of mind, yield to the

simpler forms of animal enjoyment. This is the normal and necessary effect of living upon another's property. One by one the higher activities are debilitated, and cease to work; the attempt to consume without producing, to enjoy without effort, at once lessens the quantity and lowers the quality of life. The logical end of a society living upon unearned incomes would be death by over-feeding, or by inability to digest and assimilate their food. No economic or moral defence of the right to receive rent or interest, or to take by inheritance or bequest another's property, however cogent it may appear, can abrogate this application of the natural law.

Physical decay is a "natural" consequence of attempted evasions of the physical law which imposes exercise as the condition of digestion. "Whosoever will not work, neither *can* he eat" is the physical rendering of the moral law. For the physical diseases bred of stolen luxuries, and those which spring from chronic starvation, are literal counterparts. The convex, congested paunch of the torpid plutocrat, who consumes without the effort of producing, implies as its equal and opposite the concave, anæmic body of the inefficient starveling. The logic of events works, indeed, slowly, and with seeming irregularity. Not only is it possible for individuals to postpone, and even to escape utterly, this natural Nemesis of "economic independence;" but this struggle for existence has evolved, among other "fitnesses," a particular cunning directed to this end. On the physical side it takes the name of Sport. Considered as an organized and regular pursuit—and, as such, distinguished from "play," which in all animal life is the wholesome expenditure of superfluous vitality in unorganized displays of individual activity—Sport is a device to avoid the natural law by substituting voluntary, useless, physical exertion for useful physical labour directed to the social good. It is practised alike by the upper class of "unemployed,"

and by specialized brain-workers and others engaged in sedentary and indoor occupations, in order to safeguard the physique against the effects of economic idleness on the one hand, and over-specialization upon the other. From the social standpoint it is a waste of potentially productive energy, arising from the imperfect social order, which enables some to escape all contribution of physical labour, imposing their proper share upon others. We are not here concerned with the justice of the pleas upon which such conduct is defended—the plea of inherited wealth, prior concentrated services, the necessity of minute subdivision of labour. The fact alone concerns us that, the greater part of this organized "Sport" is a cunning product of parasitism, a substitution of voluntary physical exertion directed by individual pleasure for the compulsory physical work directed by social utility.

Would a sound society, then, make no allowance for physical recreation? Certainly. Not a smaller, but a larger, margin of free exercise of individual powers is socially desirable for all; not a larger, but a smaller, share of the individual's time and energy should be directly ordered by society for the explicit attainment of social ends.

But this "freedom" can only be obtained for all on condition that all likewise do their share of the drudgery of social work. If all did their share, there would be more time and energy for recreation; but recreation would probably take different shapes from those in vogue at present. Boys, and even men, would still play games; some of these games would probably be to some degree organized. To that extent what we call Sport would survive; but it would have lost the place it occupies at present in the life of certain classes. We should no longer find thousands of able-bodied Englishmen virtually devoting all their time and energy in summer to golf, in winter to hunting; we should no longer find the greater part of the South of England degenerating into a mere playground for the

"classes," and we should no longer see society contaminated by the brutality of the hordes of professional sporting men, from flash bookmakers down to "caddies," representing in their character and lives the most pernicious type of modern humanity. Sport, as a profession and an organized occupation, would give way to "sport" as a pastime and a recreation.

The suggestion that Sport, as practised at present, is a cunning device to escape a natural law, is curiously borne out by investigation of some of the leading forms of sport, which are merely reversions to the early predatory practices of primitive man; hunting and racing are useless imitations of early necessary functions; even football and other organized combative games are ornamental survivals of that war habit which, in its serious aspect, is now commonly delegated to a special class.

The energy displayed in sport and travel, and in other forms of physical activity, undertaken voluntarily by many persons of "independent" incomes, enables them, not merely to escape the natural penalty of idleness, but to develop a physique superior to that of any other class. But this only holds of a minority; most members of the upper unemployed class, when middle age creeps on, remit much of this voluntary activity, and gradually succumb to the illusion that a man can eat and get the good out of his food without working. But nature is not mocked; such people fall victims to the various maladies arising from indigestion and hypertrophy; according to Dr. Arlidge, the death-rate for the "unoccupied" classes after the age of sixty is actually higher than it is for the overworked, ill-fed, worse-housed agricultural labourers. Thus, in the long run, the natural law of "property" exacts its physical penalty.

As Ruskin and Tolstoy insist, it is "intended" by nature that all men should do some manual work; and every avoidance of this law, either by excessive specialization

upon some non-manual work or by living upon "property" due to the exertion of others, damages the physical vitality of those who practise it.

Voluntary exercise in sport or work is not in the long run an adequate safeguard. Nature imposes the obligation of work as a condition of enjoyment, and it belongs to a well-ordered society to enforce this obligation.

CHAPTER IV

IS A LEISURED CLASS DESIRABLE?

THE defence of a leisured class—that is to say, of persons whose material needs are satisfied, chiefly or entirely, by the exertions of others—is commonly based upon the higher social services which, it is claimed, are rendered by the voluntary activity of men of leisure in the spheres of politics, science, literature, in travel and adventure, and in all the finest and most progressive arts of civilization. Indeed, it is often boldly asserted that the graces and refinements of life, the disinterested love of knowledge, devotion to philanthropic work, the pursuit of all the slower, more hazardous, and less directly fruitful paths of thought, would perish from a nation where all classes alike were compelled to labour for a living.* A people thus materialized, and set upon a common economic level—all obliged to produce what others need, or think they need—would lose all adequate appreciation of the finer, rarer forms of human achievement. What support or encouragement, it is asked, would such a society give to the mathematical researches of a Cayley, the slow, patient investigations of a Darwin? Would a Shelley or a Tennyson have been allowed to live years of apparent idleness necessary for the ripening of their genius? Would not a utilitarianism of the cruder sort reign throughout society, repressing all the finer flights of the human spirit?

* *Vide* Lecky, "Studies of Democracy," vol. ii. p. 411.

So large a proportion of what is noblest and most imperishable in science, literature, art, and in political and spiritual achievements has, indeed, proceeded from members of a "leisured class," or has been supported by their "patronage," in all countries and all ages, that this argument for an upper grade of "unemployed" seems to many quite irrefutable.

But let us realize more clearly what it signifies. It literally means the feeding of a chosen—generally a co-opted—few, by the bounty of others, or of society, upon the chance that some of them will do fine work which they are not compelled to do. "Ah!" it will be said, "but the finest work will always be done by an internal compulsion; genius will demand expression, and the absence of all obligation to produce for the market will give this genius the freedom it requires to seek its natural and noblest outlet."

Such men, owning "property" which they have not earned, or supported by those who own such property, will, it is urged, use their property as the means of enabling them to do for society a work which is intrinsically far more serviceable than what they would have done had they been compelled to labour for a livelihood. Now, taking society as it stands, it cannot be denied that in this pressure of individual genius, there resides a force which, in not a few cases, postpones or defeats the operation of the "natural law" that imposes the necessity of labour. But, taken as a general defence of a leisured class, it is nothing else than a plea for "Anarchy." I call those men "Anarchists" (they may be sportsmen, politicians, litérateurs, or professional men) who, in the choice and execution of all their work, are entirely uncontrolled by the force of society, and do whatever they do of their own individual choice.

By far the most specious defence of unearned property is based upon these volunteer services. If we assume that

every man is inclined to be as greedy and as idle as he can, it may well be considered noble, and even heroic, of Lord A to spend long days in the tedious work of the Foreign Office, of Sir John B to compile his elaborate "History of the Barbadoes," and of Mr. C to make himself an authority upon agricultural chemistry, when it was open to them to sit as mere parasites at the feast of life. But the Social Question imposes the test of economy. May it not be that these rare gains are bought too dearly? For every rich man of leisure who seems to justify his economic position by the value of his voluntary work are there not a score whose self-chosen activity is ill-chosen, wasteful, or pernicious, and a hundred who use their economic power to consume without producing anything? The enjoyment of property which represents no personal effort is not really justified by volunteer efforts. The effort which precedes and justifies enjoyment must be—as nature directs—obligatory; and, as it is necessarily social in its consequences, it must be determined in amount and character by social requirements. To say that a man has chosen to spend all his time in shooting tigers in Bengal, exploring the South Seas, drafting a Local Option Bill, or performing any other arduous and meritorious act, is no answer to the allegation that he enjoys property which is of another's making. It may be highly creditable to the nature of an individual that, whereas he might have sat idle, he uses the income he derives from "economic rents" as the basis of a vocation which is arduously pursued to the advantage of the society in which he lives; but, so far as he acts of his own initiative, his "vocation" must be regarded as a purely "charitable" one, and the benefits he bestows upon society are open to all the dangers which beset charitable action. On the average man an income received for no definite service rendered, or to be rendered, will operate as a bribe not to work — a definite endowment of idleness. Even if he

struggles against it in the vigour of his youth, it will overcome him in later life, and he will become an idler, or a still more pernicious "dabbler." This will be its normal effect. The property of another, which he uses, will disable him for producing property of his own—will sap the power of vigorous self-expression.

Even where voluntary work is done, the defence of private endowment is far weaker than at first appears. So far is it from being true that the necessity of contributing his quota to the routine labour of the work-a-day world would check the flow of voluntary energy into the higher arts, or degrade its quality, that the direct contrary is the case. Where a leisured class, by the very condition of its economic independence, is severed from close contact with, and direct experience of, the larger social life, its art, its literature, its science and philosophy alike suffer. Losing at once the direct support and inspiration of the popular life; deriving the material it handles in its art and literature, not from the fountain-head of direct personal experience, but from loose, casual observation, or from the second-hand sources of books and conversation, having no strong grasp of that social utility which must rightly form the standard of all valuation—the *dilettanti* workers, in their select fields, fail in actuality, in broad, sympathetic comprehension of the life around them, and fritter much of their energy on fruitless and recondite trivialities. The "unnatural" condition of their class-life narrows and emasculates their work of every kind, tends to turn their art into artifice, their science into esoteric pedantry, their philosophy into refined verbiage.

Great literature cannot proceed from such class life; it inevitably lapses into verbal elegance, recommending itself by decorative form in order to conceal the poverty of spirit. A class-life remote from the people never has produced, and never can produce, great literature and art. Where it has

seemed to do so, as in Athens, Florence, Elizabethan England, it is where and when the majestic and multitudinous forces of some great national struggle have for a season breathed into the artificial forms of class art the breath of popular life, and made them its vehicles. A leisured class, enjoying securely a high level of material comfort derived from the labour of others, is normally disabled from "great" work. This is particularly the case in literature, not merely from the lack of broader sympathies which it involves, but for another reason directly related to the material of the literary craft. With how loose and impotent a grasp most of the common words of a language relating to material objects and physical actions are held by the minds of people educated too exclusively on books and talk, is never adequately recognized. People who are not obliged to "do things for themselves" remain through life quite ignorant of many of the common properties and functions of material objects around them, and in particular of the physical capacities of the human body. In other words, they know the material world directly and essentially only as it affects them as "consumers"; something "about" the working-side of common life they will learn from books or unsystematic observation, but the facts are not branded by adequate personal experience upon their minds, and the words relating to these facts are poorly realized. People, educated in the literary sense, often conceal the defective realization of the words they use, even from themselves; but the defect is there. As most people bred in towns remain through life with a most shadowy grasp of the meaning of the commonest words relating to country life which they habitually use, so people with no direct experience in manual work have no vital or real understanding of a large proportion of their language. The peasant or the mechanic, with a far smaller vocabulary, has an incomparably more powerful grasp of his words. Until we understand the

difference between a strong and a weak grasp of words and the indispensable conditions of the former, we shall remain the dupes of literary charlatans. In the nature of things no great body of literature, no great body of poetry, "simple, sensuous, and impassioned," can arise from a leisured class severed from direct contact with the working life of the community.

But divorcement from the necessity of manual labour and from familiar converse with hard facts of life is just as injurious to many of the other arts to which the "leisured classes" appeal for their justification. Politicians, historians, economists, philosophers, when they do their work thoroughly, are constantly compelled to handle terms of which they have only a vague conventional understanding, because of their defective experience. Many of the gravest and most injurious errors are directly traceable to this defective grounding of the class-man in facts of common life. Historians who write of campaigns or of popular tumults, never having marched in line or tasted the life of the streets; politicians or economists who discourse airily of unskilled labour without ever having wielded a spade or carried a sack of grain, however brave a show of understanding facts they make, fail to convince, because they have no vital grasp of the meaning of their words. Imagination will not do everything, even for the historian.

I do not, of course, mean that no one can properly use words without personal experience of the special facts they are intended to convey; I merely affirm that our experience must bring us into direct touch with some experience of the same order, if we are to know and use language aright. The total severance of class-life from mass-life—or, at any rate, the feeble casual contact with it—disables our "leisured classes" from a true handling of the ground issues of life in any of its great departments.

The ordering of property in accordance with natural

laws, imposing upon all the obligation of manual labour, so far from destroying national culture, is the only sound foundation of such culture. A life thus ordered, while it would own no "leisured class," would vastly increase the general fund of leisure, furnishing the two essentials for great production in the intellectual and artistic fields which are lacking now—the inspiration of great national forces, and direct organic contact of intellectual workers with the general life.

Would "the swinish multitude" trample under foot all the fairest flowers of civilization, as the superior man, who despises those that keep him, constantly affirms? There is a fine flavour of parasitic insolence in the wide vogue which this creed obtains among the leisured class. The proletariat of to-day, oppressed by the burden of the entire material support of an aristocracy and a large middle class, who, while they do no share of manual labour, consume a wholly disproportionate quantity of material products, can only accomplish its task by an excessive intensity or duration of hard mechanical or other routine toil, which absorbs the vital energy and the leisure required for the growth and satisfaction of the higher human needs. This excessive output of cruder labour-power is attended, under the present economic system, by an insecurity and irregularity of employment which demoralizes and derationalizes character, stifling the germs of æsthetic and intellectual tastes, and evoking the grossest selfishness as a necessary law of self-preservation. The natural and inevitable result is that material dissipation and amusements of the coarsest and most sensational order swallow up the narrow margin of their leisure and consuming power, and make them appear to our educated classes the enemies of culture, prepared, if they had the power, to uproot the garden of civilization, and to establish a reign of coarse material ease and sensational utility. Such is the future which even so

thoughtful and so calm a critic as the late Mr. C. H. Pearson imagined for democratic England. The humorous insolence of such a view must now be apparent. The low tastes and character of the mass of workers are directly imposed upon them by the very class which taunts them with possessing them. In the economic and attendant legal processes which determine the composition of the leisured and cultured classes there is extremely little to furnish a "struggle" which selects and assigns success by any test of those moral and intellectual qualities which make for the advance of culture in art, literature, and the finer human branches of achievement. We have, therefore, no warrant for assuming that the mass of workers offer a worse natural soil of culture than the class which at present lives upon their degradation, and then defends its parasitic life by arguing from this degradation as a natural and permanent factor.

To come back to our main thesis, there is no warrant for supposing that a people, established upon a sound basis of property, and endowed with an ample margin of energy and leisure, after a certain reasonable level of material comfort was assured, would abuse that energy and leisure as it is abused to-day by most members of our too-leisured classes, and would refuse to recognize and advance the claims of literature and art, or degrade science by imposing short-sighted utilitarian tests.

The fallacy of those who impute to democracy this *débâcle* of culture is that they suppose the people to be able to possess and wield this destructive power, without perceiving that the very condition of their getting it implies a change of economic order, and of intellectual conditions which will naturally tend to avert the very dangers that they fear. Not having diagnosed the maladies of economic injustice which underlie the existing infraction of the "natural rights of property," they fail to perceive

how the healing of these maladies will operate in raising the character of democracy. The dangers they impute are genuinely inherent in mob-rule; they disappear from an organic democracy standing on a sound basis of property.

CHAPTER V

INDIVIDUALIST SOLUTIONS OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS

STARTING with the individual in his capacity as producer and consumer, our theory represents him as giving forth voluntary effort to make valuable products, and receiving as his "natural property" such portion of the product (or its equivalent in other products) as is physiologically and morally necessary to promote the application of his most effective work.

But do individuals, as such, make all or any wealth, and are valuable products to be regarded as their creation? Not only avowed Socialists, but most modern economists of every school, would maintain that "value is social" in the sense that organized labour and social demand are essentials and determinants of the value of all valuable forms of property.

It is, however, necessary to recognize that the great majority of educated and intelligent people regard valuable property as the creation of individuals, and economic society as a mere aggregate of individuals. So firmly is this fallacy fastened in the common mind that it requires extraordinary care for its effective exposure. In addressing myself to this task I need not assume in my readers an eighteenth-century attitude of mind, which has no view of society other than as a mere concourse of individuals or as a merely mechanical combination. Some notion of society as a political, a moral,

or a spiritual unity finds lodgment in the minds of almost all thinking persons. The common use of such terms as national conduct, national responsibility, the public conscience, and State rights, may be taken as conclusive evidence that society, in its several shapes and sizes, from the municipality to the nation, and even to the wider humanity, is recognized in some sense and degree as a social organism operated by a social will. The education of the city and the nation, and still more powerfully the education of the church, has always maintained this organic conception of what is termed the higher life. It is only in relation to industry and property that the individualist or monadist position is still obstinately held. This curious inconsistency of mental and moral attitude is carried so far that moral socialism is sometimes set even in theoretic antagonism to economic socialism. "The economic socialist," it is suggested, "is a moral individualist, who wants to socialize industry and property as a means of enabling every one to enjoy material comfort and liberty, so as to lead a selfish life, doing what he likes with his ample income and his ample leisure, and caring nothing for the higher spiritual commonalty." The crude materialism, the definitely hostile attitude towards religion, the family, and other bonds of moral union, which have marked certain sections of Continental Socialism, lend a certain superficial support to this antithesis. At root it is as false as every other form of dualism. To a certain class of temperament, however, the assertion, that economic socialism is opposed to spiritual socialism, and that the latter alone is necessary, comes as a welcome gospel. It is both an "elevated" and a convenient doctrine, for, by enabling him to concentrate his thoughts upon reforms of moral life, it releases him from fighting in those coarser and more brutal frays which engage the more ungovernable passions and disturb the foundations of the existing social order. Just as the "future life" has been commonly exploited

by religions in order to belittle this life, and so to divert the potential energy of political and economic reform into innocuous extra-terrestrial channels, so our "moral socialists" play the soul against the body even in this world, and the ground motives for this false philosophy are the same as those which played the next world against this world.

It is, of course, true that an economic socialist may be a man defective in the sense of moral solidarity, just as he may be a vegetarian, a theosophist, an impressionist, or a bi-metallist. But there is no reason, in the nature of things, why a man, with a strong grasp of the idea of industrial unity, should fail to realize the need of spiritual unity; and there is every reason why he should not. A clear conception of the conditions of spiritual society will disclose the necessity of a sound industrial basis. When it is shown that social reform, upon the industrial plane, is the embodiment of moral principles of justice and goodwill, the exposure of the false distinction between economic and moral socialism will be evident. Antagonism will be resolved into identity.

I have spoken of the tendency to use religion as a sedative of social discontent. It is, however, right to recognize that, by its steadfast maintenance of an idea of solidarity, it has also been, at various epochs, a powerful, though commonly a misdirected, agent of social reform. This is particularly true of the Christian Church in its recent efforts to woo democracy. The Churchman, more than others, possesses, in his conception of a Church, an idea of spiritual unity and continuity, which is not the mere sum of the lives and actions of the individual members who from age to age constitute the visible membership of that Church. To the more enlightened members of these Churches has come in recent years not merely a growing recognition of the duty of the Churches to "capture" the people, and to utilize the forms of democratic institutions for spiritual ends; but some desire for a genuine expansion of the functions of a Church,

and a broadening of the meaning of Christianity, some recognition of the dangers and falsity of the old antithesis between this world and the next, a positive perception that this life is part of "the life eternal," and a consequent insistence that Christianity shall be a vitalizing social force in this world, transforming and elevating the humblest activities. This widening and deepening of religious sentiment has turned the minds of many to a recognition of the fact that the attainment of spiritual unity in any large human sense is impossible, so long as the great mass of the people have their energies absorbed, and their spiritual capacities thwarted by the incessant selfish struggle for a bare physical subsistence.

But those who have approached the Social Question from this spiritual plane, uninformed by economic criticism, though they have often fought boldly in the cause of social progress, have achieved little solid success. The Christian Socialist movement in the Protestant Churches of this country, and the various sporadic movements of the same order in the Catholic Church of Continental countries, manifest the same qualities and the same defects. Their condemnation of the immorality of the present economic order is powerful and convincing. They are shocked by the contrasts of riches and poverty presented by modern industrial societies; they call upon the rich to abandon degrading luxury, and to administer their wealth in a generous spirit, for the material and spiritual well-being of their dependents; they endeavour to assuage the animosity of class strife by impressing upon employers their obligations towards the workers, while they urge the workers to peaceful co-operation; and, in general, they seek to harmonize the interests of capital and labour by infusing a sense of brotherhood and mutual goodwill.

While no high purpose is barren of results, it should be clearly recognized that the endeavour to solve economic

problems by direct appeal to the moral conduct of individual members is foredoomed to failure.

The crudest form of this spiritual attitude is that which finds a social solution in the kindheartedness and generosity of the rich. "Rich people must," writes Mr. Mallock, "learn in time that property has its duties as well as its rights, and give of their superabundance generously, wisely, ungrudgingly."* We need hardly expose in detail the miserable insufficiency of this revival of a time-honoured remedy. Charity cannot do what is required of it. Even when Charity is not blind, when it finds "worthy objects," it is a mere partial palliative, and acts neither as a cure nor as a preventive. Indeed, it is not difficult to show that—sinning, as it must, against the natural laws of property—such charity, however well administered, weakens and enervates society. To receive as a gift what should be earned as a right injures character and damages self-respect.

Those whose sentiments are somewhat better guided by reflection eschew this crude charitable solution, and speak of "moralizing business." Here, again, we have Mr. Mallock on a somewhat higher plane. "Wealth," he tells us, "does not want nationalizing; it wants moralizing—Christianizing." So others tell us that wealth is "a trust," and that we need not nicely scrutinize its origin, but only look to the use made of it by its owners. It does not seem ever to occur to such social teachers as Mr. Carnegie, with his "gospel of wealth," and Dr. Bosanquet, with his justification of unearned property by voluntary social services, that there exists any causal connection between origin and use, and that property wrongly acquired will, in the order of nature, be wrongly administered.

The notion that, if we can get employers, workers, and consumers rightly to regulate their individual business

* "Luxury and Labour," p. 135.

conduct, social salvation is attainable, is as unsound in theory as it is inadequate in practice.

The suggestion, that reforms in the conditions of a trade can be secured by the voluntary action of individual employers, betrays a woeful misunderstanding of the issue. Carlyle, Ruskin, and the Christian Socialists in general have looked forward to influencing employers to regard themselves as "captains of industry," fighting an industrial battle for the commonwealth. The fatuity of such a process of reform appears the moment we attempt to realize the details of any such proposal. The only cases where an individual employer can reform a trade is where he owns a trade—*i.e.* where he is a monopolist. A local gas company, a big brewery, the sole manufacturer of some profitable speciality, and other business firms which, by some special skill or economy of production, or by the virtual control of a market, are screened from competition, and are earning profits considerably higher than the minimum required to keep the requisite amount of capital in the business, are able to be "generous" to their employees, can pay them wages above the competition rate, give them an eight-hours' day, and incur the expense necessary to secure the best hygienic conditions for them. But even here the "moralization of the employer" as a practical reform policy is singularly futile. For who is the employer for the purpose in hand? Most businesses in the condition we describe are either joint-stock companies or other large businesses, using capital furnished by many persons, who take no part in management, and are unacquainted with the requirements, or the very names, of the employees. The manager, who directly employs and controls the conditions of the work, has no power to adopt a policy which is virtually a charitable policy, and has no right to do so without the sanction of the shareholders. The complete impracticability of inducing a majority of shareholders at an annual meeting to forego some of their dividends

in order to pay more than the market wage to the employees has been established by numerous experiments, in the case of the Aerated Bread Company and various other highly-remunerative businesses. In such businesses, where most shareholders have probably purchased their shares upon terms which have already discounted the very surplus which they are invited to disburse in charity, there remains no reason to expect that anything can be obtained by moralizing the employer. But, when we turn from these exceptional businesses to the ordinary business, where the keen competition of rivals cuts down profits to a minimum return upon the invested capital, it is plainly impossible for the employer to make any considerable improvement in the conditions of employment which shall increase the expenses of his business. So long as close competition prevails, the rate of wages and other conditions of labour, as well as the prices and qualities of the goods, are determined by the operations of economic laws over which the individual employer has no control; or, if any individual can be considered to influence them, it is the worse employer, who, by sweating labour, adulterating goods, and cutting prices, either undersells his trade competitors or forces his low level of morality upon them, in the shape of "the custom of the trade." If a competing manufacturer chooses to defy this low customary morality and insists upon paying higher wages than his fellows, or incurring any other costs which raises his expenses of production, he cannot recoup himself by higher prices, but must produce at a loss—a condition which, in the long run, is impossible. A joint action of employers to raise the condition of their trade is possible; but that implies the persuasion, not of individuals, but of a full trade organization. When such joint action of masters and men is practised—as, for example, in certain Birmingham trades—it may lead to some solution of the labour problem for a particular class of workers; but this is achieved by the establishment of a

monopoly, which is fraught with grave dangers to the body of the consuming public.

A similar line of criticism disposes of the efficacy of an individual moral policy applied to the workers. Individual action is impotent, or, if successful in the case of some workers, it is at the expense of others. The common test of the moral remedy here is the case of unemployment, due, as most unemployment can be shown to be, to trade causes over which the worker has no control. Where ten per cent. of the workers in a trade are thrown out of work by some trade disturbance, the moral or industrial character of the individuals out of work will be lower than the average of their fellows. But no improvement of the character of these individuals will affect the quantity of unemployment; for, if the industrial efficiency of the out-of-works could be raised, they could, *ex-hypothesi*, gain work only by displacing some other ten per cent. of their comrades. This is, of course, no argument against the educational reforms which seek to improve the morals or industrial efficiency of labourers; it merely signifies that a social malady cannot be cured by individual means.

By similar analysis it can be shown that "sweating" and other industrial evils of a general character cannot be treated effectually by appeals to the conduct of individual consumers. Even where some slight organization is applied, as in the formation of Consumers' Leagues, it is not possible to achieve anything considerable. In as far as the consumers who band themselves together to boycott certain shops and to give their custom to others are actuated by a charitable self-denying motive they must be regarded as persons who will buy in a dearer market when they could buy in a cheaper. An attempt is sometimes made to shirk this crucial test by suggesting that a Consumers' League merely induces its members to give preference to a good employer over a bad employer, both charging the same price

for similar commodities, but the latter taking an illicit and excessive profit. This, however, is not a normal result, for where sweating goes on in a trade, competing "sweaters" commonly drive down prices to a point at which a fair dealer can only with difficulty make a living. The normal use of a Consumers' League is to induce its members to abstain from buying goods at "sweating" rates in order to give the trade to a fair house. We must, therefore, rightly assume that its members are willing to buy dearer goods when they might buy cheaper, and that in some cases they will actually do so.

Now, I am far from disparaging the moral and educational value of such a movement. By teaching consumers to reflect upon the vital or mortal nature of the power they are by their expenditure exerting over the conditions of the lives of innumerable hidden workers, and by inducing some producers and traders to recognize that the industrial functions which they exercise are fraught with distinct social and moral significance, they are engaged on an educational crusade of supreme importance. The organized action of a certain number of influential persons, consumers and producers in a locality, can sometimes mould a force of public opinion which shall shame the "sweater" into some compliance with decent conditions of employment, and may even break down bad "customs of a trade." But, taking a general survey of the field of industry we find no reason to suppose that these moral forces can achieve large results in the matter of direct economic reform. So long as the powerful economic forces of competition are coercing each manufacturer and trader, goodwill and moral enlightenment among individuals cannot achieve much, nor can an amateur society of consumers, however skilfully managed, combat successfully the pressure of powerful trade interests. The members of such leagues by zealous inquiry may guarantee themselves against encouragement of "sweating" in some final stage of production; but they cannot trace back, through all the intricacies of industry, the diverse

processes through which the shop goods have passed, and it is more than probable that the higher price, which, from charity, they pay, is intercepted by some middleman or profit-maker in one of the stages of production, and does not secure any adequate improvement in the conditions of labour. Further, supposing the well-meant measure were most successfully applied, it means that the consumers who apply it reduce the total quantity of purchases they make by paying higher prices for the goods they buy, and the reduction of demand thus caused will directly and most injuriously affect various groups of workers whose wages will fall, or whose employment will cease. Any action, which substitutes a demand for goods produced under sound conditions of employment for sweated goods, confers some net gain upon the workers. But those who enter on this line of practical reform must not deceive themselves into supposing that its extension and more powerful enforcement will abolish or even seriously diminish sweating. This criticism implies no depreciation of the utility of educational forces in the work of social reform; it merely denies their efficacy through individual conduct. When the moral education of individuals has strengthened and informed the general will, and that will finds adequate expression through sound public institutions, the conditions of social progress are attained. But to preach that each individual can, by his own private conduct, contribute to the solution of a social problem is a barren gospel. The kernel of need is set by Mr. H. D. Lloyd in these words: "Change of heart is no more redemption than hunger is dinner. We must have honesty, love, justice, in the hearts of the business world; but we must also have the forms that will fit them."* The fact that these qualities are conspicuously absent from the business forms of existing industry constitutes the moral pressure for economic reforms.

* "Wealth against Commonwealth," p. 523.

CHAPTER VI

SOCIETY AS MAKER OF "VALUES"

THE greatest single source of error in dealing with the Social Question is the failure to understand the claim of society to property based upon the ground that society is a worker and a consumer. Outside a narrow class of economic students, an almost universal belief prevails that property and the value in it are attributable to individual agency alone. Though Mr. Herbert Spencer, for instance, claims to have given closer attention than others to the structure and functions of society, we find him, in one of his latest books, broaching a theory of value which is nothing else than a sheer denial of society as a working unity. The rights of property of the "community" are denied in the following instructive passage: "We must admit that all which can be claimed for the community is the surface of the country in its original unsubdued state. To all that value given to it by clearing, breaking up, prolonged culture, fencing, draining, making roads, farm buildings, etc., constituting nearly all its value, the community has no claim. This value has been given either by personal labour, or by labour paid for, or by ancestral labour; or else the value given to it in such ways has been purchased by legitimately-earned money. All this value, artificially given, vests, in existing owners, and cannot, without a gigantic robbery, be taken from them." *

* "Justice," p. 92.

Since it will be generally admitted that, if society contributes nothing to the creation of value in land, and has no rightful claim to such form of property, her claim to create other values and own other property most *à fortiori* collapse, this passage may be considered to offer a test case.

In order to clear the way, we may dismiss all consideration of the legitimacy of inheritance or purchase of land raised in the awkward and redundant language of the last sentence. The interest to us consists in the assertion that land values are the product of personal, in the sense of individual, labour; who gives forth this personal labour is a matter of indifference, so far as this theory of origin of value is concerned. Moreover, the slight qualification of the opening sentence, which seems to give some property to the community, may be cancelled. To assign to the community the value of "the surface of the country in its original unsubdued state" is to assign nothing. Prairie value, to use the ordinary term, is *nil*. The "original and indestructible properties" of the earth, in Ricardo's well-worn phrase, have no value until the labour of man makes them available, and the wants of man give them human utility. Spencer's *real* proposition, therefore, is that all land value is the product of individual activity.

In order to test this proposition, let us briefly trace the growth of value of a piece of prairie land as it passes under cultivation. A settler crosses the frontier of civilization, and takes up virgin soil. He brings with him strength, knowledge, skill, and tools—all of them, to some extent, admittedly the products of the slow growth of social institutions and social knowledge in the community which bore and educated him. But let us make him a gift of these social qualities, and suppose him to start operations upon his new land as a fully-equipped and independent individual. Whatever concrete improvement of the land takes place is obviously attributable to his personal labour; every increase

of product is due to him. Let us present him with a family, which helps him to work the land. Though the co-operation of the members of this family renders it no longer strictly possible to attribute the improvement of the land to the personal labour of any particular individual—introducing, in fact, in miniature, the whole question of social productivity —we may waive it at this stage, and treat the personal labour of the family as a unit, assigning to it all increase of "value" of the land. So long as the family keeps to itself, using the produce of the land for its own consumption, and providing by its own labour for all its wants, the claim of society is *nil;* no social influence enters. If other families settle in the same country, and pursue a similar policy, entering into no directly economic relations with one another, the position is unaltered. The industry of a family may constantly raise the productivity of the soil. The so-called "value" of the land under these circumstances is "value in use," and not what the ordinary language of commerce or of economics means by "value." As families grow upon the newly-settled land, we may take it that they will enter into business relations with one another, will devote themselves more particularly to growing and raising articles for which their particular land has some natural advantage, and will establish, first, informal exchange, and, afterwards, regular markets for disposing of their surplus produce. The value of the first farm is now no longer identified with its productivity, but also has reference to what can be got in exchange by disposing of some surplus produce. Now the "how much" of this "what can be got"—in other words, the exchange value—will depend partly upon the needs of the other farmers for this kind of produce, partly upon the number of other persons from whom they can get it if our original farmer is unable or refuses to supply it, and partly upon the number of other things useful to the first farmer which they are able to offer in exchange.

Now, just in proportion as exchange or market-value enters and displaces use-value, so does social determination of value displace individual determination. While value in use is strictly personal, value in exchange is distinctively social. A market, however crudely formed, is a social institution; the value of our farmer's produce is now partly determined by the personal labour he has put into them, but partly by the needs and capacities of others; and not even by the needs and capacities of any definite individual, but by a great variety of needs and capacities expressed socially through the instrument of a market price, which is a highly elaborate result of bargaining, and does not represent the needs or the capacity of any single purchaser. So, when our farmer is enabled by the creation of this social institution of a market to give special attention to growing certain crops, and exchanging part of them for other commodities which he no longer raises, the productivity of his farm business has increased. But part of this increment is not due to his "personal labour," but to the labours and the needs of others expressed through the market. This social influence not merely increases the annual productivity of his farm, but gives it an increased capital value, in the sense that, whereas he could have got nothing for it at the beginning, since there was no possible buyer, and but little for it when the market was first established, every year the enlargement and improvement of the market increases the price he could get for his land if he chose to sell it.

Now, when we speak of "land values" in a civilized community, for purposes of sale or taxation, we mean not that early use-value which seemed to be entirely the product of "personal labour," but the exchange value which we have seen cannot be produced at all by personal labour, but requires the assistance of society. But the social needs expressed through a market are only one of the ways in which land values are made by society. Our farmer, finding

neighbours close around him, may suffer injury as well as receive service from their presence; in order to enjoy security for his property, and to prevent risks and waste of energy in defending the product of his labour, he will co-operate with his neighbours for mutual defence, thus laying the basis of the social instrument, the State. This co-operation, both on its industrial and its political side, will constantly grow; as population increases, not only the defensive functions will become more important, but various directly productive uses of co-operation will arise; social instincts will combine with economic gain to organize large enterprises which a single farmer could not undertake at all; large irrigation or drainage schemes, improvements of the market by roads, establishment of schools, churches, and other co-operative schemes, will be adopted, improving the skill, knowledge and character of the individuals, and reflected in improved working of the land and raised land values. Co-operative industry gives birth to towns. Our farmer's land lies just outside one of these towns; he finds it pay to use some of this land for market gardens. This gives a great increment of value attributable *ex hypothesi* not to his personal labour, which is no greater than it was before, but to the social pressure of the needs of a congested industrial population; in a word, it is a product of the social institution called a "town." Other land he rents or sells for suburban buildings at an enormously enhanced value, which not merely represents the present value set by "society" upon the land, but the future value which society will hereafter set upon it.

Thus we perceive that economic value cannot attach to land at all, except by the operation of social forces, and that the influences which normally cause increase of land values are distinctively social. It is, of course, possible that increased industry or skill of an individual landowner may co-operate with these social forces to raise the value of

his land, but this is not normally the case; most instances that are adduced mean merely that the landowner has had the skill or cunning to foresee some change of the social forces of demand which will give an increased value to his land for some special use, as where land is acquired and adapted for speculative building purposes.

We now see that since land values are not chiefly due to personal labour, but to the operation of social forces, society has some right of property in these values, and may assert this right without the "gigantic robbery" of which Mr. Spencer speaks.

The real underlying error of Mr. Spencer and his legion of followers is that they persist in regarding society as an aggregate of individuals. It seems to them "a mere superstition to look upon society as anything other than the members who compose it." This declaration sounds final, and yet its very language carries its refutation. "Compose it." Composition implies an orderly relation of parts. This relation is not found adhering to the individuals, as such. Is a "composition" in music the mere addition of the notes employed? Can we break up the composition of a poem into its component words or letters, and, shuffling them, still maintain that we have the poem?

If society is a composition, it must have a unity consisting in the relations of its members. The maintenance and activity of these relations can be shown to be a source of value.

Let us leave land and turn to some other industry. Brown, Smith, and Jones, working together by agreement, build a boat. Does the value of this boat, when made, represent the value made by Brown, *and* that made by Smith, *and* that made by Jones? No such thing. Why, Brown, by himself, could not have lifted the log to make the keel. Or suppose he could have made a boat, could he, in a given time, have made a boat worth one-third as

much as the joint product of all three during the same time? Obviously not. Supposing all three to be equally efficient workmen, it is evident that their joint product, in a given time, will be worth much more than three times the product of Brown alone. Organized co-operation is a productive power. The associated or "social" productivity of Brown, Smith, and Jones is not the mere addition of their productivity as individuals, even supposing they can, as individuals, produce something. In a certain sense, this social productivity is even capable of measure. If we set Brown, Smith, and Jones to work, first separately and then together, the difference in value between their added and their joint product might rank as the quantity of social value. This supposed case is not, of course, really accurate, for it supposes Brown by himself could produce something of value. We have already seen that, even supposing an individual could produce something of use to himself, he could not produce something of "value" in an economic sense. In a thousand different subtle ways society works in and with Brown. Let him be no longer boat-maker, but solitary shoemaker. The value of the pair of shoes which he "produces," working by himself, is just as much determined by society as the land-values of our farmer, as soon as they begin to emerge. The skill and knowledge of his craft is an elaborate social product, and is taught him by society; the same society protects him while he works, assists him by an elaborate organization of markets to get leather, tools, thread, and a work-place, provides him with a market in the form of persons who have evolved the need of wearing boots, and the industrial arts whereby to pay for them, and so forth. The value of the boots when made will obviously depend, to an indefinite extent, upon the innumerable factors which affect the supply and demand of all other products, along with which boots figure in processes of exchange. It is needless to labour further the proof

that society co-operates with individuals in producing the value which attaches to material goods. The same conditions hold of non-material goods, which can be said to have either a use value or an economic value. The maker of a poem or play, or other non-material work of art, is in no sense an absolute creator. He works upon words and other intellectual forms, which are the plastic embodiments of thoughts and feelings that are not his private property, but are the slowly-grown, elaborate products of his nation, his age, and humanity at large. Society helps him in the very effort of that "inspiration" which seems so peculiarly his own, through the public understanding and appreciation which lighten, stimulate, and direct the creative effort. So the intellectual maker has no full and absolute right of property in his product, but only a right limited by the relative importance assigned to his individuality of effort. The exact measure of such right of private property it is not easy, perhaps not possible, to ascertain. Who shall say how far the *Œdipus Tyrannus* was the product of Sophocles, how much of Athens, how much of the Hellenic genius, or how much belongs to humanity? Indeed, the boundary of such property seems an ever-shifting one. Humanity—society in its widest significance—is ever claiming, and making good, its larger property in the great masterpieces of human achievement; they become less and less the property of the man, more and more of the race and of mankind.

Society has, then, a natural claim upon property, on the ground that it is a maker of values of property.

We have seen how an individual suffers in the efficiency of his work and life, and in his capacity of progress, if he is deprived of that property in the result of his labour which is necessary to support and educate his powers. The same is manifestly true of an organized society. We have seen that such a society is rightly regarded as a maker of

wealth. If society does not receive an adequate share of the wealth she makes, for direct expenditure on social objects, she suffers in vigour and progress of life and character as does the individual.

The results of the social activities which we have investigated form a "property" which belongs to society, and which coalesces with each piece of individual property. In the language of political economy, this social property consists of increments which, not being in their origin assignable to individual activities, are called "unearned," but which, in sober fact, are the earnings of society, arising from public work and public wants. Bad social administration, unjust stewardship of society, enables certain individuals or classes to take and enjoy some of this social property which is needed to support the full healthy progressive life of the community.

This view of the rights and needs of society differs very widely from the commonly accepted view, which grudges society the small fraction of her rightful property that she takes by taxation, regarding such taxation as an encroachment upon individual rights of property, justifiable only upon specific grounds of the particular public use to which the taxes will be put. This false, narrow view of the claim to social property has resulted in an equally false and narrow conception of the meaning and the possibilities of social life. It is true that society will perform certain bare necessary functions, even if most of the "property" which is her due is taken from her, and administered by individuals for their own purposes. The stable order of society, a certain necessary change and growth of institutions, the increase of population and of external structure can proceed within certain limits without the direct design of creating property, and without the full enjoyment of the property it does create. Hence, the fact that individuals take away and consume this property, as though

it were their own, does not prevent the reproduction of fresh forms of social property. Society, like individuals, may do her work though she is "sweated" of the major part of her product. But the natural penalty is not escaped. This misappropriation drains the strength and impairs the productivity of society. A society, where the just rights of individual and social property were observed, would yield a social life far stronger, far richer, far more cohesive than we have any conception of. If individuals got for their own private use all the product of their labour that is rightly theirs—*i.e.* such portion as is needed to support the best individual life of which each is capable, and only that—leaving society to administer the whole of her property for public uses, such an economy would be attended by an incalculably great enrichment of the political and industrial life of the community. A starved society or a parasitic society is injured just as the individual starveling or parasite is injured. This is apparent directly we grasp the organic conception of society: whether society be defined as an "organism" or as an "organization," the character of organic progress which is conferred upon her implies conformity to the same natural laws of property that apply to individuals. If an individual producer has no security of his property, he not merely suffers in lack of enjoyment, but the loss of incentive weakens his functional activities and impairs his vitality. The same is true of society.

Every defence of the principle of individual property is likewise a plea for social property.

Individual property, we are told, is required for self-realization. Man needs to have a "permanent nucleus in the material world" (as Dr. Bosanquet excellently phrases it),* such security of material property that he can look ahead, plan, and regulate his life as a whole, not living

* "Aspects of the Social Problem," p. 314.

from day to day, from hand to mouth. Not only do we admit this claim, but we have found the "natural"-justification of it. But, with the abuse of this doctrine of self-realization, used—as it often is—to suggest that a rich man, drawing rents and profits of monopoly, can justify his property by the good rational use he makes of it, we must join issue. We have seen that, in so far as at any given time material productivity of wealth is limited, a limit is imposed upon the right of any individual to "realize" himself in material forms of property—*i.e.* the limit of his single contribution to material wealth. No one has a right to realize himself in the property of others—as sweater, in the property of other individuals, as taker of "economic rents," in the property of society. For society also needs to realize herself by means of her property. It is strange that a logician like Dr. Bosanquet, who so strongly builds his philosophic support of private property, should ignore the corresponding need of social property. "The point of private property," he tells us, "is that things should not come miraculously, and be unaffected by your dealings with them; but that you should be in contact with something which, in the external world, is the definite material representation of yourself."* This is urged as a defence of private property; but no word is added to explain the limit it imposes upon individual property, or to extend its application to the property of society. Yet, taken rightly, this judgment is strikingly conclusive on both issues. It presents a clear condemnation of "economic rents" and monopoly profits as individual property, on the ground that "they come miraculously," and are "unaffected by your dealings with them;" that they are not "the definite material representation of yourself," seeing that none of your vitality has gone into their making. Turning the matter round, we find that these "economic rents" and

* "Aspects of the Social Problem," p. 313.

"unearned increments" are "definite material representations" of social activities, and the property they constitute is required for the self-realization of society. It is the denial of this full property which starves our social life today. Look, for example, at the civic life of an average municipality in England, the richest country that the world has ever known. Is this civic life as strong, as rich, as beautiful, as noble as it might be? Is even its provision for sanitation and the common conventional civic services adequate? Are its streets, its public buildings, worthy expressions of a rich and civilized community? Is it not a commonplace that these external embodiments of our civic life are, in every quality of excellence, inferior beyond all comparison to the attainments of most of the great cities of antiquity, the private wealth of whose citizens was not a hundredth part as great as ours?

Or, turning to that larger instrument of social life—the State—do we not find its services everywhere crippled by lack of property? The miserably penurious provision for the vast expansive needs of that public education which the State professes as a public duty is one crucial instance of the poverty of our State. Or take another instance. At the present time the State of England is so starved that, while recognizing that public utility demands the provision of some monetary aid for the aged poor, she is utterly unable to lay hands upon the few millions needed to defray such an expense. Yet these instances refer to the prime necessities of a healthy stable society. No social property is accumulated to work out the progressive character of a society which should seek constantly to develop and to satisfy higher and more complex needs of social life, building up a growing commonalty which shall correspond with, and react upon, the rising individuality of its constituent members.

This public progress is impossible until the State, as

representative of society, shall claim for its use and administration the property which it makes and needs.

It is no policy of confiscation that is here advocated, but a just, rational demarcation between private and public property. Let the individual and society, each own, out of the property they jointly create, that portion which is necessary to support the life and sustain the progress of each. We thus refute a false individualism by setting property upon a sound, natural, and rational basis. Mr. Spencer imagines that "A is taxed in order that B's children may read books." No such thing! The tax imposed on A is simply the most convenient way of taking the results of social work which commingle with the work done by A: the joint product is not in itself directly divisible, so that society takes her share in a tax. This tax it uses to educate B's children, not as a favour to B, nor even as an "abstract right" on the part of B's children, but because it is socially important to society, of which A and B are members, that all children shall be educated.

This view of social property summarily disposes of the objection that society should not be allowed to administer much property, because its administration will be incompetent and wasteful. We do not take away a piece of property which A rightly owns, and give it to B, on the ground that the latter can make a better use of it. We say: "It is A's property; he alone made it; he has a right to it; even if he makes a bad use of it now you must not take it from him; he will learn to make a better use; having made it by his hard work, he *will* presumably make a better use of it than one who obtained it without effort." So with social property. Wherever the State or Municipality can make good its claim to a piece of property, it is no answer to urge that the public cannot well administer such property. If a community can show that the values of certain land, tramways, gasworks, or other forms of wealth

are wholly, or in large measure, the products of social activity, are a social property, it is a right and a duty to administer such property. If it refuses, it thereby weakens the social life; if it consents, it strengthens it, and learns by experience how to administer properly the property which belongs to it. The objection on the score of bad administration is peculiarly impertinent. You deprive a man or a race of liberty; keep him or it in forcible subjection; then, when it is proposed to confer freedom, you raise the cry that your victim is unable to make a good use of freedom. So it is with property. A wrong injures the doer and the sufferer, and on both sides the evil lives even after its cause is redressed. Is that a conclusive reason against redress? Society is precisely in this position. She has been starved so long, her rightful property has been meted out to individuals, and she has not fully learned to use her own. But it is her duty and her right to learn to care for the commonwealth by an economical administration of common property.

This view of a progressive socialism turns the edge of the stock arguments of the individualist school by basing the claims for social property upon the same reasoning which defends individual rights of property.

CHAPTER VII

DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO NEEDS

The establishment of a theory and a policy of individual and social property upon the common basis of a reference to the work and the needs of individuals and societies stands in some danger of rejection by Individualists and Socialists alike, who may be disposed to regard it as an unphilosophic compromise. The Individualist recks nought of social work or social needs; or, if he gives some half-hearted recognition to the advantages of social co-operation, he is sure that the gains are best utilized by handing them over to the private control of the co-operating units, reserving as little as possible for social use. The Socialist (using the term in its broadest sense) will, on the contrary, be disposed to cavil at the allowance of individual claims to property, based upon the productivity of individual effort, insisting that, since all "value" is social, it is impossible to sever the aggregate of wealth into two classes, and, keeping one for social use, to assign the other to the unfettered use of private individuals as a "right." "How," it may well be asked by both sides, "are you going to determine the amount of individual and social property respectively contained in an aggregate of material wealth?"

We have, underlying this criticism, a logical and a practical difficulty. But both are more apparent than real; at any rate, they become far less formidable when we face them.

The theoretic point, as raised from the ranks of Individualism, has already been met by showing the reality of the organic unity of society. To the "Socialist" objector we may reply that he gives a strained emphasis to the statement, "All value is social," which it will not bear. It may readily be conceded that in a society an individual neither can, as such, produce "value," nor, indeed, exist as a completely separable economic unit. But the individual aspect of a person, alike in its material and its moral character, cannot be ignored. On the physical side there exists a sharp separability of the individual, both in work and in consumption; and this character, or aspect, demands economic recognition through property. The same, as we see, must be said of the will, or moral character; that, too, requires, in varying degrees, to be stimulated by an acknowledgment of a separate property. The productivity of society itself must, then, depend on the operation of individual powers of body and of mind; and "nature" requires that from the product, "social" though it be, separate provision must be made for each individual. Though, therefore, we may continue to repeat, "All value is social," and even to grant to society an over-lordship of all property, we must none the less insist that, since the antithesis of individual and society is necessary, so far as it has validity, individuals must be accorded "natural" rights to property. The Socialist can only meet this by denying the validity of individuality as a distinction.

But how much property should belong to individuals, how much to society, of the complex product? There are three suggested modes of answering the question which arises, after we have once accepted Social Utility as the standard of reference, "What practical rule shall Social Utility adopt in the assignment of individual property arising from the co-operation of individual and social forces?" These answers may be indicated by the three words—

"Effort," "Productivity," "Needs." Now, ethical and economic considerations strongly urge the claims of effort; it is felt that, if individuals can be rewarded according as they try to do their best, the best will be got out of them. But there are two powerful objections against the adoption of effort as the all-sufficient practical rule for the determination of payment, both connected with the "subjective" nature which the term "effort" implies. A and B may both equally do their best in their different walks of life; but A is feeble-bodied or dull-minded, or, even if he is physically and mentally on a par with B, the kind of work at which he is doing his best does not take so much out of him. B, who is stronger in body or in mind, or is engaged in a sort of work which taxes the capacity of the worker more heavily, though he tries no harder than A to do his best, actually expends more energy. Now, this greater actual expenditure of energy—this greater exertion of B—naturally requires a larger replacement, or, in other words, a higher standard of consumption. If A and B receive from society the same "property" in return for equality of subjective effort, either A gets more than seems necessary to sustain his highest efficiency, or B gets less. In either case social waste is involved.

Our analysis of "natural rights" makes it evident that subjective effort cannot supply the required rule. The second and completely final objection is that such effort is inherently incapable of measurement until it is translated from a subjective, or mental, condition into an objective state, and becomes "productivity." The common sense of ordinary individualism insists that "productivity" alone is the most serviceable, and even the "fairest," criterion.*

* It is curious to find instructed economists, such as Menger, in his work, "The Right to the Whole Product of Labour," and Foxwell, attributing to Socialism this distinctively individualist doctrine of Distribution. Socialism demands, indeed, that in a rightly-ordered society, the workers, taken collectively, shall own "the whole product," but never that the

"Productivity" of the individual, it is popularly believed, does actually determine the distribution of wealth, by which property comes into the possession of its owners. Workmen on piece wages, it is said, are rewarded according to the productivity of their labour—the man who turns out twice the output of another getting twice as much in wages; and the wage system is supposed to be generally adjusted in order to give each man what he is worth, his worth being measured by his product. It is likewise contended that, by the force of competition among capitalists and managers of industry, profits also are distributed in some approximate relation to the utility of the services rendered—viz. according to productivity. Even those who admit that this rule works very imperfectly, and that some men—perhaps some whole classes—get more than their productivity would rightly entitle them to receive, while other individuals and classes get less, generally insist that productivity is the right rule where, and if, it can be correctly practised. Yet our analysis requires us to reject this rule, ultimately upon the same ground upon which we rejected the test of effort. The productivity of the individual does not, as is pretended, admit of direct measurement. It is quite true that we may, by measurement of piece-work or some similar method, compare the productivity of one worker with that of others in the same process of production, in cases where there is not close personal co-operation. Such comparisons rest on the assumption that the social forces which assist each individual worker may be rightly ignored, because the assistance they render is the same for all. This assumption is seldom accurate; but, if it be admitted, it enables us to apportion wages or other rewards by comparison of products. A general scheme of just or socially useful distribution, however,

individual worker shall have the individual product of his labour, which, in accordance with the central doctrine of value as a social product, is non-existent.

cannot possibly be thus attained, because, in a large proportion of industrial operations, the productive unit of direct labour is not an individual, but an organic complex of individuals, working in such union as forbids the exact calculation of individual piece-wages. The notion that piece-wages, the direct measure of individual productivity, are spreading over the whole industrial field, or even gaining ground, has no warrant from industrial facts. But, even if it were possible to universalize a piece-wage system, we should not have attained the result of an apportionment of wealth, by reference to productivity of individuals. Though we might by this means ascertain that A, being one-third more productive than B, should receive a third more wages; while B, being a third more productive than C, should receive proportionally higher pay—we have no means of ascertaining in any of these cases what is the total separate productivity of A, B, or C; for the proportion of the aggregate product imputed to each, which in reality is due to the social or non-individual forces that co-operate with each, is unascertained and unascertainable. A, B, and C are coal-miners, cotton-spinners, or rivetters; each ton of coal they get to the surface, each pound of cotton yarn they spin, each steel plate they rivet, depends for its value, *to an unknown extent*, upon the economic forces embodied in the tools and machinery employed, the organization of the business and the trade, and of the whole industrial and political society in, for, and with which they severally work. This follows from our analysis of value in the last chapter. A moment's reflection will serve to dissipate the notion that a piece-wage system is really a distribution according to productivity, in the sense that each worker gets the whole of what he contributes to production —neither more nor less; it is, in fact, only a comparison of the relative superiority and inferiority of individuals in production—a very different matter. For, though a wage system properly adjusted might balance the differences of

productivity of workers by corresponding differences of pay, the laws which determine the basis of wages are not at all designed, nor do they serve to secure to any worker that full portion of the joint product of his individual and the social activities which is rightly designated as his "product."

The claim sometimes made by workers to receive the whole "product" of their labour is, in the nature of the case, impracticable; for there neither is, nor can be, in an industrial society any particular product directly assignable to the labour of any individual. The same answer, of course, is applicable to the capitalist or the manager who insists that the high profits or salary he receives measure the amount of his productivity. In order to know whether the banker or the owner of a brewery, who receives in profits or in dividends £50,000 a year, is entitled to the property on grounds of "productivity," arising from skill of management, or even from the "utility" of his capital, we should have to estimate and to abstract all those social forces which, both on the supply side and on the demand side, help to determine the value of his business—a feat which is quite impossible. Those who, like Mr. Mallock, seem to assume * that a business man earning £5000 a year is fifty times as "productive" as another earning £100, have simply no warrant for their assumption. He may, or may not be so much more productive; it is impossible to say. Neither, in theory, is the separate productivity of individuals directly calculable, nor, in practice, is there any force which apportions incomes or property according to such productivity. To judge that one man is twice as "productive" because he can earn an income twice as large exposes the circular argument which vitiates it; for if we ask, "How do you know he is twice as productive?" no other answer is forthcoming than this: "Because he receives an income twice as large."

In thus rejecting the claims of "productivity" to form

* *Vide* "Labour and the Popular Welfare," p. 231.

a practical basis of property, I do not wish to imply that one man may not be vastly more productive than another, if only we were able, either in theory or in practice, to measure individual productivity. The position sometimes assumed by Socialists, and generally by democrats of the old order, that men are approximately equal in their powers and results, whether true or false, has no direct bearing on the issue. For, even on the widest supposition of congenital inequalities, on the theory of "Fritz is with us—he is worth ten thousand men," we cannot allow that individual productivity either is, or ought to be, the direct rule for apportionment of property. Even were the severance possible between individual and social contribution to a product, it by no means follows that Social Utility should base its practical rule upon this severance. For, if one man produced exactly twice as much as another, social waste might be involved in paying him exactly twice as much; for his "natural rights," as indicated by his physical needs and his moral demands, though they would in the ordinary course of nature be larger than those of the less productive man, might not be twice as large, and any excess of property in products over and above the limit of these "rights" involves, as we have seen, a definite social waste.

In choosing the third alternative, "Needs," as the most serviceable basis of a practical rule for the assignment of property to individuals, I wish to guard against the supposition that we are impelled to this selection by merely "sentimental," or even distinctively "ethical," considerations alone. In adopting as our rule of distribution, "Each man according to his needs," we neither affirm a merely charitable basis of individual claims upon society, nor do we discard such wholesome regulative influence as is afforded by consideration of efforts or productivity. Our analysis of the natural relations between efforts and needs has already implicitly disposed of the difficulties which have prevented the common acceptance

of the doctrine, "From each according to his powers, to each according to his needs," which has to so many seemed a counsel of perfection ethically sound, but unworkable in the world as we know it. Reflection shows that the doctrine is only unworkable if we suppose the two rules which apportion work and wealth are destitute of organic causal connection. We have already seen that this is not the case. Understanding, as we rightly do, by "needs" the satisfaction of those physical, intellectual, and moral wants which serve to maintain and raise individual efficiency for social service, Social Utility will clearly sanction full satisfaction of these individual needs. Only by such satisfaction of genuine needs can an individual be kept in a position to serve society by efficient labour "according to his powers." In other words, by taking "Needs" as our direct practical standard for determination of individual property, we have a security, based upon natural causation, that distribution will likewise be in general accord with effort and with productivity. Full satisfaction of needs can alone evoke full efforts and full productivity.

There is a slowly-growing, but perceptible, tendency throughout industry to recognize this truth. In the determination of official salaries, payment of managerial and of most highly-skilled and responsible work more and more attention is given both to the real and even the conventional "needs" of the "position." It is felt increasingly that neither the effort nor the product in such labour can be justly measured, or in any other way directly checked; and that the best guarantee of the most capable and energetic performance of duties, involving, as all duties do, qualitative as well as quantitative considerations, is a substantial salary, sufficient for the full regular supply of all reasonable wants. Gradually this more enlightened doctrine is creeping down to the less skilled and less responsible grades of labour. It is felt that the differences of motive between manager and

foreman, foreman and skilled workman, skilled workman and "labourer," are, after all, differences of degree; and that, if the best can be got out of a manager by fixing his salary with direct regard to his "needs," the best can likewise be got out of the employees throughout the complex system of industry by a similar policy. This is, in fact, the *rationale* of the labour movement in its struggle for a "living" or a "minimum wage." This claim is simply the first step towards the substitution of a rational wage-system, based upon needs, for the anarchic struggle of disordered competition, which only feigns to apportion pay according to individual productivity.

In assigning "Needs" as the true basis of distribution and of property, I need hardly say that the final reference is not to what the individual thinks to be his needs, nor even to the real needs of the individual for purposes of purely private satisfaction or perfection, but to those needs which society, taking an enlightened view of social interests, confirms and endorses.

In taking "Needs" as our practical rule of guidance, how far are we carried towards equality in distribution of property? The natural laws of the relations which subsist between production and consumption, work and life, suggest that individuals may differ as widely in their needs as in their efforts or their productivity. In giving consideration to this view, it will be best to exclude at the outset that interpretation of the doctrine, "to each according to his needs," which has special reference to the "needy" classes —*i.e.* to those social weaklings for whom it is deemed socially useful to make "charitable provision." The social support rendered to the young, the aged, the sick, the infirm, is best regarded not as based upon individual rights of property, but upon considerations of the wise and humane use of social property for directly social ends. Ample provision for these "charitable" purposes should be the first duty towards

itself of every organized society, due care being taken to eradicate that sense of degradation which has been attached to public charity by those who fail to understand that the public is only consulting its own highest interests in taking care of those who cannot take care of themselves, and in preventing them from becoming a burden on the private charity of individuals who, in a rightly-ordered economic state, will have no funds available for such unnecessary purposes. The higher forms of individual charity, the offices of personal kindness and devotion in comforting sorrow and alleviating suffering, will still remain, and will gain in purity of motive and enjoyment, because they will be relieved from the material bounty which too often degrades those who give, by appealing to some secret pride of power and property, and those who take, by rousing some feeling of personal inferiority. The task of palliating or of healing social sores should be left to society; it is her duty, and she should learn to do it.

The active members of society who claim individual property according to their needs will not, therefore, claim equal property. Individual needs endorsed by social utility will tend to vary directly and even proportionately with productivity, which is no more than saying that a larger output of energy requires a larger replacement through consumption.

But if this were all, why not take current productivity, it might be urged, as the rule of distribution? This, however, would plainly yield defective results. A merely present quantitative material view of productivity might assign to the "navvy" a larger property in satisfaction of his needs than to the skilled mechanic or the managing clerk. The two latter might at lower cost maintain their standard of physical health and strength. But is this a fair computation of their "needs" from the standpoint of social utility? Evidently not. The latter are

engaged on work which, for its efficient execution, taxes other faculties than muscular strength; not only must these faculties be kept in due repair, but, in proportion as the work calls upon higher mental qualities, it requires provision should be made for the continuous stimulation and satisfaction of new powers and interests. In proportion as we raise the character of work, we have to deal with a class of worker whose social efficiency demands continual progress in the development of his mental and moral powers. The necessity of this development imposes more needs upon the worker; social utility demands that these needs shall be supplied; since society cannot check each several need as it arises, much must be left to the individual. Put into simple language, this means that a high-grade worker should have a higher rate of pay than a low-grade worker, because his "needs" are greater, and since these needs can only be properly supplied by private expenditure, he ought to have a larger property. It is, of course, true that in a well-organized society many of the higher needs may be supplied freely by society to all who feel their pressure, and such expenditure may be made out of public property. But there must also remain for all workers, whose work depends on individuality of nature and of circumstances, a large class of needs, the satisfaction of which, though of the highest social importance, cannot conveniently, or possibly, be met by social organization. An enlightened system of apportionment of pay or property according to needs, must allow a sufficient margin for this class of needs.

This doctrine of inequality of property is not cancelled by the phrase, "equality of opportunity." In strict logic it cannot be affirmed to be socially useful that every man should have the same quantity of opportunities, as measured by expenditure, or any other objective standard. For social utility evidently ought to have regard to the capacity and will of individuals to utilize their opportunities. Why

should a dull, unprogressive, uneducable man have the same opportunities of education or of social influence furnished him as an able, progressive man? Such a policy would imply a waste of economy of the social fund of opportunities, which at any given time is limited. It would be wanton folly to lavish arithmetical equality of opportunities either in the shape of material property or immaterial wealth, upon individuals not equally capable of making a good use of them. "Equality of opportunity" is a serviceable phrase, and may, indeed, help—within due limits—to express a sound policy; but only for a society which is beginning to develop a sound social economy. Since there are large needs which are really common to all citizens, and since there are others which it is convenient should be met by indiscriminate provision, though some of the provision will be wasted, equality of opportunity is sound doctrine for the organization of the cruder material or educational departments of social activity. But, when the finer arts of social life are developed, more and more discrimination in dispensing social opportunities will be practised, so that the more exact economy may be attained whereby opportunities are distributed in proportion to the advantage society will get from the individual uses made of them.

This argument in favour of inequality of pay does not imply any conviction regarding the necessity of retaining the existing or any other wage system. Assuming that complete communism were applied to co-operative industry, and every worker was entitled to take freely from a common fund of products, it would still be right and socially desirable that there should be inequality in consumption, and so in "property," which, under such communism, would be confined to consumables in the actual possession of consumers. Unless communism operated so that individuals took and consumed food and other commodities in proportion to their real needs, it would be uneconomical and ineffective. What I mean is

this. In the well-ordered family life we have an example of communism; but a true economy of such a household implies not an absolute equality of consumption, even though every one might be free to help himself, but one which is directed by the relative needs of the various members: the father engaged in hard manual work requires and takes more and better food than the others; the older children, again, consume more than the younger because their needs are greater. In a large communistic society some such voluntary process of adjustment must prevail, otherwise waste and parasitism will corrupt and destroy the society. The application of this principle does not therefore imply the maintenance of existing methods of distribution, though in arguing the issue I have found it convenient to deal with distribution on its present basis.

But, though arithmetical equality of property or of opportunity is not consistent with the law of distribution according to needs, it by no means follows that this doctrine lends any sanction either to the kinds or the degrees of inequality which prevail at present. A large proportion of the so-called "needs," by reference to which individual or class property and expenditure are defended, are no "needs" at all in the sense we use the term, for they serve no purpose of "social utility." True needs and false needs will be distinguished by reference to our "natural rights" of property. The individual needs to which society should assign "property" will be those physical and mental demands of which due satisfaction is required to evoke full efficiency of labour. So far as relates to physical needs, this law would certainly not justify any of those wide disparities of property which prevail at present; the differences of standard of material and intellectual comfort physically necessary to support the different forms of work could never be so considerable as to justify any of the current contrasts of class living.

"But," it may be urged, "your doctrine of 'Needs'

requires that a proper stimulus shall be applied to the individual will; whatever a man is able to insist on getting as a condition of doing his best work, that it may pay society, in its own interest, to accord him. Now, taking the normal selfish man, will not this virtually identify 'distribution according to needs' with 'distribution according to productivity,' because the selfish man will insist on having a property corresponding to his productivity, or full social worth?"

Now, there is evidently some force in the objection; the question is, "How much?" We have admitted that if a greedy man, possessed of some natural gift or some trained capacity, enabling him to do some great social service, insists upon full payment for this service, he must, in an enlightened society, obtain it. But I entirely deny that this concession gives away the case with regard to "needs," or justifies the greater part of existing inequalities of property.

There are several important considerations to be weighed. In the first place, correct analysis of our economic processes shows that large amounts of property—to wit, economic rents of land, large portions of profits and interest—are derived from monopoly or other abuse of economic power, and are not necessary in order to induce those who receive them to maintain land, capital, or ability of management, in its current use. In other words, they do not correspond to any personal productivity, and cannot, therefore, be "needed" to evoke it.

Again, even in cases where great individual ability seems to be the source of large gains, it is only a defective view of social conditions which makes it so appear. The defenders of economic inequalities speak of the enormous rewards which sometimes come to inventors, to organizers of industry, and to professional experts, as if they were of necessity the just measure of the social services they render, or, at any rate, as if they could not be in excess of such services, and were socially necessary payments to evoke these services. But

none of these statements is correct; they are the result of slipshod reasoning on "the theory of prices." This is best seen by an example. A skilful surgeon of great reputation gets, say, £1000 for a single delicate operation. Now, if the operation is successful, and a very valuable life is saved, it may well be represented that the "productivity" of this work is far higher than is represented by £1000. The notion that a man can insist on getting the full worth of his work in the sense of its productivity is evidently false; for, suppose the surgeon in question to be as greedy as possible, it might not pay him to charge more than £1000 for this class of operation, though a particular patient might have consented to pay more; by charging more he might spoil future business. But our real question is: "Why can he get £1000?" Is it because he would not consent to do such work for less? Strictly speaking, "Yes." Taking into consideration all the economic circumstances as they stand, £1000 must rank as payment according to needs—*i.e.* it is necessary to pay it in order to induce him to do the work. If he knows he can obtain this fee he will not take less. But Mr. Mallock and his friends speak as if this enormous price represented some inherent and immutable quality of skill, and corresponding service; and are even ready to insist that our surgeon is, by admission, paid less than he ought to have—not more. Now, such is not the case. Two vitally important circumstances, which help to determine the price, are ignored. In order that the surgeon may be able to get £1000, two conditions are necessary: one is that there should exist in the community a wealthy class, whose income enables them to pay so high a price for medical service. Living in a society where there was no such wealthy class, this same surgeon, exhibiting the same skill, would consent to put it forth for, say, £50, instead of £1000. Or, again, if other surgeons were available, approximately of the same level of skill, they would, however indirectly, compete

with him so effectively that the price of such an operation would be, say, £100 instead of £1000. It therefore appears that economic changes, which, by "socializing" those economic rents and monopoly profits that are the sources of great wealth, tended to abolish a "millionaire" class, would greatly reduce the large sum which was supposed to represent a necessary payment to individual skill; while a similar result would ensue upon such a wider spread of medical education and of general intelligence as would abate the superstitious reputation which, under existing circumstances, a great surgeon is wont to enjoy. Thus, there is nothing finally "necessary" in the high rents enjoyed by professional ability. Those who oppose the high salary proposed for some responsible official are commonly met by the retort, "You cannot get an equally good man for less;" and, so far as present circumstances go, this is often true. But, in proportion as free play is given to individual ability by practical equality of educational opportunities, and by breaking down the close monopoly of certain professions, a larger supply of approximately equal ability will be available; the best men may be as superior to the worst men as before, but there will be more of the best men, and they will compete more closely with one another, so as to abate the extremely high individual rents often received at present. What holds of professions will hold even more signally of industrial inventors and undertakers. There is nothing whatever in the nature of things or men to require that the invention of a new screw-stopper or a new pill should be rewarded by half a million of money, or that an iron-king or a railway contractor should make the princely pile he often makes at present. It is only "necessary" in the sense that there is nothing at present to prevent his getting it; it is not "necessary" in the sense that the inventor would not invent and the undertaker would not undertake for a much smaller reward as efficiently as he does now. The large rewards which accrue

at present to our magnates of industry and finance measure neither personal productivity (for that is immeasurable) nor needs, but simply represent what the powers of monopoly they hold, or the conditions of the market, enable them to take. This rational interpretation of "Needs" disposes of most of the larger class and individual disparities of property which exist at present. Equality of natural and educational opportunities will, by affecting both the supply and the demand of skilled personal services, greatly reduce the wider chasms of income which are falsely attributed as necessary measurements of individual skill, effort, or productivity. Just in proportion as society, on the one hand, enables every one to detect and educate his best abilities for social service, and, on the other hand, takes away the power of private ownership of "unearned increment," will the "wages" of different classes of work tend towards such levels as will measure the intrinsic qualities, hardness or ease, agreeability or disagreeability, etc., of the work involved.

No absolute equality of "needs" will then be attained. A selfish man with a real individual superiority of skill over his fellow craftsmen will be able to take a larger reward, and so long as he insists upon receiving this larger reward as a condition of doing his full and best work, it ranks as an individual economic "need." This will continue to be a basis of inequality of property. Assuming that individuals press their selfish claims, it will be socially useful to admit them in order to evoke the best social service.

The law of property, then, though eternal in its nature, is of changing application. True work is self-expression. The self of the mechanical toiler, of the greedy business man, expresses itself in the material products of his labour—his energy has passed into this form; it is in the strictest sense his property, and, so far as he alone has made it, it must be secured to his individual use. Even here there are differences with different races and degrees of civilization. In a primitive

society peasants often will not put their best work into the land, unless an absolute ownership of the land and all it bears is secured to them. Here it is their rightful property; and society, in its own interest, will protect them in it. Another people, in another age, will give out their best effort provided a reasonable share of the annual fruits of the soil be secured for them—their rightful property is smaller. Nor is this unreasonable; in the more primitive society, where the peasant seems more grasping, the produce of the soil is more largely the result of his own effort; the simpler society and civilization in which he lives give him less assistance. In the highly civilized state his property is smaller, because the co-operation of society, and, therefore, its share of property, is so much larger. Similar criticism applied to other industries will show how the right of property in the products of labour varies inversely with the human satisfaction of producing. The higher the human satisfaction which attends productive effort, the less insistent is the worker upon getting what is called the full product of his labour for his true payment; his real property consists more largely in the productive activity itself. A shoemaker must always have as his property a larger proportion of the money value of the shoes he makes than the painter of the value of his picture. This is not unfair. It may be said that society co-operates in both cases equally, and should have an equal property in the two products. But this is not so. The work of the painter is more "socialized" in its result, for the true expression of the man is less in the picture and more in the effort; the work of the shoemaker is less socialized: the self-expression of the man is in material terms, and the matter in large measure must be his. That portion of the product which the individual insists upon regarding as the true expression of his individual activity, as a detached part of himself, must always be secured to him, and regarded as his "property," for this is the very condition of its existence.

Our judgment upon right limits of individual property will take the following shape. Whatever portion of a product is necessary as an incentive to an individual to work is his rightful property. It may be said to consist of two parts: (1) That which is necessary to maintain, from the material physical standpoint, the energy required for work; (2) That which, in addition, may be required to operate as an inducement upon the will of the individual. The former, for any given kind of work, and any individual physique is a fixed quantity. The latter will vary with—

(*a*) The satisfaction which accrues to the individual from the functional activity involved in working.

(*b*) The selfishness of the individual.

Just in proportion as a society can be evolved which, on the one hand, shall slacken the demand for monotonous and arduous toil, infusing an increased element of art, and therefore of human interest, into all work, and, on the other hand, shall so educate the social nature of the individual as to lead him to identify himself more closely with the welfare of others, the second element of property will tend to pass over from the individual to society, because the real force or motive which has produced it will be less individual and more social in character. Such will be the interpretation of individual needs by Social Utility.

CHAPTER VIII

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INDUSTRY

ADMITTING the utility of private property for individuals, and of social property, based upon similar needs, for society, we have next to ask what light this assignment of individual and social property throws upon the government of industry. Though the end of the ownership of property is consumption, rational individuals or societies will not always seek the direct and immediate attainment of that end; much property will at any given time be used, not for present enjoyment, but to produce a larger continuous fund of future enjoyment —in other words, property will function not merely as consumption-goods, but as capital. Thus the question takes this shape: In what forms will private individuals and society respectively best use that portion of their property which ranks as capital? or, stated otherwise, What forms of industry will best be undertaken by society, what forms by private enterprise?

The notion that society ought, by virtue of a natural need of self-expression or self-realization, to undertake industrial work, is yet so novel that, in trying to answer these questions, it will be best to confine ourselves to making good the industrial claims of society, leaving the claims of private enterprise to take care of themselves, which they have always been quite capable of doing.

The preliminary question, whether society, through the State, should directly engage in any industries, important

though it seems to some persons, requires no answer from us. For when we have decided that society has large claims upon property, and must administer such property economically in the public good, we perceive that it can only perform this duty by organizing industrial services. But what services? There are three answers which suggest themselves, all expressed in general terms. The public, it is said, should undertake such works as it is best capable of administering; it should undertake works which are required for supplying the common necessities of the people; it should undertake such works as, if left to private enterprise, are prone to abuse, by reason of high or irregular prices, or by causing danger to the public or to the workers engaged in them.

The first answer implies that the State can best undertake industries of a routine character, which can be economically ordered upon a large scale and administered by officials. Such businesses must supply goods or services of fixed sorts for which there is a fairly equable or calculable demand, and where, therefore, comparatively little depends upon those qualities of individual energy or ability that are best evoked by some special stimulus of profit. The second answer implies that the State, acting in the direct interest of the whole community, should engage to supply goods or services which all require—in other words, the necessaries of physical, intellectual, or moral life. The third answer means that it is the duty of the State to protect the public, or any section of the public, as producers or consumers, against specific dangers arising from the technical or the economic conditions of private trades.

Now, though these three claims seem at first sight to be widely divergent, based upon totally different considerations, a little reflection will show an inner harmony of application.

What are the industries which best admit "routine" administration? Are they not precisely those which supply the common needs of the masses of the population? The

evolution of our State and municipal services has clearly been conducted on these lines. The postal service in all civilized nations, the railway service in most, the State organization of defence against enemies without and enemies within, the system of elementary education, are obvious instances of the union of these two claims; in municipal government the public supply of gas, water, tramways, in some continental cities the supply of water-power and of bread, fall under the same double category of routine and necessary services.

The third development of public industry, on grounds of protection against abuses, is not so closely and generally consistent with the two other tendencies. Yet a nearer examination of the structural development of modern business discloses a real connection.

What are the industries most prone to the above-named abuses? Whose power over the consuming public and over the workers is most dangerous? Is it not those businesses which have crushed out effective competition among themselves, and are tending to establish themselves as private monopolies? Now, the commonest characteristic of this class of business is magnitude of market. The economies of a giant business are best attained where it is engaged in the supply of a vast regular demand, or a demand whose irregularities are fairly calculable. Such demands are evidently not demands for luxuries or fashion goods, or for goods which have a narrow special sale, but for the widespread general consumption of the people. The most highly evolved forms of capitalist business are either those forms directly engaged in making and selling necessaries or prime conveniences to the masses, or those fundamental industries connected with the production or conveyance of materials necessary to a great variety of directly serviceable industries. Oil, sugar, corn, cotton, may be taken as examples of the first order; mines, iron works, engineering shops, banks, of the second; railways of both.

If we take the most advanced industrial nations to-day —in particular Great Britain and the United States—we find that in these and similar industries arise those vast combinations of federated businesses, corners, trusts, syndicates, etc., which are by their nature designed, and by their size and strength enabled, to escape the competition which has hitherto striven to safeguard the pocket of the consumer by imposing wasteful struggles upon trade competitors. Wherever great capitalism prevails, and competing businesses in the same market are few, we find the growth of agreements to hold up prices and to keep down wages, which take definite shape in those Shipping Federations, Railroad Syndicates, and other forms of combination which seek to tax the consuming public for their private benefit. So long as a considerable number of businesses of moderate size survive, and there is regular and effective competition, although this competition has evils of its own, it enables the public to secure goods at reasonable prices, and affords employees in the trade some option of employment. But, where this competition has altogether or largely disappeared, the public welfare is evidently endangered, and a policy of self-protection will more and more compel the public to guard its interest by public administration of industries which attain, or approach, this dangerous power. Those who imagine that it may remain to the public interest to permit private monopolies to plunder the consumer, and then to force the plunderers to disgorge by means of taxation, have not mastered either the intricacies of taxation, or the cunning which monopolies, such as the Standard Oil Trust, employ to dodge taxation.

The natural evolution of modern industry is bringing many large routine businesses into a position of dangerous power, to which State organization will be found the only effective remedy. Most of the businesses which come within this category may be recognized by the business form which

their size compels them to assume, that of the joint-stock company. Generally speaking, it may be said that, in those trades where the whole or the bulk of the business is in the hands of companies, a stage of development has been reached fraught with present, or not remotely future, danger to the public.

While competition still survives between great companies, the consuming public may suck most of the advantages of the economies of this business structure. But, so soon as a whole industry is portioned out among a few great companies, the work of federation and amalgamation proceeds apace, wasteful expenditure on cut-throat competition is saved, and prices are fixed upon a tariff yielding high monopoly profits to the federated or amalgamated companies. This apex of private capitalism also enables the business that attains it to exercise a well-nigh absolute control over the specialized labour it employs, and solves the conflict between capital and labour by securing the unqualified submission of the latter.

The businesses which take this course of growth, passing from private businesses into public companies, and proceeding by agreement with other companies, or by amalgamation, to secure the power to earn monopoly profits by dictating prices to consumers and conditions of employment to workers, become distinctly anti-social forces which cannot be ultimately tolerated. The history of modern States shows that they are not tolerated. The large joint-stock company is but a stage in the process from private to public industry. A reference to the "Wealth of Nations" will make this evident. Writing on the eve of the Industrial Revolution, Adam Smith had little notion of the capacity of joint-stock enterprise in the immediate future: "The only trades which it seems possible for a joint-stock company to carry on successfully, without an exclusive privilege, are those of which all the operations are capable of being reduced to what

is called a routine, or to such an uniformity of method as admits of little or no variation. Of this kind is, first, the banking trade; secondly, the trade of insurance from fire, and from sea risk and capture in time of war; thirdly, the trade of making and maintaining a navigable cut or canal; and, fourthly, the similar trade of bringing water for the supply of a great city."

Making the requisite allowance for more modern ideas of transport and municipal services, we have in this passage an admirably succinct indication of the kinds of business which can be most profitably administered by companies. It is worthy of observation that these very businesses, which in Adam Smith's day had reached the stage of joint-stock companies, are all of them in various places and at various paces passing into the condition of municipal or State undertakings. Banking, insurance, modern transport and municipal services cannot permanently remain anywhere in the hands of private companies; the same economic forces which have developed the company form will, acting in conjunction with the self-protective instincts of the public, everywhere compel the socialization of these industries.

But how far, it may be asked, must we regard these as merely the advanced guard in a general progress of industrial evolution? It is sometimes suggested that all businesses are moving along this same road at different paces, and that thus, in the end, all alike must pass under direct public administration. This is one of the most frequent claims of "scientific Socialism." But do all productive businesses alike gain in economy by increase of size, and are they thus alike driven into large capitalistic shapes destined to become dangerous monopolies of private profit-mongers, unless they are taken over by the public? Is there no legitimate place for individualism in industry? These questions deserve thoughtful inquiry, and that inquiry must have special reference to certain inherent qualities of the arts of industry.

What are the true characteristics of that "*grande industrie*" which seems to tend by inevitable laws towards great capitalist forms, that are ultimately destined for "socialization" as the necessary safeguard against abuse of private powers of monopoly? The word "routine" has figured prominently in describing them, and we may turn the question thus: "What industries tend towards routine?" In economic terms the general answer will be this: "Whenever a large, steady demand exists for certain common sorts of goods or services, the twin economies of machinery and minute division of labour are applicable, and these goods or services can be produced most profitably upon the largest scale of business." It is hardly necessary to enumerate the many separate advantages which a large business enjoys as compared with a small business in industry where processes of production can be reduced to routine. In manufactures the possession of a capital so large as to secure the latest and most expensive machinery, and to experiment with new processes and new lines of goods, is more and more essential to success; in buying materials, in securing cheap and efficient carriage, in advertising, and in "pushing" wares, the advantages of big over little business are many and obvious. Even in industrial departments, where mechanical appliances are still secondary to the direct use of labour-power, as in mining, and in many branches of distribution and of agriculture, the economies of large-scale production are such as to drive business rapidly along the path of "manifest destiny" towards the alternative of public or private monopoly.

But no one can closely inspect any large industry without perceiving that all its parts do not move along this same path. The radical antithesis which underlies the antagonism of Socialism and Individualism in its industrial application is the antithesis of Machinery and Art. If we take the fine arts, which are engaged in producing the most refined sorts

of material and non-material wealth, we easily recognize that they show no tendency whatever to develop into great companies and into syndicates. Among the lower or more mechanical orders of art-workers we may, indeed, find certain imitations of this industrial evolution; but the true art-worker, though he lives by his art, conducts a business upon essentially individual lines—he has little to gain by direct business combination with his fellows, except for those processes of log-rolling which are at once the denial and the degradation of true art. In this finest productive work there is no economy in the large-scale business: great capitalism has no place here. Why not? Clearly because the "routine" elements which prevail in common business life are absent. An artist must produce the whole of a product—a product with a unity; it must be the direct expression of his personal skill, directed to the individual work in hand. The first of these conditions negates division of labour; the second, machinery. Collaboration, beyond certain very narrowly-defined limits, is essentially impossible for art-work; even where it is possible, it demands a personal sympathy between the fellow-artists of the rarest order, and always imposes some sacrifice of perfect harmony in the result, taken as a whole. Such slight division of labour as prevails in art-work is either directed to certain less skilled or more mechanical preparatory processes, or is imposed by exigencies of executive art, as in performance of orchestral music. Great creative art is felt to be absolutely and eternally individual in nature: the labour of producing it cannot be divided. Still less conceivable is it that such work can be produced by machinery: the constant repetition of the same process turning out a number of similar goods, with the finish, not of a skilled craftsman, but of a machine, is the very opposite of art. Machine economy produces large quantities of average goods, art a single product, the whole significance of which lies in the direct expression of human spontaneous skill which it embodies.

But it may be said: "After all, art is a thing apart; though machinery may not do everything, its capabilities are constantly increasing; an ever-growing proportion of wealth-production is destined to pass under its sway. If, therefore, we exclude a few fine arts, industry at large may be considered as destined to move towards monopoly and Socialism. Indeed, it may appear that all general improvements in the economic condition of the masses make for this goal. In proportion as a genuine levelling-up of the standard of comfort of a people takes place, the number of industries which can be thus regulated for the satisfaction of wants which, formerly confined to the 'classes,' have now been extended to the 'masses,' will be continually increasing. Thus, it would seem that an incessant growth of Collectivism is indicated by the essential facts of general progress." But this is a short-sighted view of progress, based upon an imperfect conception of the needs of man. It assumes that doctrine of mechanical equality which we have already recognized as utterly without foundation. Man is not only one with his fellows, but also one by himself; not merely a partaker of common humanity, but an individual with nature and conditions which evolve tastes and needs that are his, and his alone. Now, not only in respect of the fine arts, but in all other arts, this individuality craves expression and satisfaction. These tastes and needs cannot be adequately satisfied by routine industry. Such industry is based upon the supposition that a large, and ever larger, number of persons will consent to consume copies of the same articles. Now, since no two persons are made precisely the same in respect of any of their needs, every consent to consume these routine goods implies a certain sacrifice of individual taste, which should only be incurred where it cannot be avoided. Mechanical routine processes can never give full satisfaction. A machine can be made capable of satisfying all the wants, where we are not "particular"; if

the wants are for material goods, steam-driven arrangements of iron can be devised for making them, and there is virtually no limit to the application of machinery for such purposes where the necessary demand is expressed in willingness to pay a sufficient price. There is hardly anything in the way of material production a machine cannot be made to do, provided only that a sufficient number of people will consent to use exactly similar commodities. But if I stand out for the "particular" wants in which I differ from all my fellow-men, a machine cannot meet my requirements; I shall demand a fellow-man to satisfy me, by the exercise of skill applied to the discernment and satisfaction of my special needs. Now, such a worker, whatever he be called, is essentially an artist; and his work is exempt from the tendency towards capitalist production and Socialism. The whole gist of the problem of social progress lies here. It is, indeed, possible —as the late Mr. Pearson, for example, seemed to hold— that industrial progress might quench the individuality of both producer and consumer, moulding a society content to satisfy its material cravings with ever-increasing quantities of common orders of material goods, turned out by machines operated by workers who were nothing but machine-tenders. Such an evolution is, indeed, conceivable; but one would hardly call it social progress. Most, if not all, avowed Socialists would be prepared to stake the value of their Socialism upon the single test of its active promotion of individuality in freedom of life, and in the fuller satisfaction of those needs which give distinction to the individual. It is doubtless true that few members of a really enlightened progressive community would insist upon expressing their individuality in a capricious or an ultra-refined demand for satisfaction in all the ordinary necessaries of life. Indeed, it might fairly be assumed that machine economy, and therefore State administration, would have a large and an absolutely growing domain in the organized supply of

ordinary food, clothing, and other prime necessaries in which few healthy members of the community cared to express their desire for distinction. But, though the absolute number of common needs and corresponding industries might grow, absorbing one after another most of those trades which are now tending towards large business forms, these will be progressively outweighed by the growth of human activities devoted to kinds of work which will rightly rank as art. Under this term will come all handling of material or intellectual "stuff" which involves individual skill and attention in the worker, imposed by the need of meeting the requirements of an individual consumer. The Fine Arts only yield the most signal instances of such work; as Ruskin so admirably insists, there is no material which does not admit a genuine artistic treatment. Metals, wood, stone, leather—every form of matter affords infinite scope for a handicraft which shall exhibit the true and noble character of Art. A qualitative conception of social progress implies a constant decline in the quantity of routine work as compared with that work which is individual in its character and in the enjoyment it furnishes.

Even in the great manufactures of to-day there is much work which does not gravitate towards large businesses, the execution of special orders, work of repair, various finishing processes and subsidiary employments which are, from the very nature of the services they render, irregular and individualistic. The highest class of work still remains in small businesses, because it cannot be reduced to routine and be executed either by machinery, or by uninterested, low-skilled, minutely subdivided labour. "There is no fit—there can be no fit—which is made by the machine and by subdivided, uninterested labour," writes Webb, in dealing with the London tailoring trade. A man who will wear an average fit can get it cut out by machinery; but he who wants a good fit employs an artist. So in the clock trade, which has, for the

most part, passed into a factory trade, we are informed that the best kind of London work is still carried on under primitive conditions. "The work of making a clock is conducted under one roof, both by hand and by machinery. The men learn to make a clock throughout, and, whatever their particular work may be, they do it with conscious reference to its bearing on the action of the whole clock." So not only a poem and a picture, but a well-fitting coat and a well-made clock, are subject to the economy of art rather than to the economy of machinery. While Machinery makes for large businesses with large capital, with minutely subdivided labour, which rapidly tend to eliminate competition and establish monopolies, Art makes for the personally owned and personally conducted business, whose success depends not upon quantity, but upon quality of work and output. The former businesses, by the inevitable law of evolution, must pass under social administration in every well-ordered State, according as they reach the fully-ripened form of monopoly. But the latter need not, and will not, pass out of private management; the competition they engender is not of the sweating and price-cutting order, but a genuine rivalry in excellence of work; supplying the comforts and luxuries of life rather than the necessaries, they can exercise no grievously oppressive power over the consumer. These individualistic arts of industry will not the less be servants of the commonwealth, because it will be found socially expedient to leave them to private enterprise, for they can only live by giving satisfaction to the finer tastes which individual consumers entertain. The State will organize routine industry for the supply of the common services of the consuming public; private enterprise will continue to supply the more refined, erratic, individualistic demands of citizens.

The real harmony between industrial Socialism and Individualism will be thus achieved by delimitation of the

respective provinces of machinery and art. This is not the less a sound solution of the problem, because it is impossible to allocate precisely all the industries. Degrees of development in the industrial arts, national and local differences of taste—in a word, all those factors which determine the current civilization of a State, will decide what activities at any given time shall be ordered by the State or municipality, and what by individual enterprise. Turning to a familiar economic distinction, we should endorse the judgment of Professor Marshall in assigning to the State those industries which conform to the law of Increasing Returns, reserving for private administration industries which conform to the law of Diminishing Returns. "This is," writes Marshall, "*primâ facie* reason for believing that the aggregate satisfaction, so far from being already a maximum, could be much increased by collective action in promoting the production and consumption of things, in regard to which the law of Increasing Returns acts with a special force." Now, the goods which, in their production and consumption, most conform to the law of Increasing Returns are precisely those "routine" goods which go to satisfy the common needs of the general body of consumers.

CHAPTER IX

LAND AND AGRICULTURE

The lines by which we have approached the problem of Socialism and Individualism in industry have so far led us to avoid the land question, which is to not a few the "be-all and end-all" of social reform. The demand for social ownership and control of land and of agriculture is not at first sight on all-fours with the demand for the socialization of industrial monopolies. The concentration of land ownership in a few hands, and the growth of gigantic farms worked by elaborate machine processes, with subdivided routine labour, only cover a small portion of the area of the land question. The root-danger of uncontrolled private property in land consists in the fact that, while land is an absolute necessary of life for all, the available quantity of this "necessary" is, for a given community, absolutely limited. Competition among manufacturers and merchants can and will increase, virtually without limits, the supply of other commodities available for consumers to purchase; and, so long as competition is fairly maintained, consumers will get them upon easy terms. It is, therefore, only when competition lapses into monopoly that social danger arises in these departments. But the supply of land does not so readily admit of increase; for many purposes it is absolutely limited, *e.g.* central city sites, and though for many agricultural and other productive purposes a rise of rent may, by calling into use less fertile or more distant lands, add to the effective

supply, the new increments of supply are of an inferior quality, and the pressure of need which has introduced them assigns oppressive economic powers to owners of superior portions of supply, enabling them to take rents of scarcity without the trouble of maintaining close combinations.

Land nationalizers, however, often fail to discriminate the degrees of power exercised over industry by private owners of land. Setting aside the ideal absolutism of the sole owner of an island, who may keep the entire population at a bare subsistence wage, compelling all to work his will and taking from them every increment of wealth, we find land-ownership in historic communities endowed with very different degrees of economic power. Reverting to our familiar antithesis of life and work, we find that, whereas land is needed both for life and for work, it is the former rather than the latter use which marks the greatest pressure of the "land question." As a first condition of healthy physical life, every man, woman, or child demands the sole occupation and use at any given time of a certain quantity of ground with certain physical properties. Since bare land does not suffice without some adequate provision of shelter, such security of continuous possession is required as shall yield the material structure of a fixed home. Taking consideration of the social needs of man, we find the exclusive use of a given piece of land for a settled home the first aspect of the land question. Private property in or control of land must not be such as to prevent society from securing for all its members this material basis of adequate home life. This claim to use of land cannot, in the nature of the case, ever extend to absolute ownership, a *jus utendi et abutendi;* but, resting on physical and social utility, will be limited by the available quantity of land, on the one hand, and by the growth of population on the other.

The same consideration will evidently affect private property in and occupation of land for purposes of work.

But here more discrimination is required. Whereas the physical nature of all is so much alike that the amount of space required for life may be regarded as approximately the same for all, this is not the case when we consider land for working purposes. Though every business requires land, in some it is the most important factor, in others it plays a trivial part. A manufacturer needs land on which to build his factory, a merchant or a lawyer needs land for offices to stand on, a retail trader for his shop. But though, in some of these cases, the importance of occupying a particular position gives great power to the owner of lands available for these purposes, the land question here is evidently far less important than for other businesses, which are directly engaged in getting material out of the land, or in utilizing spatial qualities. Agriculture, mining, transport, are the fundamental and supremely important uses of land, and society must of necessity protect itself against the abuse of private ownership in these regards with particular solicitude. It is easy to produce instances in which the stoutest champion of private property would insist that society must over-rule the "rights" of individual owners in such industries. The owner of forest lands, by cutting down trees, may ruin the climate and fertility of whole districts; reckless consumption or export of coal might disastrously affect the future of national industry; unrestricted tolls upon travellers or goods may cripple the freedom and fluidity of national commerce for the profit of a greedy few. In these great departments of industry modern States are everywhere strengthening the social control. More enlightened views of the needs and duties of society everywhere impose growing restrictions upon ownership of land in these industries. Individual rights of property in land as in other wealth will always be protected—that is to say, such freedom of use will be accorded to individual "owners" as will suffice to induce them to put "their" land to the use which is socially

most profitable. On the other hand, as the needs of growing populations press, greater care will be taken to prevent individual "owners" from wasting the land-uses they control.

There is obviously no rule good for all times and all circumstances relating to "property" in land. Where "pioneers" are to be induced to go out into an uninhabited and virgin soil, in order to get it into cultivation, it may be socially expedient to give them a well-nigh absolute "property" in their land for several generations. But, in proportion as a country is settled and populated, the direct agency of social forces grows, and social needs begin to press; with this pressure must come a graduated modification of the powers of property vested in individual owners or holders; and when we reach the congested state of modern cities, where individual enterprise does least and social activities most to determine the value and use of land, we reach a condition of affairs in which it is unsafe to leave any considerable property to individuals. Whereas, in a new, unsettled country every fresh increment of land-value is the direct result of the effort of the individual pioneer, in a modern city collective activity—either in the shape of definite public improvements, or through the enterprise and wants of the body of citizens—alone causes such increments of land-value.

It is not, however, any abstract reflections upon the sources of value, or the philosophy of social rights, that are the dominant forces making for nationalization and municipalization of land, but a clearer perception of certain concrete dangers of private ownership. Probably the most pressing movement is towards public ownership of transport, not merely for protection against excessive rates of carriage, but still more urgently in order to secure such rapid, cheap, and convenient transit as will relieve the congestion of town life and remove the worst burdens of the Housing problem. Public ownership and control of all roads is essential, for the

spatial properties of land surface utilized by roads are far more fixed and inelastic than any other land-supply. While new and more scientific treatment of agricultural land might almost indefinitely increase the effective supply, and the supply of metals in the bowels of the earth may be virtually unlimited, and made more easily attainable by improved methods of mining, the spatial relations which subsist between one place and another cannot be materially altered, and a monopoly of the best and shortest road is absolute. Nowhere, indeed, is the land question quite separate from the question of capital; and railroads, in their historical origin, were regarded as a capitalist enterprise. But more and more it is perceived that the land monopoly is the real basis of railroad enterprise, securing for its owners a power to tax the public, which rests ultimately upon ownership of land surface. So, just as the high roads, originally made by private enterprise, and used for private tolls, passed into the possession and control of the public, the same course must be followed in the iron roads of the present. Railroads are becoming more and more a common necessary of life, their management a routine art; and, since effective security of competition cannot be maintained, every test of sound nationalization is satisfied. All services requiring an exclusive occupation of public roads, in town or country, enjoy an economic power resting ultimately upon monopoly of space. In accordance with this condition, municipal and other public enterprise continually encroaches upon private businesses in the conveyance and distribution of routine commodities; the charters or leases granted to tram, telephone, gas, water, and similar companies, in which the public vainly seeks adequate protection for consumers, can represent only an interim experimental policy which must everywhere give way to wider considerations of public economy.

In Great Britain, under free trade, the question of the wisdom of allowing to a few individual owners a virtually

unrestricted right to use, abuse, or waste the material fabric of the land, its soil, subsoil, and minerals, has never assumed the importance which it takes where the population of a country is dependent for physical support upon the land of that country. So long as the British nation can mitigate the monopoly of agricultural and mining lands, by freely drawing upon foreign sources of supply, the strict limits of quantity of British land do not confer upon the owners of these lands an economic power at all commensurate with the power of landowners where space and position are chief sources of value. Moreover, so far as agricultural land is concerned, the decline of agricultural values and rural population, combined with a general belief that Great Britain gains by the division of world-labour, which makes her more and more a nation of city-dwellers, has not only minimized the economic power of agricultural landowners, but has diverted attention from the demand for socialization of agricultural land. Mines stand upon a different footing; but even here the peculiar character of mining industries prevents mining from figuring as a routine industry, which could be easily administered by public officers. It is true that in other countries direct ownership and management of mines, as of forests and other natural treasures, are widely prevalent, and a mature consideration of the national importance of a wise economy of these resources will doubtless determine England ultimately to adopt a similar policy. But at present, though mining has almost entirely reached the company stage of capitalism, the demand for national control and working is less advanced and less urgent than in the case of railroads; the tendency is to make a rough separation of the land factor from the industrial factor, and to claim for the public the royalties and rents now taken by private owners.

The social policy towards agriculture will evidently depend in great measure upon the tendency which that

industry may exhibit to conform to the condition of routine machine production. Where, as in certain parts of the new world, gigantic farms of the bonanza order arise, in which vast areas of land are cultivated for some single crop by machine-tenders, and where little depends upon detailed individual skill and economy, there seems nothing to distinguish agriculture from the other branches of great capitalist industry which ripen into public industries. But where, as in most European and Asiatic countries, minute cultivation with spade labour, applied with careful regard to the particular character of each portion of the soil and climate, for the growth of varied produce adapted to local markets, holds its own, and progress in agriculture implies a constant increase of this individual skill and care, it seems evident that such industry is least susceptible of pure routine management, and depends most for its success upon the maintenance of private enterprise. Under such conditions a sound progressive social policy will confine itself to such increased control over property in land as is required to secure security of tenure upon moderate terms of payment, and such freedom and encouragement of cultivation, as will stimulate the most efficient activity of the actual workers on the soil. Since rack-rent, or economic rent, is clearly a deterrent of the effective application of capital and labour to the land, the progressive policy will evidently lie in breaking down the existing economic powers of landowners. This will be done either by establishing judicially "fair" rents, or, if this prove impracticable—as evidently it must, since no true criterion of "fairness" can be found—in establishing public ownership of agricultural land, that will be let to tenants paying the economic rent to the public in taxation arranged so as to establish and maintain that stimulus to efficient industry which is at present lacking in most countries to the workers on the land. But even here it is likely that public control will not confine itself to

ownership of the land; loans of capital upon easy and equitable terms to efficient labour for purposes of buildings and improvements on the land already form an important function of the State in many civilized countries, and a wide extension of this policy may be expected when the broader social implications of the land question are realized.

The obligations of the State towards national agriculture will be fulfilled only according as a more enlightened public opinion recognizes the vital importance of the maintenance of rural life in the national polity, not so much for any narrowly economic purposes of national food supply as from a knowledge that the sane physique and character of a nation cannot be preserved if purely commercial estimates of wealth are permitted to congest the population in large centres divorced from the free goods of nature and the wholesome work upon the land which have always been the backbone of national greatness in the past.

The complexity of the true social policy regarding land is evident enough. But what has been said will be sufficient to indicate pretty plainly the order of leading land reforms. Briefly summarized, they run as follows:—A right social regard to the value of a healthy settled home for all citizens will oblige our civic policy to extend its control over the town land and houses, until the town itself has become the owner of the land and houses which form its material basis. Taxation of ground rents and values, with increased sanitary inspection and control of housing, lie along the direct route of municipal reform. Past experience and the inherent difficulties of such work, however, give no finality to this course. A city, in order to safeguard the health of its citizens, and to secure worthy and dignified external expres sion for the civic life, will be compelled to extend those powers which not a few are already beginning to apply in the case of the worst slum streets, until it possesses a complete ownership and control of the entire material fabric of

the city. The task of achieving this policy may be slow, but it is inevitable. The housing problem will only be solved by a bold, conscious, continuous policy, which shall secure the town for the townsmen, and, not less important, the village for the villagers. So far as the same policy will cover work-places as well as homes, it will be reinforced by the growing needs of social control, particularly over those industries which are conducted in the home or in small workshops that escape the full publicity of the more organized factory structure. The housing question and a sound industrial policy will thus co-operate in enforcing the demand for public ownership of towns and villages. The progressive social policy in agriculture will probably be applied, not by any wholesale national scheme, but by an extension of the powers of local authorities to purchase and let out land upon such conditions as will release the servile rural workers of to-day from the dominion of landowners and capitalist farmers, securing for them freedom and hope in their work, as the establishment of a self-governing village will secure the decent conditions of home life which are lacking now.

The housing problem and the nationalization of railroads are the most urgent land reforms, because the monopoly of space is the most dangerous of all monopolies.

CHAPTER X

"HUMANITARIAN SOCIALISM"

THE "socialization" of certain industries, on the ground that society can well administer them, or that, left to private enterprise, they endanger the common good, by no means covers the whole area of practical Socialism. There remains that large field of public activity in direct administration or control of economic functions which is undertaken directly for the protection or support, not of a society as a whole, but of a weaker class. This Socialism, propelled by growing considerations of humanity, plays a larger and larger part in modern government. Factory and Public Health Acts, and a vast number of protective Acts relating to particular trades, Employers' Liability Acts, and the major part of industrial legislation in England and other countries, are chiefly inspired by the intention of protecting certain sections of the working classes: our Poor Law, Education Acts, public dispensaries, etc., are expressly based upon the conviction that certain classes are unable to provide against certain evils of poverty, ignorance, and disease. Modern humanitarianism, particularly in Great Britain and in middle Europe, constantly makes for increased protection of the young, the aged, the disabled and diseased.

Education and insurance are perhaps the two most prominent branches of this Socialism. Of course, it is true

that in both cases a genuine philosophic defence of these protective measures may be based upon Social Utility in the broader sense; but it is important to observe that in both cases the direct and conscious motives which induce this Socialistic legislation are humanitarian regard for the weakness of special classes of society. Insurance of every kind is evidently the soundest form of public business, because the security furnished by a civilized State is far greater than that furnished by any private body of individuals within that State, and can be more cheaply provided by the State, while the more routine part of education conforms to every test of sound public enterprise. But, though society is evidently benefited by such social work, a chief and special benefit is conferred upon some particular persons or class; and this latter consideration is a more and more important determinant of extensions of State activity. The fact is that Social Utility is assumed in cases where effective support or protection is accorded to any considerable section of the community. Pity, sometimes ignorant and misguided sentimentality, plays an ever-growing part in the inner life of the "educated" classes; partly it may be deemed a genuine product of a growing sense of brotherhood; partly it must rank as a neurotic product of distorted civilization, a moral luxury, which blinds its possessors to the wholesome claims of social justice. Pity, like mercy, was "invented in the courts of tyrants": philanthropy now freely utilizes legislation to salve the wounds of social injustice. It is true that in the notorious inconsistency of "practical politics," government by doles more often takes the form of charity to the rich than to the poor; but the former usually sue *in formâ pauperis*, appealing to a generally accepted sentiment that the State should support an injured class where the injury is undeserved and unforeseen. But, after all, these doles to powerful industrial and social classes do not derive from an openly-admitted policy, but are rather to be regarded as

parasitic upon that growth of humane sentiment which more and more insists that the State shall look after the weaklings of society.

It is not always easy to distinguish this humanitarian Socialism from that Socialism which arises as a normal and necessary product of the evolution of industrial structure. There are cases where the two are intimately related. For instance, public control and administration of the drink traffic may be supported either upon humanitarian or upon scientific grounds. Moreover, this same example illustrates the close identity which may exist between legislation for the direct protection of society and legislation for the protection of sectional weakness. Municipalization of the drink trade might be undertaken primarily for the protection of drunkards and their families, or for the protection of the whole society which they injure and corrupt. So with public work for the unemployed: it may be motived by a recognition of an individual "right to work" which it is deemed expedient for society to admit and provide for, or it may be undertaken in order to protect the whole body of society against the dangers and disorders of an idle and desperate class. Where the protection of society as a whole is the chief direct and conscious motive, no difficulty of general policy arises, though the particular mode of public support often deserves the closest consideration. But when the direct motive of the Socialism is to protect a class by contributing material support, either with or without the exaction of labour, the gain to society at large being indirect, or altogether hypothetical, a clear rift in the development of State Socialism is discernible.

It may be premised at once that many proposals of humanitarian Socialism are both dangerous and ineffective, as is only natural where the dominant motive is the immediate relief of the material or economic needs of a section of the people. A perception of these dangers so frightens some

scientific Socialists that they seem to repudiate altogether this sort of Socialism, and even rank themselves among the harder-hearted Individualists, when old-age pensions, feeding of school children, or similar proposals come up. Mr. Sidney Ball, for instance, seems to agree with Dr. Bosanquet and the philosophers of Charity Organization in wholesale repudiation of such measures as a spurious Socialism.

It is, indeed, natural enough that scientific evolutionary Socialists should desire to disentangle themselves from that militant Socialism which seizes indiscriminately every path that seems to carry it even a little way towards an imagined goal of complete State monopoly of industry. The policy of relief workshops for the unemployed in some trade depression is often urged by militant Socialists as the readiest means of forcing on a general adoption of State industry; it is claimed that, if a municipality can once be induced to offer to the unemployed work in their several callings at trade-union rates of wages, the constant flow from private employment to the more secure and easier employment of the municipality will continue until the latter has been practically raised to the position of sole organizer of industry.

The folly and social inutility of such a "progressive Socialism" may be indicated by pointing out that, from the very nature of the "unemployed" question, such public industry must fail to conform to the sound tests of evolutionary Socialism. Unemployment presses most upon the lower-skilled, disorganized trades, which are irregular in their movements, and where the periodic over-supply of labour is greatest: these trades are, as a rule, precisely those which the public can least effectively and least profitably undertake. The labour which, at any given time, is unemployed will be, upon an average, far less efficient than that which remains employed. Thus the utilization of the "unemployed" question in order to push public employment

is "Socialism at the wrong end," so far as industrial evolution is concerned.

But academic Socialists, who, on this account, turn a cold shoulder to schemes of public workshops for the unemployed, are not justified in assuming this attitude. Though this sort of Socialism may be, and often is, supported by false motives, and though, so far as industrial structure is concerned, it is far removed from evolutionary industrial Socialism, it by no means follows that it is false Socialism, and that it is not the business of the State to furnish work to the unemployed.

The right to have employment furnished by the State may not be, and is not, rightly regarded as an absolute individual claim; but, for all that, it may be a claim which a well-ordered State will recognize as an individual right, endorsed by public expediency. This claim, indeed, can only be refused by those who hold that all men can, at all times, get work and wages if they are willing to work, or can make sure and adequate provision out of their normal wages for irregularity of employment. This position requires no close consideration: those who hold it are simply ignorant of the structure and movements of modern industry in the scope they assign to individual power and responsibility. The growing insecurity of regular work is pressing this public guarantee of employment upon every advanced industrial nation: the problem can only be solved in one way—by an avowed adoption of the principle of public relief works, regulated so as not to interfere with the normal evolution of outside industry. Those who understand the genuine inability of large numbers of willing workers to get continuous employment, or to make safe provision for intervals out of their wages, are compelled to admit the social necessity of such a policy as a provision dictated alike by humanity and regard for good order. But, as Dr. Stein, in his important work, *Die Sociale Frage im Lichte der*

Philosophie,* reminds us, society has given an even more express endorsement to this policy. The modern State, he forcibly contends, "in prohibiting abortion and the starvation of children," has placed upon "the individual resting in his mother's womb a legal compulsion to be born," even in the case of weaklings and deformed children, inherently incapable of earning an "independent" livelihood. Therefore, he urges, there is a moral duty incumbent on the State to make "the right to live" a corollary of the "legal compulsion to be born." "This right to live" implies a "State guarantee of a minimum standard of life." Since work is alike a physical and a moral necessity for a healthy life, this admission of a public guarantee of life involves, *à fortiori*, the provision of public work for those who require it. This provision, it may perhaps be contended, is already afforded in most civilized countries by some Poor Law. But this purely eleemosynary provision does not meet the case; it is neither based upon an avowal of the "right to a minimum standard of life," nor does it anywhere provide such a standard. Moreover, by purposely imposing a stamp of personal degradation upon every item of its grudged support,† it corrodes the dignity of personality—as, indeed, it is designed to do—and thus destroys the all-important moral basis of the individual life. Not until our Poor Law has eradicated every element of degradation from its working, and has succeeded in humanizing the conditions of work and life which it affords, so that a self-respecting man or woman who fails to get proper work and wages outside

* Page 616.

† Sir H. Longley, chief *Charity* Commissioner, thus admonishes Boards of Guardians: "Care should be taken that the stamp of pauperism is plainly marked upon all relief given, in whatever form, by the Guardians, *e.g.* the words 'dispensary' and 'infirmary' should never be used in forms, advertisements, or addresses without the prefix 'Pauper,' or 'Poor Law,' or 'Workhouse,' which should, indeed, appear as far as possible in every document issued by the Guardians to those relieved by them."

will speedily and willingly have recourse to it as an expedient expressly designed to maintain the standard of public life, will a modern State have realized this obligation to society. There may be, and doubtless are, dangers and difficulties, either in expanding the sane application of our Poor Law to such a purpose, or in the establishment by other public authorities of relief workshops; but these dangers and difficulties must be faced and overcome by a State which recognizes its duty in view of the facts of modern industrial life.

The oft-repeated argument that such a policy enervates the sense of individual responsibility and breaks the spirit of independence, rests partly upon ignorance of industrial facts, partly upon a shallow psychology related to this ignorance. Study of industrial and social facts shows that this so-styled independence has no existence, for no member of a civilized society is capable of "self-support," so that the doctrine of individual responsibility based on this notion is utterly chimerical; while a sane psychology insists that social support wisely administered does not impair, but feeds and develops, a healthy personality.

These are the true tests of the right limits of this humanitarian Socialism. We cannot on *à priori* grounds approve or condemn a policy of generous out-relief, feeding school children, or old-age pensions; nor can we determine the issues by merely weighing the immediate benefits to the individuals concerned against the alleged damages inflicted by weakening the efforts for self-support and retarding the struggle of the workers to include all these objects in their ordinary standard of comfort to be defrayed out of wages. It may, indeed, appear preferable on *à priori* considerations to educate the worker to value the well-being of his children and to practise thrift, and to stimulate in him the effort of attaining for himself these objects. But when we recognize the genuine inability of the average worker to gain a safe

and sufficient livelihood for himself and his family in sickness and health, while not a few are unable to rear their children with proper food and clothing, the futility of the individualist psychology becomes evident; the moral stimulus, upon which it expressly relies, is thwarted by circumstances which the average man, under existing economic and social conditions, cannot overcome. If an ideal distribution of economic opportunities to individual members of society were feasible, it might be reasonably urged that individual self-reliance would be best evoked by obliging each to make a full provision for the needs of his family, though this policy, consistently followed, would be the negation of society in its moral organic character. But, under the present apportionment of economic opportunities, no guarantee exists of the efficacy of these stimuli to self-help. To impose upon any one the obligation to do what he cannot do at all, or cannot do without neglecting other more urgent duties, is a foolish, cruel, and demoralizing policy. Some dim perception of these truths is entering the general mind, and increased social support for the young, the old, the sick, the injured, and the unemployed, will continue to be embodied in the public policy of civilized countries.

No doubt this policy sometimes weakens * the stimulus of individual effort, but this stimulus, if left to work, would only be effective in a minority of cases; in the majority the effort would be wasted. To intensify the struggle for the weaker members of society, with the knowledge that this struggle must spell failure in the majority of cases, and that, where success is attained, it commonly involves the ruthless trampling down of weak competitors, is the most pernicious

* Social support may sometimes strengthen the individual stimulus, *e.g.* it is very reasonable to suppose that a State old-age pension on the lines of Charles Booth's proposal, whereby a bare physical subsistence was provided for old age, would evoke the thrift of many poorer and irregular wage-earners who at present cannot hope to save enough to keep themselves from the workhouse in old age.

policy which has ever been dignified by the false title of "morality."

Humanitarian Socialism, or direct social support of the weak, often appears defective, and is always attended by danger and waste, precisely because it is an interim policy of palliatives. If social justice in a wide sense prevailed, many of these particular social functions might be unnecessary or harmful; but where all economic processes tend to the advantage of the strong and the disadvantage of the weak, it may be and is desirable to mitigate some of the wrongs due to this reign of force, by provision of a social ambulance which shall take care of those wounded in the fray.

We do not, as is sometimes contended, reduce by such a policy the struggle for life which is essential to the survival of the "fittest;" but we raise the struggle to a higher place, where a higher kind of fitness is the best.

This is not unsound Socialism, though it may well be distinguished from the scientific evolutionary Socialism. Palliatives are necessary, even though they may endanger more radical cures; the present cannot be wholly sacrificed to the chances of an ideal future. Some of these palliatives may even prepare the social body for more effective remedies by redressing in particulars the evil effects of social injustice. Most of the charges of demoralization brought against State aid imply a defective recognition of the meaning of the State as a chief social instrument. When the doctrine of society as maker and administrator of social property is rightly seized, no one will feel degraded because society, recognizing the economic weakness of his position in some regard, deems it a wise use of social property to proffer State support. The particular forms of such State support must, of course, vary with the forms of social weakness or disease to which they are applicable, and with the public resources available for such alleviative work.

CHAPTER XI

THE PROBLEM OF POPULATION

One of the chief barriers to social progress in our age is the refusal of the "educated" classes to handle freely and simply the physiological issues which underlie every social problem. It is scarcely credible that the vast majority of children in modern communities are still permitted to grow up to manhood and womanhood without any clear and organized instruction in the truth about their bodies. Serious grown persons, in discussing human issues with a view to conduct, commonly and consciously ignore, or gloss over with dishonest and foolish smoothness of speech, questions relating to sex and generation. The joint and related results of this conspiracy of silence are prudery and pruriency, which are equally destructive of sane judgment and conduct. Many, moreover, who are not tainted with these vices, through very anxiety to avoid them, are apt to make light of sex and population questions. This they are the better enabled to do by reason of a certain exaggeration and false emphasis which Malthus and many of his disciples have laid upon the quantitative as distinguished from the qualitative aspect of the problem. Social idealists from Plato to Bellamy have been confronted with the objection that a Society in which food and other necessaries of life was freely found for all, would increase so rapidly in population that it would become unable to feed itself. Such a danger had, however, never seemed real in this country

until the early decades of the last century. Until the nineteenth century the population of the British Isles had grown but slowly, and except in Ireland there had been no signs of anything which could be called over-population. The rapid increase of population between 1770 and 1830, and the widespread poverty and misery of the working classes, gave a new and terribly dramatic significance to the "law" of Malthus, according to which population tended to increase faster than the means of subsistence.

A crude interpretation and a false application of this "law" has made it inimical to some of the most popular reform movements, and in particular to socialistic experiments. Taken in conjunction with the Ricardian doctrine of a natural wage, it has been held to present a final barrier to all effective attempts of workers to improve their condition by organized action. If the result of trade combination or even political combination be to raise wages, and such rise of wages was accompanied by an increased birth-rate, the enlarged supply of labour thus induced would of necessity cause a reduction of wages towards the normal "natural" level of bare subsistence. But while combined action was thus shown to be ineffective, a plausible appeal was made to individual conduct. "Look around, and you will see that persons with small families to keep are better off than those with large families: poverty therefore results from early and improvident marriages. Let workers abate this improvidence: each man has the remedy for his misfortunes in his own hand. Let individual forethought keep down the birth-rate among the workers, the supply of labour will be relatively short, and wages will rise. Hence a double economic gain to the workers."

Now the amount of truth in this economic argument is limited by the following considerations. At any given time the necessary wage of any class of workers must suffice

to support an average family in that condition of comfort without which the wage earner will not consent to work. Self-restraint in marriage exercised by certain families in such a working class will enable them to live more comfortably than they would otherwise have done, for their wage will be determined by the normal family in this class. Such a policy of self-restraint, were it generally adopted by a single grade or class of workers, might enable them to raise the price of their labour, possibly at the expense of their employers, possibly at that of other grades of fellow-workers, by establishing a more or less close corner of a particular labour market. So, too, it is arguable that the working classes as a whole, by adopting this policy of self-restraint, might enforce a general rise of wages, deriving this increase by depressing rents, profits and other "surplus" elements in the income of the classes. Those who admit the existence of "unearned" or otherwise "squeezable" elements of income in the hands of the richer classes are bound to admit that by ordinary operation of the "law of supply and demand" a general adoption of such prudential conduct would improve the power of labourers to bargain for the sale of labour-power. Here, of course, as in every other economic issue, the international aspect requires recognition: the workers of a single country practising this policy could only keep a small proportion of their gain, unless by a rigid system of protection they excluded alike foreign goods and foreign immigration.

Regarded, however, as a working-class economic policy, neo-Malthusianism is justified in claiming that it tends to enable the workers to get a higher price for their labour. Reckless increase of population tends to impoverish, regulation tends to enrich the working classes. This may be admitted at the outset. But some of those who would accept the accuracy of this reasoning regard neo-Malthusianism as needless or noxious. Their argument rests on a

denial of the validity of the Law of Population, or more strictly, of the Law of Diminishing Returns, in accordance with which the labour cost of raising new increments of food and other natural commodities increases after a certain level of cultivation of the soil is reached.

The most popular statement of the position, viz. that every new pair of hands brings an increased power of production, illustrated by the fact that the material wealth of Great Britain and of certain other countries has increased faster than its population, is an evasion of the issue. It is generally admitted that in many manufacturing and commercial industries every increase of working population may produce more than a corresponding increase of general wealth. Nations which obtain their food supply from foreign sources by exchanging manufactured goods or by other services may escape or postpone the pressure of the law of Diminishing Returns. Nations which thus evade the population question for themselves, succeed in doing so, it is urged, by ripening it more quickly in other countries. The famines of India and Russia are thus to be explained.

In order to test the issue properly we must assume the isolation of a country with a growing population. Suppose England had been compelled to be a self-sufficing country during the last half-century, could she have supported the population she has had, and how? Those who regard the quantitative issue of population as an important one, are not obliged to deny that England could, if necessary, have supported her present population, so far as food and bare physical necessaries are concerned. Important experiments in intensive and scientific culture, carried on here and elsewhere, show that mere area of land does not play that part in limiting the population with which it has sometimes been accredited. In his important and fascinating volume, "Field, Factory, and Workshop," Peter Kropotkin shows that human skill, knowledge, and care can increase almost

indefinitely the quantity of vegetable food stuffs to be obtained from a given area of land. Agriculture as practised in large districts of Holland, China, and elsewhere prove that an immensely larger population could be subsisted on the soil of England than that which it now holds. Upon the strength of such evidence it is sometimes claimed that the law of Diminishing Returns has been overthrown, and that "standing-room" is, after all, the only true limit to the population a given piece of land properly cultivated would support. Now the evidence from intensive culture does not seem to me to warrant such a conclusion. In order to annul the law of Diminishing Returns, it is required to show, not merely that there is no virtual limit to the quantity of food to be got from a given area, but that every increment of food can be got without a more than proportionate increase of capital and labour. Now, this is not shown by the kind of evidence adduced. In the case of the most highly cultivated lands of China, for example, we are dealing with a people who, according to European testimony, have a passion for labour, and devote themselves to minute cultivation with an assiduity and an endurance found in scarcely any other people. They do not farm, they garden: they manure the plant and not the ground, and so they get immense results, but at immense cost of toil. Even thus, the population grows too fast for all to find a subsistence from the soil, and in the best cultivated parts of China there is a constant drift of the surplus of the young population to the towns. The evidence upon which Kropotkin relies is commonly vitiated for the purpose of disproving the law of Diminishing Returns by another consideration. When a small class of cultivators, possessing knowledge and skill superior to that of their competitors, can put upon the market earlier or better fruits, the price they receive may make their industry remunerative. But if this skill and knowledge became the

common property of a large agricultural population, such special prices would no longer obtain, and it might then be seen that such intense and scientific culture, though not less productive than before in actual objective results, was not sufficiently remunerative to evoke the necessary care and efforts from a people not enamoured of "labour" for its own sake. What holds of the special skill of a small class, such as the Paris *maraîchers*, may also hold of a large national industry. Denmark, for example, taking the lead in scientific dairy work for the last twenty years, has built up a very prosperous and remunerative industry, the gain of which is largely due to the backward condition of dairy work in England, her largest customer. If England applied herself earnestly to a scientific dairy-farming, it is very likely that Danish dairies would be compelled to sell their butter so much cheaper that the more expensive processes would no longer prove remunerative, at any rate over those districts which were less fertile or in those farms where there were other demands for labour closely competing with the dairy work.

The evidence regarding the increments of labour required to obtain the results of more intensive culture is generally defective: it is often proved that an enormously enhanced product can be got from a piece of land; it is not so often proved that it will pay to work the land in this fashion.

Even where such proof is given we cannot easily admit that the validity of the law of Diminishing Returns is broken. Economists have always admitted that a law of increasing returns is operative in agriculture up to a certain limit, *i.e.* that an increased application of labour to a piece of land, may, up to a certain point, be attended by a more than corresponding increase of productiveness. It may, therefore, be allowed that improvements in scientific agriculture may raise the limit within which this law is applicable, and that

modern methods may justify the remunerative application of a much larger amount of labour than was possible under cruder agricultural methods. Moreover, science may enable man so to mitigate the vast waste of nature as to falsify over certain areas and for certain periods the dictum of Malthus that man tends to increase at a greater rate than his food supply. Indeed, as has frequently been shown, this statement of "tendency" is false, for the lower forms of vegetable and animal life tend by process of natural generation to multiply at a far more rapid rate than man himself. Not merely is this so, but it must be so, if any necessity can be held to attach to natural laws. The lower forms of life, each individual of which is subject to a keener competition and more risks, and is less able to protect himself against hostile environment than individuals of higher forms, must be more fertile in order to maintain the species. So in proportion as we ascend to higher and more complex species we find a diminishing natural fertility. This, of course, by no means implies that the lower forms which can furnish food for man, will, if left to the full stress of the struggle for life, survive and reach maturity in larger numbers. But it does furnish greater opportunities to the skill of man, by conscious contrivance mitigating the pressure of the struggle, so to increase the growth of certain species as to make enormous additions to his food supply. Certain discoveries of method, as in regard to rotation of crops, cures for diseases of plants, or cross-breeding in animals, may be fraught with productivity similar to that of the great mechanical inventions, greatly enhancing the food supply without any appreciable increase of human labour. The same holds of discoveries of hitherto neglected sources of food, the most important of which is the practically unexplored food supply of the sea. In these and other ways the mind of man may, by strokes of skill involving no normal increase of labour-cost, add enormously to the available food supply.

But though human skill and energy has in the past made great steps of progress in increasing the food supply and the ability of man to maintain a larger population upon a given area, these improvements have been relatively smaller in food-producing industries than in others, and are likely to continue to be smaller in the future.

It should be plainly recognized that all these advances of human science, though they postpone and mitigate the pressure of the law of Diminishing Returns, do not annul it. For this so-called law is in reality nothing but a direct and necessary application of the admitted fact that the quantity of best or most available matter for the production of material commodities is restricted; increased skill in extracting such raw matter, or in handling it for manufacture or trade after it is extracted, may more than compensate the restrictions, but the larger the part which quantity of matter plays the more difficult such compensation is. Hence it arises that, even where increased skill is put into agriculture and other extractive industries, a rapid increase of supply to meet the needs of a quickly growing population is only met by a more than corresponding application of labour.

It is possible that the application of great scientific discoveries to agriculture might for some time enable human skill so to triumph over the limits of matter as to enable a growing population to be fed more easily. But the suggestion that the limits of matter can be reduced to the same insignificance in the food-providing industries as in those manufacturing and finer arts in which the quantity of raw material and the cost of getting it is a negligible part of the total cost, is impossible of acceptance. Unless some means of deriving physical nutriment from the atmosphere or from some other virtually inexhaustible source can be devised, there seems no reason to suppose that the pressure of the law of Diminishing Returns can be postponed so far as to make its operation a matter of indifference.

To sum up, I am inclined to think that though a thickly peopled country like England or Holland could support from their own soil an increasing population, such a course would necessitate the application of a continually increasing proportion of the total productive energy of the nation to agriculture. If such a country as England were called upon to produce its own food it could do so by diverting a sufficient proportion of its labour from towns to country, and employing it under skilled business management. The total quantity of material wealth produced in the country per head would be gradually diminished, and the population engaged in agriculture would be a constantly increasing proportion of the whole. If, as Tolstoy holds, "bread labour" in its most liberal sense is necessary for the good life of all men, this process might be beneficial to natural life and character, up to a certain point. But the tendency to absorb labour entirely in agriculture and to reduce progressively the output of other industries could hardly be accepted as consistent with social progress.

Even if the development of machine processes in manufacture received such stimulation by the rise in wages, which would undoubtedly be one first tendency of the obligation to produce our own food, that improved mechanical appliances enabled the smaller amount of labour available for manufacturers to turn out as much or more goods than before, the fact that an ever-growing proportion of the population must be agricultural labourers would give pause to those who consider progress to be involved in a progressive application of human energy to those arts and sciences in which the satisfaction of animal needs plays a less and less part. In a word, the unchecked growth of population on a given area of land implies the progressive diminution of energy available for what is commonly regarded as "the higher life."

If this is true, we are forced to recognize that an unchecked growth of population impedes and defeats the growth

of a more complex and qualitative life for the people, by forcing the needs of the lower life. Quantity of human life can only be obtained by sacrifice of quality, the same choice with which we are confronted as individuals and nations wherever we penetrate to the roots of the social question.

Though, then, there exists a quantitative Population Question, its pressure may be postponed and mitigated by the skill of man, but such postponement itself involves some sacrifice of social progress. But a more serious and more urgent aspect of the Population Question presses upon civilized communities to-day. Selection of the fittest, or at least, rejection of the unfittest, is essential to all progress in life and character. Any social organization which checks the efficiency of such processes must of necessity make for deterioration of the species. This is the gravest danger of our time.

We now admit that it is the duty of society to see that every child is well educated, though we still grudge the necessary means to fulfil this duty. But there is a prior duty which society owes to itself and to the child, to see that it is well born. To abandon the production of children to unrestricted private enterprise is the most dangerous abnegation of its functions which any Government can practise. We have seen that modern societies impose upon every child in the womb a "legal compulsion to be born," and that this involves an obligation on the part of society to furnish the means of earning a sufficient livelihood. The broader policy of social support by which modern societies —either through the organization of the State, or by the less formal agencies of philanthropy—assist their individual members, not only in childhood, but in adult years, to attain a full and satisfactory life, implies an ever-growing social interest in the physical and mental nature of the individual. Society has, at any rate, the right to insist that worthless, or even noxious, lives shall not be thrust upon it

for support by reckless or unfit parents. If parents could be compelled to take upon themselves the full responsibilities of parentage, and society could afford to stand aside and look upon the failures with indifference, the present policy of *laissez faire* in parentage might be defensible; though even then considerations of mere pity and humanity might demand that individuals should not have the right to bring into existence lives destined to pain and misery. But, as matters stand, the first interest of society is involved in maintaining the physical, mental, and moral standard of its citizens; and, in order to secure this end, the right to veto the production of bad lives is essential. Every improvement in social order impresses this need with greater urgency. "Natural selection" (or "rejection," as it is more rightly termed), operating through its crude and cruel agencies of plague and famine, performed a certain social function in the rejection of the physically unfit. Modern societies, so far as in them lies, have put down the operation of these natural checks, without substituting any others in their stead. The plain result is that large quantities of low-grade lives, which, in less advanced communities, would have perished in infancy or childhood, are now enabled to reach maturity, and to freely propagate their like. This increase in the proportion of weakly or diseased men and women, rearing weakly or diseased families, is the most dangerous condition of modern life—implying, as it must, a degeneration of the physique of the race. Though mental and moral defects are not necessarily involved in physical weakness, the causal relations are sufficiently close and constant to make it certain that the survival and growth of physical unfitness means a fairly correspondent growth of mental and moral unfitness.

By putting down the wasteful and cruel methods of "natural rejection" society is only performing half her duty; she must substitute methods of "rational rejection." In a

word, it is all-important to society that propagation should only take place from sound stock; only thus can she secure that the children, who are to be her future citizens and workers, shall be well born. Our study of the necessary limits of efficient action by the State implies, and common sense readily endorses, the implication, that direct selection by society, or any full application of the arts of stirpiculture to the human race, would not be feasible or profitable. But a social policy of veto upon anti-social propagation, however difficult of enforcement it may seem, and whatever moral risks it may involve, is really essential. Extreme instances of this necessity are generally admitted. No defence is now seriously attempted of the fatuous and wicked policy which restores known and confirmed criminals to free life, allowing them to propagate and educate unchecked a family of criminals. Public opinion among the more educated and enlightened classes reprobates, even when it condones, marriage between persons afflicted with diseases believed to be transmissible by heredity.

But any full or clear recognition of the social import of bad marriages is very slow to spread; the most criminal laxity of practice still prevails in all classes of the community. Thinking men and women, while admitting the seriousness of the evil, and the right inherent in society to protect itself, continually dwell upon the difficulties attending any interference, and, impotently stretching out their hands, say: "What would you do? If you prohibit marriages, you only encourage free connections, and do not achieve the object of checking the growth of the unfit population." But this, after all, is a mere bluff, which can satisfy nobody who realizes the urgency of the facts. If the physical and moral health of society is really involved in a policy of veto upon unfit propagation, means of enforcing that policy must be found. When it is once plainly recognized that the production of defective children is the worst crime which any

one can commit against society, the necessary penalties will be attached, and will be as effective as any other coercive measures can be in repressing the particular crimes to which they are directed. Public medical certificates of marriage would probably not have any considerable effect in increasing the rate of illegitimacy, if heavy penalties were attached to the birth of diseased or otherwise unfit "illegitimates." When public opinion is sufficiently educated to permit the operation of such laws, coercion will only be necessary in the case of classes where the direct force of public opinion is weak. The law itself, here as elsewhere, will be a schoolmaster to lead people to reason. Once attach a penalty or prohibition to anti-social marriage, and all people amenable to feelings of "propriety" and "respectability" will soon come to recognize the immorality of such unions. Education in physiology and sociology, even of the most elementary kind, could do much to establish such sound public opinion. But those who, in order to escape the inconvenience and dangers attending legal action, would trust to educative influences alone, mistake utterly the gravamen of the issue. It is precisely those classes least susceptible to education and to the pressure of sound public opinion who are most liable to degrade the quality of population by anti-social unions. Legal coercion is thus a necessary educator and support of public opinion. The latter may be more potent and far safer in its action, but the former is likewise essential. The population question is the question how society is to secure the means of social progress by the elimination of the "unfit." The rejection it is called upon to exercise cannot take place after birth; it must, therefore, be directed to prevention of unfit propagation.

CHAPTER XII

EDUCATION AND ECONOMY OF INDIVIDUAL LIFE

For convenience we have, throughout our inquiry, maintained the antithesis of individual and society, and, in relation to this supposed opposition, we have examined other deeply-rooted antitheses—Rights and Duties, Work and Life, Production and Consumption, Efforts and Needs. Study of these antitheses, with particular reference to economic activities bearing upon the making and use of material property, has disclosed a harmony of physical and moral law in their relations. We have seen that nature clearly assigns certain rights embodied in exclusive use of property to individuals and to societies, and imposes corresponding duties to assert and use these rights; that she likewise lays down certain wholesome and just rules relating to the quantities and kinds of effort or work which are essential to secure a full and wholesome enjoyment or satisfaction for an individual or a society. In particular our analysis has established the soundness of the claim of the principle, "From each according to his powers, to each according to his needs," to be, when rightly interpreted, a law of social expediency covering all economic conduct.

Just so far as the physical and moral laws of this harmony are clearly recognized and embodied in the habits and institutions of individual and social life do we possess secure conditions of health and progress.

It now remains to make a definite attempt to resolve the

opposition of individual and society, with particular reference to the economic basis of life, in order to effect, not a balance or a compromise, but a genuine harmony or reconcilement of the opposed claims of Individualism and Socialism. Although it is easy to see that an individual man, such as we know and recognize to be endowed with rational humanity, could not arise or exist independently of society, it is not unprofitable to speculate upon the conduct of an independent, self-sufficing individual. Both educationalists and economists often find it convenient to start from this position, looking merely to the perfection of the individual life and character as their ideal. Indeed, it is a special fault of educationalists that, having so many of their practical problems presented to them in sharply-defined individual cases, they have tended to concern themselves over-much with schemes of education for securing what they term "all-round development" of the individual, considered as a free and separate nature, and to ignore, or at any rate to slight, the claims of the social nature. If the problem of education were really this, and this alone, how to develop all good physical, moral, intellectual, and æsthetic faculties of the individual in right harmony and healthy interaction, so as to secure the perfect poise and progress of the individual life and character, difficult as this problem would be, and differing for every child, it would be far easier than that which is actually imposed upon educationalists—viz. that of recognizing and providing for the requisite modifications of this ideal individual harmony in accordance with the claims and needs of the social harmony, as represented in the conception of social utility and of the social interests of the individual. Stated crudely, the claims of society seem to involve that the perfection of individual development shall be sacrificed. Society claims that the individual shall not live unto himself alone, but shall give some considerable proportion of his time and energy to definite social services.

Education must take this into account, and prepare for it. This preparation means an apparent interference with the free, full development of the child; specialization of certain faculties, and corresponding neglect of others, are imposed by society. Nor is it true that this will always mean the special cultivation of some fine natural gift which the child displays. Society, in what we recognized as a well-ordered community, will make two sorts of demands upon the individual—first, that he shall contribute his proper share to the routine labour organized directly by society for its common supply of necessaries of life; secondly, that he shall be induced freely to exercise any fine natural taste or faculty he may possess, so as to serve the higher purposes of social life by a voluntary enrichment from individual resources. Now, regarded from our hypothetical standpoint, either of these specializations may seem to interfere with the absolutely "all-round development" theory of education. The socially-ordered routine labour may appear an excessive burden, imposing upon the education which shall prepare for it a mechanical drill in certain common activities, that will take up time and energy which might be better devoted to other purposes. Even as regards the cultivation of a special gift, there is no security that a man can best serve society by cultivating the particular talent which stands out most prominently in his individual nature. It is not only a question of productive powers, but of the needs of society; a musical nation might produce many individuals with high natural gifts of music, but it might be a social gain for most of these to devote themselves more to the cultivation of secondary tastes and talents. Here, of course, no question of social ordering and compulsion arises; but, where individuals are powerfully inspired by social feelings, they may voluntarily devote themselves to arts which are not determined by their strongest natural bent. An education which shall pay due regard to these considerations will evidently

be conducted upon very different lines from one which aims at merely individual perfection.

The same problem may be illustrated in more definitely economic terms. In "Crusoe economics," where the case is taken of a wholly self-sufficing and self-supporting individual, his outlay of time and productive energy will be determined by a conception of perfect harmony of life in accordance with the possibilities of his nature and environment. In order to make the most and best of his life, he will work out an economy of efforts and satisfactions upon a purely individual basis, giving out so much of various kinds of effort as will yield him what he considers as the most satisfactory life. Economists, who have worked upon this hypothesis, clearly perceive that such a man will have no temptation to fall into the most grievous error of modern industrialism, the undue and excessive attention to production as compared with consumption. Crusoe will consider the "disutility" of labour as carefully as the "utility" of its results. He will avoid specialization, not merely because only by variety of work can he secure variety of satisfaction, but because he will learn by constant practice that thus, and thus alone, the painful endurance of labour can be kept at a minimum. An intelligent individual thus placed may be conceived as working out a perfect organic economy of production and consumption designed to support him in full physical health and satisfaction. A study of the physical nature of such a man, and of the material resources available for him, would, if such study were possible, enable us to ascertain the exact proportion of time and energy, and the order of such outlay, which he would give to the several processes of work and enjoyment. If we modify this notion of perfect individual economy with its organic complex of work and enjoyment, by a due allowance for physical and moral changes in the man, developing new and more refined wants out of old wants whose satisfaction

has become habitual and therefore has lost interest, we conceive this organic complex of efforts and satisfactions not as a stable one, but as a constant and continuous growth. The calculation of such an individual economy, depending as it does upon organic conditions, can never be determined by quantitative methods, though it may for rude convenience be illustrated by quantitative terms, so much time and energy being assigned to this, so much to that kind of effort or enjoyment.

But when we leave this false abstraction of the individual economy, and consider the work and life of a man as we find him, and as alone he can be found, in society, supporting and supported by society, the organic complex of the individual economy, the question of the best disposition of his powers of work and enjoyment, is radically altered. Looking at the individual nature and its material environment alone, we can no longer determine what he can best do, how best lay out his time and efforts, even for purposes of individual satisfaction; still less can we determine how he should order his life in conformity to social utility. The reason of our failure is, of course, quite simple. We have hitherto taken a defective, a false view of the individual and his environment, for we have ignored the social relations which are inseparable from the individual nature, and which involve him in another and a different environment than the natural one which we hitherto assumed. The moment we recognize that no man can live unto himself alone, the problems of individual education and economics are vitally altered. We can then no longer determine how an individual ought to be educated, and how he can best dispose his working energies, without a preconceived idea of a social economy, which shall do for society what we assumed falsely could be done for an individual—viz. provide the conditions of health and progress for a complex organism. Not until we know what society

requires can we know what should be done with the individual. Not that the individual is to be regarded as the slave of society, and have his ends subordinated to the social ends. The rights of the individual, so far as he is really an individual, must be recognized; it is alike the duty and interest of society to recognize them, even if we do not go so far as to say that society exists for no other purpose. But the social character or relations of the being we call individual must also be recognized, and that recognition must profoundly modify the whole "individual" economy. It must be, however, plainly understood that there is no question of individual *versus* society, and of a balance or a compromise of conflicting claims. There are no conflicting claims; such notion of conflict only arises so long as we conceive the individual as he is not—viz. a *mere* isolated unit; when we conceive him as he is, it is only a question of harmonizing the different sides of his nature. It does not detract from the perfection of the individual education that it should specialize certain faculties and subordinate the training of others; for when the individual is seen with his social bonds of feelings and interests, to ignore these would be to inflict injury upon the fulness of his individuality by ignoring one important aspect of it. So, in the case of the economic specialization imposed upon him in the social interest, he does not suffer injury, but receives gain, by direct co-operation with the larger life of the society to which he belongs. Only so long as we confine our attention to the body is the illusion of absolute individuality even plausible; directly we realize the individual as a "person," a rational being, a spirit or soul, we perceive that he lives and moves and has his being in society, and that his "ends" as individual are organically related to and determined by the social ends.

CHAPTER XIII

OVER-SPECIALIZATION IN INDUSTRIAL LIFE

The right ordering of work and of life of an individual member of society at any given time, what is sometimes termed his "standard," will be determined by harmonious adjustment of the needs and capacities of his individual nature, and of those of his social nature as interpreted and directed by the needs of society. Society exists, not, as is sometimes maintained, in order consciously to secure the separate welfare of its individual members, but to secure the health and progress of society always realized as a spiritual organism; but this end, interpreted at any given time in terms of "social utility," has been seen to involve the care and promotion of individual health and progress. It can never be the interest of society to attempt to dominate or enslave the individual, sucking his energies for the supposed nutriment of a State; any such endeavour would be futile, for, as we have seen, an attempt to exploit those energies, or to take away that "property" which nature has set aside for individual support and progress, would defeat its end by drying up the sources of such energy and "property." Neither is it to the real advantage of the "individuality" of any individual to retain a churlish isolation, and by an excessive pride of self-sufficiency to refuse a due acknowledgment of those external and internal social bonds which nature has likewise furnished to enable each "individuality" to be enlarged and enriched from social sources.

Society has been through all the history of man the great maker of individual freedom, in that, by the material and spiritual co-operation it has furnished, it has enabled individuals continually to enlarge the quantity and to raise the quality of their interests, aims, and satisfactions. This being so, the notion of a real antithesis or opposition of interests between individual and society becomes as obviously unthinkable as the notion of a conflict of interests between the trunk of a tree and its branches.

Human capacity of error, however, makes it very possible that a society, whether through the instrumentality of the State or in some less externalized and formal capacity, may, by foolish exercise of force, "sweat" or oppress its members, inflicting real injury upon their individuality; or, conversely, it may refuse to organize and utilize the true social energies and "property" for the support of individual freedom in the positive progressive meaning of that term. These, indeed, are related vices of society, and of the State in particular; for where a State does really oppress individuals, as by excessive, capricious, or unequal taxation, or by repression of freedom of meeting or publication, it is virtually compelled to waste in the machinery of misgovernment those very resources which nature had meant for public works that should enrich and educate its individual members.

Society, whether through the State or otherwise, can never do too much for individuals; for whatever it does well in its own interests as a society must furnish a richer soil for individual growth, enlarging the range of positive freedom and opportunity for its members. But, though it may not do too much, it may easily do wrong things, or right things in the wrong order, which indeed makes them wrong. That society may oppress, and so sterilize the growth of individuality, will be readily and generally admitted. But Mr. Spencer and most Individualists, confining their attention to State measures, and, by a logical necessity of their position,

repudiating as attacks upon individuality the very measures which are its supports, commonly ignore the greatest danger of social tyranny—the excessive power of society, under modern industrialism, to narrow and degrade individuality by over-specialization.

Whether we fasten our eyes upon the ordering of the individual life or upon the life of a social group, over-specialization looms before us as one of the gravest and largest social dangers, the more insidious because it conceals its "social" nature, and masquerades as individual liberty.

Society, we have admitted, properly requires its individual members to specialize—that is, devote a considerable amount of their time and energy to serving society by the performance of certain routine work which shall contribute to the social support. Modern methods of mechanical production and of business organization favour a continual advance of this specialization, and have brought about certain notable changes in its character and its reaction upon those who undergo its influence. So long as the specialization needed to contribute to social service meant that each person should ply some particular trade or profession, should apply himself exclusively to the production of some single class of commodities as farmer, tailor, doctor, under conditions which required considerable variety of skill and experience, and evoked a corresponding interest in the work, so long as the range of specialism at least allowed each man to see the end and the utility of the work he did, no net injury to individuality was wrought. But where machinery of ever nicer character is brought more and more into play, and where the arrangement of large businesses and the increased specialism of small businesses, proceeding apace over the industrial world, brings about an ever finer subdivision of labour, for the express purpose of rendering such labour as far as possible unskilled and purely mechanical, in order that a larger quantity of routine products may be turned out by

each worker in a given time, such specialization has distinctly degrading effects upon the life and character of workers. Once we had a watchmaker; now we have a one-hundred-and-fortieth part of a watchmaker confined, whether working with machinery or without, to some single process in the turning, boring, testing, polishing, or fitting of some single portion of a particular class or size of watch. Once we had a tailor, though the corruption of an ancient saying making him the tenth part of a man, was even then a testimony to the dehumanizing influences of confinement to such a craft: it now takes ten men to make a tailor, the worker in the tailoring trade being commonly a cutter-out, a baster, button-holer, or the like. The same is true of almost all trades where common classes of commodities are produced for market. Ever since Adam Smith's day, increasing division of labour and its attendant specialization of the working life of the individual have been accepted as the chief means and the badge of progressive industry. Each man must do what he can do best—only that, and always that; and the smaller and simpler the thing he has got to do, the better and the quicker he can be got to do it. In this way alone the greatest quantity of material wealth can be attained, and each of those who take part in the production is supposed to get the gain in his capacity of consumer. Enlightened teachers of humanity—such men as Carlyle, Emerson, Ruskin, Tolstoy—have uttered vain protests against the degradation of individual life and character by this narrowing and monotonizing of all labour on the one hand, and the grossly materialistic conception of civilization involved in measuring prosperity by quantity of mechanically-wrought goods, upon the other hand. No one acquainted widely with the facts of industry can seriously question the statement that the conditions of much modern work tend to crush out all human interest in it. A man can get no pleasure from his work when it imposes a constant strain

upon the same muscles and nerves, and can be most easily done so far as the actions become automatic; when the tedium of constantly repeating the same narrow movements compels the cultivation of indifference; when strict confinement to a single process hides from him the true purpose and utility of his work, and he cannot claim any single whole commodity as the product of his labour. By such methods the economic "cost of production" of commodities is reduced to a minimum, but the real human cost is continually enhanced. That cost consists in the degradation of the individuality of the worker, primarily as worker, but secondarily as consumer, by the oppression of society.

"But why," it may be said, "do you saddle society with the responsibility which should rightly fall on the employer who forces on an industry these narrow mechanical processes, or else upon the worker, who, in order to get better wages, consents to enter such degrading occupations?" It is not enough to answer that an employer must produce in the cheapest way, if he is to hold his own in competitive industry, and that a worker is virtually compelled to take what work will bring him in the highest wages. The real answer is that society—not, indeed, through the organization of the State, but through the looser voluntary, but not the less effective and powerful, organization of markets—coerces the individual, and narrows and distorts his individuality, by this enforced growing specialization. It is the consumer who, by his exercise of purchasing power, determines what kind of work shall be done, and who shall do it. Now, the voice of the consumer is the voice of society—the composite, inharmonious, but thoroughly effective voice of Brown, Smith, Jones, and Robinson. This brings to light a paradox. "Free Competition," the force which is worshipped by those who style themselves Defenders of the Individual, is seen to be the very force which destroys individuality in work, and compels an absolute submission to the will of society. It is

not, indeed, the orderly organic will and true interest of society which is thus imposed upon the individual, but the fluctuating, irrational will of the said Brown, Smith, Jones, and Robinson, whose ill-ordered caprices and desires control the worker, because they possess the mass of the consuming power. While free competition socializes the worker in this bad sense, the forces summoned to mitigate or to counteract this tyranny are commonly described as socialistic. Socialism endeavours to mitigate the sway of the consumer, to limit the quantity and severity of the labour which society exacts from the individual, to shorten the hours of the socially-directed labour-day, to procure for the individual the leisure, education, and opportunities for cultivating his other human faculties which *laissez faire* would deny him.

These dangers of over-specialization, due to a defective order of society which subordinates the interests of the producer to the supposed interests of the consumer, are not confined to individuals, but beset the life of larger units of society. Nations are specializing more and more, some confining themselves to growing corn or cotton, sugar or tobacco, others to particular departments of manufacture. England is devoting herself to textile and metal manufactures, ship-building, and certain branches of commerce; within England large districts are monotonized by exclusive devotion to pottery or iron; town life is becoming more strongly differentiated from the country, the town itself divides into residential and business quarters, while these again are split by endless subdivision. These are but the wider social aspects of an excessive division of labour which reaches its culmination in the machine-tender of the most highly organized modern factory—a man whose working life is incomparably narrower in scope and more vacant of human interest than that of any living creature in the past.

Local specialization exaggerates the ill effects of over-specialism upon the individual worker by furnishing a

material environment which offers no relief. To have one's life bounded by an horizon of "black country" or "potteries," "cotton" or "coal," the land and labour of which are alike devoted to a single industry, implies not merely a deadly dulness and monotony of outward life, but an absence of all wholesome stimuli to the development of the intellectual and moral tastes which make for the progress of national life and character. Cheap railway trips, cheap print, and external machinery of education, are ineffective to counteract the degrading provincialism of these specialized industrial areas of which modern countries are more and more composed.

CHAPER XIV

OVER-SPECIALIZATION IN INTELLECTUAL LIFE

The dangers which beset industrial life and character from over-specialism and the sway of the consumer have their counterparts in our intellectual life. There, too, the same ideal is proposed, to get for "the consumer" the largest quantity of knowledge and products of thought, with the least expenditure of labour, and to achieve this result by increasing specialization of intellectual work. This over-specialization marks out for each man or woman some minute corner, some little "claim" in the field of knowledge. Here he must grub a life long, digging a neat little hole in which he may lie completely buried, laboriously accumulating some minute hoard of recondite truths to contribute to the intellectual market. We have in modern universities hundreds of men who thus completely lose themselves in work of research, absorbed by the smallness of the task they essay, and often hypnotized to torpor by gazing at it. This is sometimes called "thoroughness" (the German *gründlichkeit* is commonly preferred, because we have agreed to worship the Teutons for this quality). It is maintained that this minute division of labour is essential to good work. So our naturalist becomes a "scarabæist," and our historian confines himself to an ever-narrowing "period" in the history of a single tribe, sifting with admirable perseverance the countless minute mendacities of ancient records, with the view of eventually eliciting some such saving

truth as whether or not palisades were used in the Battle of Hastings.

To be guilty of even seeming to disparage "thoroughness" is reckoned the unpardonable sin against knowledge. Yet I would submit that thoroughness, like every other virtue, is a mean; because many more people are likely to err by being slight or superficial, it by no means follows that there cannot be over-thoroughness. In its true sense of seeing through and round a subject in all its bearings, thoroughness often suffers by the exclusive continuous attention to detail which usurps the name. The most minute specialist in the animal kingdom is, perhaps, the earthworm, which devotes its life to passing sedulously through its body tiny fragments of the little patch of earth in which it lies. To this process it has sacrificed every other function, and yet it knows less about the earth even than the mole, and much less than the rabbit. So with the intellectual earthworm. Even from the knowledge-getting point of view he is commonly a failure. The detailed superstructure of his edifice is often marvellously wrought, but its foundations are generally weak. Your refined specialist in medicine has commonly accepted, on utterly insufficient authority, and without "special" inquiry, some large theories about the digestive and the nervous systems; your monetary specialist in such a science as economics has erected an admirably-carved financial system upon some hollow, quantitative theory of money which he has swallowed wholesale and *à priori*.

So everywhere we find a false economy of intellectual power, based on over-specialism. Detailed accuracy may be bought too dear. Exactitude of knowledge, indeed, within any given limits, is unattainable; it is a will-o'-the-wisp, which lures the student on to collect ever minuter and remoter fragments of evidence, to test and refine with ever-growing scrupulosity what he has got. Since every fraction

contains infinity, it may be chopped ever finer and finer still, and so the specialist's knowledge becomes always more exact and smaller in compass, but never attains a satisfactory end. Even where "results" are got, the process is often indefensible on genuinely economical grounds. The wise farmer will only put a limited quantity of labour upon a given piece of land, though perfectly aware that more labour would elicit a larger crop. Why? Because there is other land which will lie uncultivated if he insists on getting the most out of one plot. So accuracy, superstitiously worshipped as the intellectual ideal, often involves, in the end, a squandering of power, and the too thorough man is convicted as a wastrel. Academic accuracy is often indignant when the vulgar clamour for results. But the demands of the vulgar are grounded in legitimate suspicions. Minute specialism sterilizes action. The academic student of this order seldom reaches any definite opinion upon living issues, for he can seldom find a definite opinion justified. "Heaven forbid that I should fetter my impartiality by entertaining an opinion," said the learned barber in George Eliot's "Romola." Such vain pursuit of knowledge leads to a minimum of serviceable truth, sometimes defending its futility by the taking paradox that the search after truth is better than the attainment of truth—a view which reminds us of the theory of the unsuccessful fisherman, that the fewer fish there are to be caught, the more sport there is in fishing. The reaction of over-specialism upon the student is closely analogous to its effects upon the industrial worker; by peering incessantly into one little group of facts, he blunts his intelligence and injures the focus of his mental eyesight. His abandonment of the wider survey of knowledge, the renunciation which is either forced upon him or is self-imposed, destroys his intellectual judgment. Every bit of new knowledge needs to be assayed by submission to the touchtone of the Universal before its value can be ascertained, or it can be

set in relation to knowledge as a whole. The over-specialist has let slip the standard of knowledge, and is at the mercy of all sorts of private superstitions and illusions. Thus, with misspent scrupulosity, he squanders his labour on vain trifles, counting every bit of knowledge worth the pains it has cost, because he owns no standard of economy. Man is the measure of all things, and the specialist who has made himself less than a man can measure nothing. The industrial specialist becomes a machine, the intellectual specialist a pedant or a faddist. The great work of the world has been done by hard workers, but not by close specialists, even in the nineteenth century. Kant, Goethe, Wordsworth, Browning, Mill, Darwin, Spencer, Ruskin—the greatness of the work of such men depends upon the quality of universality. In theory this will be readily admitted; in practice everywhere the forces of specialism corrupt and destroy the sane sense of the universal.

In some respects this intellectual over-specialism is fraught with graver damage than industrial over-specialism. The latter yields, at any rate, a maximum of material wealth, which has some substance, and can satisfy human needs if it gets properly distributed. But in the largely self-selected specialism of an intellectual clique we have little guarantee that the wealth it affects to produce will not be bogus wealth, the mere paper value of ponderous pedantic books.

It is no mere perverse scepticism which prompts Tolstoy's analysis of the nature of an intellectual class, withdrawn from the harder and grosser facts of life, and bound to seek to justify this unnatural withdrawal. He shows how there springs up a curious malformed abortive brood of theories, hypotheses, and dogmas, religious, political, literary, scientific, æsthetic, which are foisted on to the workaday world as the due and timely fruits of knowledge. When the sciences and arts are kept bondsmen to industry and the

material arts of life, they do substantial service ; but directly they claim independent rights, demanding recognition as "science for science's sake," "art for art's sake," they are apt to launch into futility or worse. I allude in particular to the vast output of idle theory in philosophy, religion, and science, the product of monastic and academic specialism through all time, the lamentable waste of much of the finest intellect of every age in weaving metaphysical speculations out of cobwebs, sand, and other fanciful material, for the amusement and supposed edification of the non-labouring classes. There is much in what Whitman says : "Now I re-examine philosophies and religions. They may prove well in lecture-rooms, and yet not prove at all under the spacious clouds and along the landscape and flowing currents." It is at least likely from the conditions of such intellectual production that this paper-stock may suffer a huge slump in the intellectual market when a thorough business scrutiny takes place into the values it claims to represent. Theories of life spun by the overwrought brains of those who are not living a whole life cannot themselves be whole.

Specialism, we said, was supposed to conduce to the interests of the consumer. But in a rationally ordered society there will be no consumers who are not also producers, and a social economy which sacrificed the producer to the consumer would be suicidal. For a recognition of the organic relation between the arts of production and consumption, work and life, will enforce the truth that what injures the producer also injures him in his capacity as consumer. The damaged life of the worker must inevitably react upon his power to live and to enjoy. It is not really possible for a man to be a specialist producer and a multifarious consumer. The natural law establishes not merely a general but a specific relation between production and consumption. A man who spends all his days poring over books cannot digest and enjoy the fare of the farmer

or the athlete. Neither can the navvy, after an exhausting day of muscular toil, reap and enjoy the fruits of others' intellectual toil. No one gets the full enjoyment out of any art which he does not practise himself. Even the ideal gourmet should have some practical acquaintance with the art of cooking if he is to enjoy fully the culinary masterpiece. The arts of production and consumption are really the two closely related aspects of one functional activity, the action and reaction which belong to one another. The inactive man cannot digest his food: follow this out, and you will find that no one can wholesomely consume anything unless he has put forth the effort of making it, or some effort of a similar order. The true balance of life demands not merely a general correspondence in the intake and output of energy as an aggregate, but in the special forms of energy. Your thoroughgoing specialist in work will be a specialist in enjoyment; only able to do one thing, he will only be able to enjoy one thing. Your specialist actor, when he gets a holiday, spends it in the theatre; your overworked 'busman spends it on a friend's 'bus. This is a natural and necessary proceeding. An increased quantity of wealth, material or intellectual, produced at the expense of excessive specialization, brings with it a diminishing power of using and enjoying each unit of the larger sum of consumables, so that the gain in objective values yields no net gain of subjective enjoyment.

Civilization, as we have seen, demands a certain amount of specialization of functions, in order that each individual may render good service to society; but the disorderly forces of modern industrial society have driven this specialization too far. Social utility requires that the interests of the producer should receive more direct attention, and that the power of the market should not dominate the life of the workers by absorbing an undue proportion of their time and energy. A healthy man in a

civilized society would be able to ensure that his working day should at least contain such variety of occupation as would give regular exercise to all the leading functions of his nature. It is neither possible nor desirable to abandon the economy of subdivision of labour, but it is possible to prevent narrowly subdivided labour from absorbing the whole time and energy, and starving the other faculties. Tolstoy has suggested that the working day of a sane man should contain four elements—work giving general play to the muscles, work of a routine mental order, work giving special exercise to wrist and eye in some skilled handicraft, and intellectual work of a graver order. Some such provision, not enforced by society, but adopted by the reasonable individual, is undoubtedly necessary for a full attainment of humanity, and not a few of the wisest and greatest workers in all ages have practised such a habit of life.

The most vital service rendered by the movement for a shorter working day will consist in its contribution to this end. Those who regard this movement chiefly as a demand for increased leisure, for idleness, or wasteful enjoyments, utterly misread the deeper issue. It is the over-specialized workers' other faculties, which are at present thwarted and repressed, that are lifting their voice in demand for a fuller individual life. In every worker confined to a long day of narrow, monotonous toil lies a score of imprisoned faculties, each a potential worker, and clamouring for work and enjoyment. It must take some time for the undeveloped faculties—"dim eyes, cramped limbs, slowly waking desires" —to gain their proper place in the economy of human forces which make true life. But surely progress, if anywhere, lies this way.

CHAPTER XV

SOCIALISM IN THE ARTS AND PROFESSIONS

THERE is no reason for confining to industry the harmony between Individualism and Socialism, which consists in assigning to the latter the relatively routine processes, and reserving the more refined and changeful processes for the former. Though, for convenience, we distinguish industrial work from the professions, the fine arts, and intellectual pursuits in general, no clear line of demarcation can be drawn. The fine arts, so far as they rest on a sensational basis, working upon "matter," using material implements and appealing to the senses, evidently differ only in degree from other handicrafts, and are governed by ordinary economic laws. The learned professions, including education, science, and literature, though the "goods" they produce are not material, are nevertheless, so far as they are "businesses" and afford a livelihood, directly influenced, and often controlled by economic conditions of the material environment. Indeed, the more closely we look into the structure and working of these arts and professions the more nearly do they seem to approximate to ordinary industry. For, although the limitations of matter, and of the law of diminishing returns, may seem alien from intellectual production (the quantity of intellectual wealth appearing capable of infinite increase), the distribution of this wealth, in the sense of accessibility and capacity for use and enjoyment, is controlled by economic laws similar in

action to those operative in the distribution of material wealth. The truths of science, the beauties of literature, of music and art, though they are inherently capable of enriching an infinite number of human lives without loss or diminution, are, in fact, confined to the consumption of a few, and this limitation depends upon distinctively "economic" conditions. The conditions of ordinary working life, denying the possibility of sane culture, shut out from the life of the majority most of the "free goods" of the intellectual world as effectively as private ownership of land and the industrial necessities of town life have shut out the "free goods" of nature. These have virtually no share in the vast increase of intellectual wealth which is the peculiar achievement of this century. But not merely does lack of education impose these limits on the intellectual wealth which can be actually enjoyed by a community. Many forms of this wealth, many kinds of special skill and knowledge, become the intellectual capital of some craft or profession, which, possessing, or claiming an exclusive right to utilize them, organize a market, regulating the effective supply, and selling their intellectual wares for as much as they can get. Herein lies the gravest source of waste, from the standpoint of social utility. Lack of opportunities of education to learn for themselves, and lack of purchasing-power to buy from the profession, confine within very narrow limits the consumption of "things of the mind." Instead of the common stock of knowledge being increased by every new discovery of scientific truth, and the common stock of literary or æsthetic enjoyment growing with the creation of each new master-piece of literature or art, these forms of wealth, meant for mankind, actually constitute a fund of exclusive enjoyment for a small class deriving their leisure, education, and means of purchase from the possession of some economic advantage. Every vice or defect of "commercialism," as it is exhibited in manufacture or ordinary

commerce, has its close counterpart in the "intellectual world." The maladies of "sweating" (underpay, overwork, sub-contract, "driving," and the rest), the evils of factory work, with the dull, demoralizing grind of narrow, mechanical routine; exploitation of skilled labour by a "boss" *entrepreneur;* trusts, syndicates, corners, and every form of "combine"; the worst trickeries of adulteration and advertisement, shop-dressing, and every detailed guile of commercialism—these things have their close parallels in the professions of law, medicine, and the church, in teaching, the stage, the fine arts, in science, literature, and journalism.

One of the gravest of the social problems surely lies here —how to secure such effective social control over the production and distribution of these forms of non-material wealth as to protect society against the abuses of monopoly and adulteration, and to secure for all the "goods" which are wastefully confined to a few.

This public economy of intellectual wealth falls under two great departments. The one is primarily educative, concerned with securing for all the time and opportunities, material and moral, that are needed to evoke and cultivate the tastes and capacities to appreciate, enjoy, and utilize the vast resources of intellectual wealth. The other, vitally, organically related to it, consists in the direct social control and administration of such forms of intellectual wealth as rightly conform to the requirements of social industry. These two functions are not precise counterparts; the former will in effect outrun the latter. Public or State education will have two great objects—first to impart such knowledge and training as lays a sound basis of citizenship both from a political and an industrial point of view; secondly, the detection and stimulation of higher individual tastes and capacities primarily designed for private cultivation and enjoyment. Thus public education will not only, under the heads of general and technical education, lay the

foundation of such knowledge and training as shall enable each man to perform his civic duties in an enlightened way, and to contribute by some routine industry his share in the production of social wealth, but it will assist each child to "know himself," in the sense of discovering special tastes and interests which will form the raw material of later development of individuality. For the accomplishment of this most urgent work, freedom and humanity must mitigate the elements of discipline and routine which rightly or inevitably form important factors in school life; special tastes must be caught and tested, their first food and rudimentary training must be furnished in the public schools. This public education is the most difficult work which a State can undertake, precisely because no education can be reduced to routine. But some education, that which consists in cultivating for general purposes capacities which in different degrees are common to all, and impressing certain common forms of knowledge and behaviour needed as a basis of efficiency in social life, can be brought nearer to routine than that other education which is concerned with individual needs and characteristics. So, even in education we can, though with difficulty, apply one general distinction between routine functions, which may be safely and economically administered by the State, and art functions which are essentially individualistic in their operation. I cannot concede, or even conceive, that State schools can ever undertake the whole of education, even in the narrow usage of that term; the common, the relatively rough work alone can be undertaken by public schools; the finer cultivation of individual tastes and activities will always belong to the home and to private organization. State schools, like State business of every kind, lacks the spontaneity and plasticity of private enterprise; they will be essentially mechanical in method. Sane training, judicious selection of teachers, and "a free hand" may considerably mitigate these defects; but the necessary

guarantees of average efficiency imposed upon State schools must always keep them from the best success in the higher educational paths. The real work of cultivation of individual tastes for the finer sorts of skilled work and enjoyment will lie outside the public schools. This truth is more widely appreciated every year by those who watch the efforts made by State schools in the education of art faculties. The fatal tendency to mechanize art is clearly discernible in the work of the South Kensington department wherever it transcends the mere rudiments which are its rightful sphere. The right limits of State-controlled art schools are to teach such common routine skill as should form a common acquisition of all educated persons, rather than to form artists. The real training of individual talents will never take place in schools, which, after all is said and done, must approximate to factories.

What is true of art-teaching applies also to the organization of the arts as professions. It is somewhat curious that in many ways and places Socialism, or direct State organization, has proceeded further and with less opposition in the arts and professions than in the material industries. There is sometimes a feeling that the State or the municipality may legitimately supply the luxuries of life, leaving to individuals the supply of the necessaries. So we have public art galleries and concerts, libraries and museums, public lectures, and in many places public theatres. The widely-accepted notion that "Socialism" of this sort is "safer" than Socialism of the necessaries of life rests upon no sound logical basis. It is said that, if the public provided food and shelter, such a course would impair individual enterprise and self-dependence, whereas public provision of luxuries does not have this effect, because individuals either could not or would not provide these things for themselves. But this reasoning cuts its own throat; for if free food would corrupt and enervate, free libraries and free concerts must

be considered to check the wholesome sacrifices which individuals will make for the cultivation of those new tastes that come into their lives, which sacrifices are even more ennobling and helpful stimuli of character than the efforts made to satisfy the animal pangs of hunger. It is better to encourage a man to make a voluntary effort to provide himself with books and music than to encourage him to an effort to buy food, though, and perhaps just because, it is more essential to have food than reading.

This argument is not directed against public libraries and concerts, nor does it advocate that free food or housing should be furnished in the same way as free books or music. The establishment of a secure standard of material comfort for all men, in conformity with their reasonable human needs, upon condition of their fair contribution to the fund of social labour, would be achieved by a system of public salaries for public work. The free luxuries of libraries, music, etc., might, if we please, be regarded as a part of this public salary, paid in kind to all who chose to take advantage of it.

But the important point for us is to recognize the limitations of this Socialism. The greatest art will never be doled out by public institutions designed for the general enjoyment. The ideal of a State theatre, which will recognize, educate, and bring out the finest original talent, acknowledge and produce the most powerful and timely masterworks, and maintain a constant progress in the arts of presentation, is utterly chimerical. Wherever officialism rules, there will be conformity to custom; respectability, vested interests, authority, and a more or less mechanical order will prevail; no use of public money to buy the best talent, and keep it up to full efficiency, will counteract these inevitable forces. The same will be true of an academy of letters, an academy of pictures, and of every other art. The finer the art, the more destructive of the choicest flowers of achievement will

be the public control. This is no argument against public concerts, libraries, art schools, or a State theatre. The general taste of the crowd may be well and economically served by such means, and, provided public money is not used to pervert really fine individual genius into conventional mechanism, no harm and great good will be done by "socializing" those portions of the fine arts which lose least by routine presentation. But the finer flavours of the arts, the more powerful, spontaneous, and original impressions, can never be thus given. The soul of art is essentially and eternally opposed to officialism and routine, however carefully and humanely ordered it may be. You can never socialize your great artist, either creative or executive, in painting, music, literature, drama; the essentially individual character of his work is crushed and thwarted by externally imposed conditions of social service. In a true inner sense he may be socialized, in so far as he recognizes the social value of his work, and genuinely dedicates his gifts to the welfare of society, drawing his inspiration from the public sympathy and appreciation. But any attempt to comprehend him in a publicly ordered scheme, and to impose conditions on the exercise of his faculty, will disable him from doing his best, in matters where, as Ruskin says, "the difference between the best and the all but best is infinite."

The same truths apply to the work of the learned professions. Socialism has largely invaded the professional domains, officializing and dedicating to the social service large numbers of clergy, doctors, lawyers; but it has almost always left the most delicate, difficult, and original work to "private enterprise"; or where official teachers have wrought any great reform, either in doctrine or in practice, it has been in the teeth of the official power. The inherent tendency of officialism to mechanize and reduce to routine is, in fact, nowhere more powerfully illustrated than in these departments. State religions, State medicine, State law, are

essentially mechanical. The moralization and rationalization of public life which would take place in an intelligent and educated democracy might, indeed, do much to give flexibility and powers of adaptation to public institutions; but originality of thought and experiment, new ideas and impulses, will continue to be more freely generated and to flourish better in an unofficial atmosphere. There is, therefore, room and need both for Socialism and private enterprise in the professions. If any routine work, either of theological or ethical instruction, remained for a separate clerical profession, a State Church might economically order the common and generally recognized elements of such teaching, or administer some common rites; but all that was stimulative and vitalizing in the spiritual life of the people would, as ever, continue to proceed from unauthorized outside sources. So with medicine, one of the most hardened and unprogressive of arts, even in its semi-socialized or State-protected condition. History assigns to law the palm for dogged conservatism, almost all great changes and developments in legislation or codification being attributed to statesmen who have only been lawyers in a secondary, non-official sense.

But, though the State can never do the best and finest work, the "art" work, in any department of activity, an increasing portion of routine work must always tend to fall into her hands, not only in the industrial, but in the intellectual and moral world. Nowhere will fixed limits be placed on this work. As new wants become stereotyped in the common standard of life of all citizens, and as public bodies, by experience, improve their capacity of administration, new State or municipal functions will continually arise. This will apply to intellectual and moral life as to industrial; the supply of general wants by large organized processes will fall to such public institutions as can most conveniently undertake it; while all that gives distinction, that marks originality of taste or execution, and impresses individuality,

will remain in the hands of private citizens or private organizations of citizens.

Into this general harmony, resting on the differentiation between routine industries and arts, the antagonism of Individualism and Socialism is resolved. Our examination both of the material industries and of the professions makes it evident that this antithesis of mechanical routine and art cannot be rigidly maintained, for no mechanical industry is entirely destitute of individual skill and interest, while no art exists but has a basis of drudgery. Yet the distinction is of real convenience as a means of distingushing the occupations which can usefully be ordered by Society at any given time from those which are best left to individual enterprise.

The particular functions which shall rank as routine matters ripe for public service will differ with different types of society and different grades of civilization. The general tendency of a society advancing in complexity will be to hand over an evergrowing number of functions to society for its express performance or control. But this must not be taken to imply any tendency of the State to encroach more and more upon the individual, or to suggest the approximation to an ideal in which organized Society shall do everything. For the very motive of each new access to the work of society is to transfer the individual energy and initiative formerly exercised upon a relatively low work to a higher work. A constant growth of State functions thus directed will not imply the absorption of a larger proportion of the total energy. A social progress which involves a continual growth of new State functions is quite consistent with an equal or a greater enlargement of individual liberty for industrial and other enterprises. Advance of municipal or State Socialism might indeed proceed so fast for awhile that an increasing proportion of the working population came to be servants of the public.

In some countries society has in the past so ignored some of its plain duties that a rapid increase of public work has recently been undertaken, suggesting the fear that in process of time further service will absorb the entire population. In one sense this is true of the ideal society as it is here foreshadowed, but not in the sense here implied. In proportion as more industries and callings pass into a condition of such relatively routine character as to form fit subjects for public administration, it is likely that a larger proportion of the entire population will give some part of their time and energy to public service. This indeed is clearly involved in the ideal that we have tentatively adopted, which recognizes the union of social and individual gain arising from a division of the working day into two portions, one in which routine work is done for direct public ends, the other being given to the free exercise of individual interests and desires. Whether we follow the progressive realization of this social ideal, or regard social progress as still dependent upon the specialization of certain definite official classes, there is no reason to charge the kind of socialism which limits public activity to routine work with encroaching upon individuality or reducing the quantity or the proportions of human time and energy available for private interests and occupations.

CHAPTER XVI

UNEMPLOYMENT AND MISEMPLOYMENT

"How to secure for every man a man's share of what goes on in life" is the great question, as George Eliot presents it through the mouth of Felix Holt. Our investigation of the Social Question has consisted in large measure of a diagnosis of the faults in the structure and working of modern industrial societies which prevent every man getting his full manhood realized. In our opening statement we deemed it most profitable to approach social progress as a progressive economy of waste.

It will now be serviceable briefly to summarize and set in order the results of our inquiry into this economy from the standpoint of society.

This waste, as represented in individual lives, has its quantitative and its qualitative aspects, and these have separate though related application to the two sides of life which we distinguish as work and enjoyment, using the latter term in its full rational and not in its narrow hedonist sense.

The waste of quantity of labour-power gives us the industrial maladies of unemployment and under-employment. Large stores of labour-power are either not utilized by society for the production of wealth, or are kept as a wastefully large reserve to be drawn upon in certain emergencies. There are not a few economists who, taking for granted the necessity of wide fluctuations in the volume

of industry, insist that modern industry will not work without "a margin" of unemployed in normal times. They fail, however, to perceive that the existence of this large unemployed margin is, if not the "efficient" cause, at any rate a necessary condition of the very fluctuations which are adduced to give an economic justification of the waste. This vicious circle of reasoning prevents them from confronting the real economic issue—viz. why it is that the volume of production and employment is not normally maintained at the full amount which short periods of trade prosperity show to be possible. For unemployment is not merely a labour question; it is a question of the simultaneous existence of large quantities of unemployed productive power of all descriptions in labour, land, and capital. The activity of industry which prevails for a short term in every decennial period might be maintained through the entire term of years; there is no lack of productive power to secure this steady maintenance of volume. As all men of wide business experience are aware, the check comes from the side of consumption. In the accepted economic theory of our textbooks there is nothing to explain why it should be more difficult to sell at a profitable rate than to buy, why a general slackening of production should be constantly occurring, or why gluts of loanable capital in the money market should attest the inability to find sound investments.

These undeniable industrial phenomena are only different ways of testifying that production tends to outrun consumption. The vast and rapid increase of the productive powers of modern societies, adopting machinery and improved methods of manufacture and transport, seems to be attended hitherto by a slower rate of increase of consumption of commodities. Since some one obviously possesses the power to consume whatever is or can be produced, and since the desire to consume seems also unlimited, many thinkers, flying in the face of facts, deny

the existence of under-consumption as a social phenomenon. They fail to understand that, though an isolated economic man would never under-produce or over-produce, but would always preserve an accurate adjustment between the quantity of work he did and his quantity of consumption, the condition of a modern industrial society, in which not the organic interest of the whole society but the separate self-interest of individual cells is the stimulus to and the determinant of the quantity of production, affords no such guarantee of accurate adjustment.

Our investigation into certain abuses of the natural law of property discloses *à priori* reasons to suspect that these maladjustments between rate of production and rate of consumption will occur, and suggests a natural explanation of them. Since some one possesses the power to consume whatever can be produced, what we have to explain is the unwillingness of some who possess this power to make a full and regular use of it. The phenomenon of "unearned elements of income" offers such an explanation. Nature, as we have seen, provides a just balance of work and enjoyment, in exacting that an output of energy shall be attended by a corresponding "intake" through consumption. In other words, where incomes are earned there exists a natural guarantee that they will be used for consumption. This, of course, does not preclude a reasonable distribution of consumption and such measure of present "saving" as will provide for future progress in consumption. But where incomes are "unearned," and come to a man in ways which we have recognized as "unnatural" or "miraculous," acquired by luck, craft, force, gift, or other ways that imply no previous corresponding personal effort, no such guarantee of natural use or consumption exists. On the contrary, it appears natural that part, at any rate, of the power of consumption thus conferred should be withheld. The economic power given through "unearned incomes" is,

we have seen, a power to live parasitically, and this power is injurious not merely to society, upon whom such persons prey, but to the parasites themselves. If they make full economic use of such power, they tend to degenerate not only morally, but physically, approaching the diseased condition of the slave-owning ants, who cannot even feed themselves, and die of starvation if unattended. The degree of rationality possessed by them as men prevents most persons, who are economically able to live this absolutely non-producing all-consuming life, from availing themselves of their full power. We have seen that sport and other amateur activities are devised as work-substitutes, which shall enable them to evade the injury they would sustain by eating without exercise. But these safeguards are often insufficient; they cannot, even with these substitutes for work, use all the consuming power arising from their unearned incomes without conscious injury. Much injury they do, in fact, incur by expenditure upon excessive luxury. But common sense, or a certain nausea and sense of satiety which nature provides as a check upon excess, sets some restrictions even upon luxurious expenditure, and impels the wealthy classes to an amount of "saving," or withholding of the power of consumption, which grows with every increase in the elements of "unearned incomes" and in the number of their recipients. It is this withholding of power of consumption by certain classes of individuals that constitutes the maladjustment, from the social standpoint, between power of production and current rate of consumption, and which brings about a larger aggregate of saving than is economically needed to maintain capital which assists in supplying goods for current consumption. An adequate psychology of the millionaire would furnish overwhelming evidence of the correctness of this judgment. What Mr. J. J. Astor said of himself is true of his class: "I can do nothing with my income but

buy more land, build more houses, and lend money on mortgage. In short, I am found with the necessaries of life, and more than that I cannot get out of my money." This holds good, not only of a handful of financial or commercial princes, but of a considerable class of wealthy men in every industrial community. After the necessaries, and even the luxuries, of life are provided, a vast surplus remains, the expenditure of which is not prompted by any sufficient desire of enjoyment; such surplus is self-accumulative, and seeks investment. Now, since the actual field of sound investment at any given time is limited by the rate of present or immediately prospective consumption (investments for remote uses being extremely restricted), there is an excessive pressure upon this area of investment. Any individual, of course, may "make good" all his savings; but he will do so by "making bad" the savings of some one else. A certain quantity of bad or futile "savings" is thus inevitable, and it takes two forms: (1) Passing into the form of "watered capital," or into the stock of some bogus or unsound company, the "savings" become "the consuming power" of some other individuals, who may use them to increase their consumption, or, in their turn, receiving them as "unearned income," may try to find a sound investment for them. (2) They may lie idle in the hands of bankers as loanable capital, only to be called into social service at periods of booming trade. Lying thus, they represent a power of production which might be used, but is not.

In fine, the unemployment, or under-production, which is of frequent and general occurrence, is the natural and necessary result of an under-consumption which is derived from a severance between the power to consume and the desire to consume. Excessive or unearned incomes remove the power to consume from those who have the desire to consume, and place it in the hands of those who do not, and in the order of nature cannot, fully use this power. We

have seen why they cannot use it—simply because it is not "their property," but belongs either to some other individuals from whom it is "sweated" by some power of monopoly, or to society, which has earned it by social work, but failed to claim it for social uses. The cure for the quantitative decrease of un- or under-employment thus consists in a progressive policy which shall restore these "unearned" elements to those who have earned them, and can, therefore, use them.

This policy is embodied in two movements. The movement which seeks, through law, working-class organization, and public opinion, to increase the proportion of the consuming power which passes, in higher wages or in increased leisure, to the working classes, is one means of readjustment. For the larger income of the workers, being earned by labour on the one hand, and needed for the satisfaction of a growing number of strong legitimate desires on the other hand, will be chiefly used in raising the volume of current consumption. Such saving as takes place here will chiefly be saving for definite purposes of increased provision for personal consumption in the near future, and, as such, will be not only individually, but socially, justified by economic results. This transfer of increased power of consumption from the non-workers to the workers will raise the social volume of consumption of commodities and will (*pace* the dead dogma that "demand for commodities is not a demand for labour") raise to a corresponding extent the normal value of production and employment. Since it will be employed, not chiefly upon the satisfaction of capricious wants, but in a general rise of the common standard of comfort, it will not only increase the volume, but will steady the character, of production and employment.

The other line of progressive policy, consisting in the "socialization" of such industries as, left in private hands, yield "monopoly" rents or profits, or in the increased

taxation of large or "unearned" incomes, will, in the hands of an enlightened community, likewise tend to a healthy readjustment of production and consumption, such as will secure full and regular employment for all workers. For an enlightened community, recognizing the growing social needs, will continually use its enlarging income from State monopolies and from taxation to raise the standard of public consumption, by providing a fuller, richer, and more complex social life, as well as by furnishing such support and aid to the weaker members of society as is held to be consistent with a true interpretation of social utility.

Upon the qualitative defect of misemployment it is needless to dwell in this summary. Though the waste it implies has never received adequate recognition, its existence and its main direct causes are not disputed. Not merely is there a waste of energy arising from occasional failure to get the right man or woman into the right place; the truth rather is that there are few, if any, men and women doing exactly the work for society which they ought to be doing, and doing it in the best way which modern resources render possible. Society suffers waste, sometimes more, sometimes less, in the case of every one of us. Public education, at once more liberal, more discriminative, and more technical, can do much. But the most perfect education conceivable would not, of itself, stop the social waste of misemployment. Even if to equality of education we added such equality of other distinctively economic opportunities as enabled each man or woman freely to choose his or her work, we should even then be faced by the fact that free individual selection, guided by self-interest, would not secure the full public economy. The added self-interest of each man does not constitute the collective organic interest of society; to suppose it does involves one more return to the false "monadism" which we abandoned in setting up a standard of "social utility." Society must exercise a supreme and

direct control over the choice of work of individuals, so far as that work is to be directly devoted to those routine services which we have recognized as the right contribution of individual members of a well-ordered society. How society may proceed towards the realization of such adequate control is no part of our inquiry here. Just in proportion as socialization of routine work advances by the natural and necessary steps I have indicated, we shall, of course, obtain that public selection and discrimination of workers which is needed to secure right employment in the public interest. Misemployment of time or energy in that large department of life left to individual control, and designed for direct cultivation and expression of individuality, will always remain part of the inevitable risk and cost of individual progress, and will only be diminished by a higher attainment of rationality and of social feeling among individuals.

CHAPTER XVII

THE NEED OF A SOCIOLOGY

Preserving our convenient antithesis, we must set against the social waste of unemployment and misemployment the related waste of unenjoyment and misenjoyment. Social teachers—modern economists in particular, ignoring or slighting the direct human uses of good work, have professed peculiarly to study the interests of the consumer; yet they have seldom recognized or understood the enormous waste of the social fund of enjoyment. Not by calm philosophical diagnosis, but more frequently by the pungent revelation of some detailed casual experience of life, is the appalling size and significance of this "waste" brought home to us. Some miserable group of half-starved, animal-faced children, playing in a city slum; a row of stolid-featured labourers, sitting on the wall outside the public-house on Sunday waiting for the opening hour; the garish vulgarity of a crowded music-hall; the dull, joyless, and unsuccessful "home" of an "unskilled" labourer's wife—such glimpses force us to feel how little the mass of the people appear to get out of life. Thus stimulated to wider reflection, we recognize how little the vast command over the resources of nature and of the intellectual world, gained by recent generations, has enabled us to raise the general standard of life. A large majority of the people of England do not, in fact, possess the opportunity of a life in which a reasonable supply of physical necessaries and

comforts, education, leisure, and the external means of wholesome recreation and intellectual enjoyment are secured. Individuals, and even special classes of the people—by the possession of unusual skill or energy, by good fortune, or by some particular conjunction of economic forces—have been able to raise considerably their standard of life, though the lack of well-directed education has generally impaired the quality of such standard by base forms of misenjoyment. For the rest, civilization has hitherto done little even to increase their opportunities of animal enjoyment. Upon the bad physical foundation of large city life is erected a meagre, ugly, and unsafe standard of enjoyment.

It cannot be otherwise, granting the economic conditions which at present underlie the distribution of wealth. The excessive power of enjoyment which passes by economic force into the control of certain members of the community, and which we have seen to be in large measure wasted, necessitates a corresponding lack of enjoyment in others; while the direct and indirect results of abuses of this power are manifested in converting the enjoyment of wealth into the misenjoyment of "illth."

The special forms of this waste need not here detain us; all we are concerned with is the recognition of the existence of this quantitative and qualitative waste of life corresponding with, and causally related to, the waste of work.

A radical method of social reform, based upon direct regard to social utility, will find itself confronted by the necessity of probing every one of these problems of waste to a double root. The practical problems of the art of social reform have one root in physiology, one is psychology. A sane standard of work on the one hand, or of enjoyment on the other, can only be achieved by social reforms based ultimately on these related studies. It may finally come to pass that physiology and psychology will be resolved into one science. At present it is best to respect their frontiers,

"unscientific" as they may appear to be. One or two brief illustrations of this need of scientific inquiry are here in place. The question of an eight-hours' day is reckoned a distinctively "economic" question; but its real issues, both direct and indirect, involve the most delicate interactions of physical and mental forces. The direct issue underlying the question of economic feasibility is the question whether a shortening of hours will be attended by an intensification of labour; whether such intensification is either possible or desirable depends partly upon physical conditions of the compressibility of labour-power, partly upon the operation of the desire of increased leisure, with intenser effort, upon the will. These forces, obviously related in their action, will be of different powers in different trades and for different grades of workers. Equally important is the indirect issue, the effect of increased leisure upon the habits of a class, upon "the standard of life," and so, by reaction, upon efficiency of labour. The rashness of the confident opinions commonly expressed as to the way in which "the working classes," lumped together as a homogeneous mass, will use their increased leisure is a pitiable exhibition of the incapacity of the average man to handle a social question by the light of nature and crude personal experience. A similar double root, with wide ramifications, underlies the question of "the economy of high wages." Here the distinctively psychological problem of valuations of various forms of expenditure merges with the inquiry as to the effect of different foods or forms of recreation upon muscular strength, intelligence, and honesty. Even where one of the two related aspects, physical or psychical, seems at first sight dominant, the other can easily be seen to exercise powerful unseen influences. Gambling appears at first sight a distinctively psychical disease, until we come to understand the animal craving for reckless relief from the grinding monotony of

mechanized industry, seeking an easy and a not too intellectual outlet: or, carrying the matter further back, the very commercial structure which, in its cardinal workings, directly feeds the spirit of speculation will be traced to the physical conditions of industrialism. So, on the other side, the population and the family, the physiological aspects of which are so prominent, are easily made to disclose the psychical forces which affect the rate of marriage, the size and efficiency of the family. It is needless to labour a point which no thoughtful person is likely to deny.

While, then, all the sciences and arts are tributaries to the science and art of society, physiology and psychology are the direct and conjoined currents of the main intellectual stream. For social conduct has as its one direct object the welfare of humanity in work and in life, and physiology and psychology are the studies which bear most immediately upon this theme.

The hopes of a scientific politics must, then, really depend in large measure upon the progress of these sciences, and the consciously-ordered application to social movements of the truths they attain. This inevitably throws the strain of social progress upon education. There are those who insist that progress always has been unconscious, the instinctive groping of blind masses of humanity towards an unknown goal; that rational manipulation or direction of these forces is either futile or undesirable. The main tendency of this view is to emphasize the purely physical side of the world-process; to insist that pressure of material needs from behind is the only explanation of human conduct; that where the psychical forces appear to exert initiative they are really engineered by physical impulses. Now, this is neither an intelligible self-consistent view, nor does it conform to facts as we know them. If the unity of life is broken up at all into body and mind, there

is just as much evidence that mind acts upon body as that body acts upon mind; nor can any assumed priority of the material conditions in time be taken to deny the genuineness of the causal interaction. What we see in the individual organism we also see in the social organism. We may say that in societies the part played by conscious design has been smaller than that played in the case of individual conduct; but nothing depends upon this size measurement. Between the view of Victor Hugo—that even the greatest actors on the stage of history, those men who are supposed to mould and dominate the policy of nations, are but waves of the ocean raised into momentary prominence by the wind—and the view of Carlyle—that "history is the biography of great men"—the truth, perhaps, lies midway. The conscious designs of strong individuals have certainly exercised potent direct influences upon the short-range policy of nations; how far they can direct or deflect the deeper current of the economic forces of a nation is open to question. But no theory which we may adopt as to the relative importance of the individual and the national forces, or of the conscious and the unconscious springs of conduct, impairs the supreme utility of a study of the related sciences of biology and psychology in the work of social reform. For there can be no question but that, in the more developed forms of social life, the conscious adaptation of social forces, whatever form these forces take, is of growing significance. Even though we regard all history as an unfolding of the processes of nature, and rid our philosophy of any idea of purpose other than that which is contained in natural laws, we are bound to admit the ability of natural forces, acting through the human consciousness, to order and economize the play of unconscious forces. The part played by consciousness itself belongs to the natural process, which in all the higher forms of nervous organism becomes more fully conscious. The conception of the modes of social

evolution requires us to assign a growing power to consciously-ordered human purposes in individuals and in peoples. There is, therefore, every reason to believe that the growing self-consciousness of nations and other social organisms will play a greater and a greater part in history, and that what we call progress will be more and more determined in pace and character by the capacity which a nation displays for the conscious rational ordering of its resources.

Thus the supreme condition of social progress is for a society to "know itself." The beginnings of the science of sociology already indicate the insufficiency of the biological study of the individual, and suggests that even on the physical side the social organisms of family, tribe, race, cannot be regarded as mere aggregates of units. On the psychical side, the infant study of folk-psychology already discloses remarkable phenomena of mass-life. The laws of the interactions of minds in the operations of public opinion, in the conduct of such a loose and temporary association as a "crowd" or a public meeting, and in the closer, more durable, and more consciously-ordered associations of a city or a State, are beginning to be seriously studied. These enlargements of the science of human life, pursued simultaneously and relatedly from the physical and psychical sides, bearing upon every size, form, and quality of social grouping, from the organism of the primitive family to that of the most delicately and consciously-adjusted organism of a great modern State, and the still more intricate and more elusive organism of international or human relations over the world-area, are rapidly transforming the aspect of the Social Question and our understanding of it. If our hopes of social progress rest more and more upon the capacity of societies for the conscious interpretation of social utility, the education of this consciousness through sociology is of supreme importance. This education must

involve a close and accurate intellectual replica of the entire intricacy of the social processes. The science of sociology thus conceived implies the correlation of a great number of groups of specialist students devoted to the investigation of biological or psychical facts, or their relations at some particular point, or from some special focus. This work of specialism is the legitimate individualism of science, always to be checked, adjusted, and rendered scientifically fruitful by reference to wider extra-specialist conceptions. The weakness of economic, political, and other sociological studies hitherto has consisted in an excess of independence, a lack of organized methods of gathering and arranging the narrower results for wider investigation with the object of attaining the crowning generalizations of sociology. This lack is attributable chiefly to the adoption of a crude notion that inductive science can work alone, unaided by those deductive processes of reasoning termed *à priori*. The arts of social progress, depending upon the answers to the question, What are the probable net social results over different periods of time of particular changes in social institutions achieved by such and such methods, and at such and such a pace? can safely rest on no other basis than this scientific sociology.

Not, indeed, that social reform requires that the majority of citizens shall become expert social scientists; but such a social science must be in their midst in such a way that the practical statesmen, the journalists, preachers, teachers, and other leaders of public opinion, may be deeply and systematically informed by it, so that sound information and sound modes of thinking may in various degrees, by many channels, percolate into the general mind. Thus alone can the social progress of a people become conscious and rational, and, therefore, take at once a faster and a surer pace.

But, it may be said, this intellectually-enlightened consciousness does not of itself suffice for social progress. To

know is one thing, to do another, even where the direct self-interest of a society is concerned. In all social conduct it is necessary to move individuals; and both the fact and the force of the movement depend upon the presence and the strength of the motive. Sociology may furnish a true art of social progress; but whether, or how far, a given society will practise that art will depend upon the force which the moral bond of association exercises upon individuals. Social efficiency, for progress, really means the desire of individuals to merge or subordinate their separate ends of individuality, and to act on the supposition that a common social end realized by the individual consciousness, is in itself desirable. Or, adopting another formula which has its uses, it implies a conformity to the "general will" seeking by rational conscious progress the welfare of society regarded as an organized whole. The individual will subserves this purpose in so far as it consents to subordinate passing caprices and desires to a fuller sense of the part it is capable of bearing in the fulfilment of the larger social purpose. Such conduct of the individual in conformity with the general will is in part a matter of knowledge, in part of rational self-control. But whatever stress may be laid upon moral choice, it is clear that such a science of sociology, as is here advocated, will have importance in as much as it can educate the social desires of individuals, by enforcing, through plain causal revelations, the true results of social and unsocial conduct. It can thus release what might be termed the potential forces of sociality in individuals, and economize them for social work. It makes no real difference how much stress we lay upon the understanding, how much in the will, for we cannot in any case assume a fixity in the amount of energy available in the members of a society for social progress. The doctrine of the conservation alike of physical and psychical forces imposes no such limitation as is sometimes suggested. The proportion of

conscious motive-power in the members of a society that can be directed to distinctively social ends is not limited. It is, to the individual, a matter of desires and preferences. Where the ideas of social causation are weak, where the organic life of society is feebly realized, but little energy will be diverted from private into public channels. But sociology, by the distinctively intellectual operation of enabling individuals to realize society as an elaborate organic interaction of social forms and forces, and so to understand the worth of social conduct, will alter the scale of human values and desires.* Social progress as a conscious process thus depends ultimately upon the store of some common fund of vitality possessed by members of a society, and their willingness to divert a larger or a smaller proportion of this power to the conscious attainment of social ends.

* For a most masterly and subtle analysis of the psychology of the General Will, see Bosanquet's "The Philosophical Theory of the State" (Macmillan).

CHAPTER XVIII

ECONOMY OF INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL LIFE

In order to emphasize the supreme need of a rational economy of individual and social life, based on the joint and related studies of physiology and psychology, it may be well to set forth briefly, in more formal order, the chief problems which specifically demand solution.

The life of an individual man, as a physical process of waste and repair, may be considered to depend primarily upon the intake of serviceable chemical elements in food and the atmosphere; the services of clothing, shelter, and other material necessaries may be regarded as subsidiary processes, protecting or facilitating the processes of repair of tissue. This intake of food by digestion and assimilation is largely converted into muscular and nervous energy, which may be given out in forms of physical or mental work. This slight reference to what is now becoming a science of hygiene may serve to indicate, not only where the tributary sciences come in, but where the chief defects of economy lie. Foods have been classified according to the proportion of various organic chemical constituents; the chemical needs of the human body are fairly ascertained; but the kinds and proportions of foods which will most easily and securely supply these constituents, even to the normal healthy man, much more to weak or diseased persons, and the relation of different kinds of foods to different kinds of work or functions, are little known. Not merely are the details of wholesome

standards of diet not scientifically known, but there is no agreement with reference to the proportions in bulk of the general classes of foods—nitrogenous, carboniferous, etc.—which should be taken by a normal healthy child or adult. How far various forms of animal or of vegetable organisms should be used to impart constituents needed for human repair; how much food should be taken, and at what intervals; what is the net economic use of alcohol or sugar—these and similar large general questions have yet found no satisfactory answer. The selection of a standard of diet for a class or a nation has had very little reference to close scientific, or even reasonably empirical, consideration of results; and, once established as a habit, it is so difficult to change or modify, that abuse of food probably constitutes by far the largest source of waste to which human life is subjected. To some extent original errors in adopting foods are doubtless modified by natural selection, which will adapt the digestive and assimilative organs to the work imposed upon them; but this process of adaption is itself a waste, and is probably quite unequal to the rapidity and complexity of change required to meet modern changes in quantity and quality of food consumption, taken in conjunction with other great alterations of physical environment. It is, for example, at least likely that, as a result of the increase of command over commodities which has come to most English people during this century, excessive consumption of food in general, and in particular of carboniferous foods, and a shortening of intervals between meals, are throwing upon the digestive organs a grave excess of work. Athletes and military officers are working towards the general outlines of an economy of food for certain cruder animal functions; but when we consider the vastly complex specialization of modern life—particularly for purposes of manual and intellectual work—we shall see how far we stand from a knowledge of the true economy of food.

The most general classification of a society for industrial and professional purposes, with some recognition of differences of size, age, sex, race, season, climate, will give sufficient complexity to a science of food; and, when we consider the continual adoption of new elements of food, we shall perceive that a constant struggle against waste is here involved. Beyond certain empirical advice, generally negative in form, the science of food, in its application to individual needs and abnormal states of body, is still in its infancy.

Apart from waste in the digestive and assimilative processes, other great wastes in the use of energy derived from food demand recognition. The growth of neurotic diseases in modern civilized communities is the most striking testimony to what is probably the next greatest waste after waste of food. The waste of nervous energy in almost every action of almost every person is considerable, and a special practice of nerve-training is now seeking to recover a lost economy of infant and animal life. To use only the nerves that are wanted for the end in view, and to use only the energy required for these nerves to effect the end, is one of those great economies of life which, lost as an instinctive art, may be recovered as a conscious art. The waste of muscular energy is also considerable, due largely to irregular use and partial atrophy, imposed by certain conditions of civilized life; though, so far as muscular energy is applied to industry, instinctive processes of selection probably economize it to the utmost. Still, where there is clumsiness or inefficiency of manipulation, waste ensues, and the wide margin of this waste may easily be realized by comparing the method of an amateur and an expert in using a pickaxe or carrying a trunk.

Economy of nerve and muscle for special industrial processes belongs, of course, to technical education: it is in the unspecialized processes—the free, or leisure side of life—that the waste is gravest. The rational man must seriously take

his life in hand, and find out how he may best economize or utilize the strictly limited amount of physical energy he gets from the food which he is able to assimilate. Idle and foolish talk is sometimes indulged upon this theme. It is, for instance, suggested that, by varying one's occupation, one can practically give out an infinity of energy; or, even if some restrictions are set upon the quantity of muscular or ordinary nervous energy that can be given out in a day, it is suggested that an intellectual man, by mere change of his subject-matter, may escape all quantitative control. This is a dangerous fallacy. Judicious distribution may do much to dispose economically the use of the muscular and nervous energy obtained from food; it cannot increase the stock, nor can it hypothecate a future stock, without danger. Those who are slowest to recognize that thinking uses up a store of physical energy, and that, though this store may be economized by distribution, it cannot be enlarged, are often taught by harsh experience. Variety of interest and occupation can do much, but it cannot create muscular and nervous energy.

So, while each rational man, with what small aid "science" can afford, must build up a complex organic diet for himself adapted to his individual needs, and changing as those change, he must similarly work out a complex standard of uses of energy. If he is wise, he will shun exactitude and leave "a broad margin to life," a large proportion of his fund of energy and time unallotted to specific purposes; the rest he will distribute so as to get the widest variety of exercise consistent with such specialization as is demanded by society, or for some private satisfaction. The same will obviously apply to the use of physical energy for moral or distinctively social purposes. The loose notion that, because "the soul" has the direction or determination of these, they somehow escape the limitation of the body, has no warrant. All conscious employments use up physical

energy; whether by transmuting it into mental energy, or merely by an accompanying expenditure of energy still physical, makes no difference.

The smoothness of these platitudes may be broken by one or two illustrations of the great sources of waste in modern life. The torrent of books has come upon the intellectual public with such unforeseen impetuosity as to break down all previously established standards of intellectual economy even for "the learned," and the untrained readers of the million vaguely flounder amid a sea of printed matter. The claims of science and of literature respectively, of the best books against lighter literature, of present interest and utility against past greatness, of the literature of power against the literature of knowledge—such great issues ramify and reticulate into a thousand minor ones, not to speak of the crowning difficulty of knowing what is the value of a book for you before you have read it. The intellectual waste of reading the wrong books, or reading the right books in the wrong way, is a topic of common regret among educationalists. But even these fail generally to recognize "the previous question" which underlies the entire economy—viz. how much time and energy should be given to books at all. The excessive intake of food and the consequent defective assimilation is in the intellectual economy a twin waste to that which we marked in the physical economy, and proceeds from similar causes.

A clearer recognition both of the moral and the intellectual uses of personal intercourse will probably depose books from the too prominent place they now occupy among the educated classes. Just in proportion as our civilization becomes more qualitative in its arts of production and consumption, the direct stimuli to over-reading will disappear with those to over-eating. We shall be more particular in our physical and mental food, and shall give more

attention to using well what we have got than to getting more.

In alluding to personal intercourse I touch the deepest and most deplorable waste of life, particularly, perhaps, in the English nation. If our arts of physical and intellectual consumption are yet crude, what shall we say of the social arts? Our boast of the English home and family life will bear no scrutiny even in their grosser material organization; when we look to the moral or spiritual side, the waste of love and joy in most homes is appalling; some family affection generally exists, but in most instances it is repressed, distracted, or even poisoned by a seeming lack of all finer capacity for sympathy. Since the family is primarily a structure for physical needs, and since the physical similarity of its members will often be a positive disqualification for the more serviceable forms of higher intercourse which will depend upon spiritual communion of unlikes, friendship remains as the truer test of sociality. Emerson and others have well insisted that the greatest wealth of individual life is derived from well-chosen friendship. Yet care in the selection and cultivation of friendship is regarded not merely by the uncultured but by the cultured classes as a matter of indifference, or, even worse, it is deliberately sacrificed to the formation of "useful connections." As a source of wealth and pleasure it is either squandered or ignored, and "advice on choosing friends" is consigned to the pedantry of copy-book morality. It is hardly too much to say that for the vast majority of English people friendship, in the sense of deep personal attachment and sympathy, and as distinct from family affection and familiar acquaintanceship, is an unexplored country. In other words, the notion of cultivating social feelings is not English; the possibilities of friendship are thrown to chance and propinquity; the Englishman closes his heart, as he closes his front door, with the conviction that an

Englishman's home is his castle, to be fortified against intruders.

It would be possible to trace the same source of moral waste further, to show that by weakening the spiritual bonds of neighbourhood it was responsible for the feebleness of civic life, and of the broader humanity which grows out of this. The true order of moral or social forces which shall enable a man to get the most out of his life in the higher planes of living, though it belongs peculiarly to the psychical side of life, is subject to similar laws of economy and waste to those discernible on the physical plane. There is no such real distinction and antithesis of soul and body as it is sometimes convenient to pretend, and for this reason it is that "the laws above are sisters of the laws below."

When, from these illustrations, we consider the prodigious wastes of human forces for work and life, from the standpoint of individuality alone, we shall perceive that the Social Question is even larger and more complex than at first appeared.

CHAPTER XIX

ECONOMY OF NATIONAL LIFE

In the wider form of society nations are the units, and social economy must take cognizance of national life and conduct, using the powers of work and satisfaction in the several nations for the attainment of the greatest human utility. What light does such a general formula throw upon international relations and the practical arts of national politics? How far do the "natural" laws, regulating the apportionment of work and property among the individual members of a social group, apply to the national members of the great human society?

Amid the vague language used even by educated persons regarding the "manifest destiny" of a nation, the "conflict of races," the "subjugation of the less efficient by the more efficient races," and the "opening-up" of backward countries to modern industrial civilization, we find scarcely any trace of a clear principle of morality or of utility based upon a general conception of an end of humanity. Yet, unless each nation is to be its own arbiter in its conflicts with another nation, and to be allowed forcibly to impose its private utility as a law of conduct, it is necessary to frame some idea of a common human purpose, to which different nations shall conform, and which shall limit the rights and duties of nations, regulating their relations with one another.

It is scarcely possible for any one pretending to form a

rational conception of life to maintain that the rule of brute force embodied in the phrase, "*Homo homini lupus*," though no longer applicable to individuals, still holds of nations. But, if it does not hold, some standard of human utility must take its place. How slow has been the dawning of any rational conception of humanity, or of any feeling of a need of it, is testified by the current reluctance of statesmen and publicists to confront this issue. Yet many dim signs of its recognition are discernible. Not only England and America, but nations with a somewhat less developed standard of political morality, like Germany and Russia, are no longer content to justify their territorial aggression and their interferences with foreign nationalities on grounds of mere selfish expediency, but profess a certain mission of civilization, insisting, at any rate, that the attainment of their private ends is accompanied by a gain to the world, and, in particular, to the land or the nation which is the object of the encroachment. The British conquest of India, the Russian advance in Central Asia, the opening up of China by the leading European nations, the partition of Africa into "spheres of influence," though motived undeniably in the first instance by the particular commercial or political interests of great "powers," are defended also on the ground that, by spreading "civilization," they make for the general welfare of the world.

Now, beyond pointing out a suspicious resemblance which this line of reasoning bears to the exploded argument of the old economists, that an "unseen hand" guides the enlightened selfishness of individual economic men to make for the greatest good of the community, we are not here concerned with the merits of these particular movements. What does concern us is the testimony which the history of modern national movements bears to the need of a scientific sociology. So long as we claimed to rule India because we were stronger, and wanted territory and

industrial wealth, no new fundamental issue fraught with a sociological interest arose. But when we claim to rule India for her own good, and to teach her the arts of civilization which shall render her most serviceable to the world, our appeal—in form, at any rate—is to some rational criterion of humanity in its widest sense.

It no longer suffices for each nation to claim to be its own arbiter as to the part it shall play in civilizing the world, and as to the spheres of political, industrial, and moral influence over which it seeks to operate. The mere *ipse dixit* of a nation which professes a mission to annex some portion of the globe, and to break it in for the civilization of Christendom, will have little weight in any rational consideration of a world economy. On the other hand, a rigid conservation of existing territorial boundaries is neither historically feasible nor desirable. The utilization of the natural resources of each portion of the globe should be assigned to the people which can most effectively undertake it. This test, it is true, is eagerly accepted by every aggressive power, which adduces its very power of conquest as best evidence of the superior efficiency required. So we hear of the "more efficient" and the "less efficient" races; and it is suggested that it is "the destiny," or even "the mission," of the former to "wipe out" the latter, or to subjugate them. But two fallacies plainly underlie this argument. In the first place, efficiency for the purpose in hand is not attested by capacity of conquest, or even by superiority in the present arts of industry. Take the nations of Western Europe by their own valuation, and the whole earth is theirs by indefeasible right, for purposes of industrial exploitation, and for such political control as is essential to secure this object. Such a course is good for the conqueror, good for the conquered, good for everybody!

But sociology, even in its dim beginnings, condemns the fallacious simplicity of such a solution. It finds "efficiency"

a relative term. The "fittest" individual in some primitive society might be the man who by force or cunning was most successful in knocking his fellows on the head and taking their property. That form of "fitness" has, however, in most societies yielded place to quite different forms. So in the society of nations we cannot conclude that a nation is absolutely more fit and efficient because it is stronger in war or more advanced in certain arts of industry. Such "fitnesses" may not be the best tests of a nation's ability to "civilize" another or to develop its material resources; and to turn the world into a cock-pit for the application of these tests may not be a wise economy of the material and moral powers of humanity.

Perhaps the most dangerous and common illusion which sociology discovers is the belief that there is one type of civilization equally suitable to all men, all places, and all times. If this were so, it would doubtless be true that every nation more advanced in the development of this civilization ought to give a helping hand to the more backward nations, and by education, or perhaps, even by coercion, endeavour to drive them along the one true path of human destiny towards the goal of a single homogeneous society. But this notion is utterly at variance both with the "theory of evolution" and with the facts of history. Not only have we no warrant for supposing that all "progressive" nations are moving towards a single type of society, but we have every reason for believing this to be impossible. The wide variants of natural environment and of race, reacting constantly one upon the other, oblige us to conceive civilization as "multiform." No stress need be laid upon any theory of "natural" races; it suffices that we find deeply marked characters of historic race, physical and psychical, which, whether they be regarded as "original" or entirely as products of their material environment, do tend to express themselves firmly and constantly in widely divergent types of civilization.

Modern researches have brought out many salient features of national character stamped upon the religion and philosophy, the literature and fine arts, of a people, and still more ineffaceably upon their ordinary domestic and social habits.

How far these roots of national character are to be regarded as physical, how far as psychical, is not important for our present inquiry; it is enough to adduce the growing weight of sociological testimony to their distinctness and their persistence as common factors underlying all individual differences and surviving all external changes in the life of a people. Le Bon, in his "Psychology of Peoples," finds this common race character to consist in certain few fixed sentiments or ideas which are virtually permanent, rejecting most attempts at grafting alien sentiments and ideas, and only absorbing kindred ones by the slow process of centuries of education. These qualities, lying deeper down than intellectual culture, deeper even than the fine arts, mould the destiny of nations, and are the real ultimate determinants of the work which they can do in the world.

Now, even if this theory gives too absolute persistency to national character, it is, at any rate, nearer the truth than the shallow current notion that one nation can, in the course of a generation or two, so impose the essential features of its civilization upon the life of a widely alien nation that they will grow and prosper.

If civilization is multiform, we cannot say that one civilization is better than another, only that it is different. Some of these differences, we may expect, will blend and cross without loss of fertility, others will not. This is surely a consistent and a necessary outcome of the teaching of "evolution." There are "specific" differences in civilizations—that is to say, differences of such a kind that "crossing" is either infertile or leads to degeneracy in the product of the "crossing." It is, perhaps, an unwarranted and a

speculative suggestion, but is consonant with many known facts, that, where the members of two races do not freely intermarry, the civilizations which they represent cannot merge; not that intermarriage is essential to the organic union of two civilizations, but that its absence serves to indicate a natural antipathy which is applicable not only to the physical, but to the psychical planes of life.

Now, it is evident that these considerations have an important bearing on the social utility of those movements of colonization and empire by which nations, advanced in the arts of war and industry, seek to extend these arts and to utilize the resources of other parts of the world. If we take the concrete example of England, and put the question thus, In what way can England best utilize for the welfare of the world her national energy? will she do best to confine herself to the "intensive" and "qualitative" cultivation of her present territorial resources, or shall she spread her growing population and her political and commercial energy over other portions of the globe, and, if so, over what portions? no reasonable answer can be given that is not based upon consideration of the physiology and psychology of races.

It might be most "economical" to have confined the energy of the English nation to these islands, cultivating on a small scale the finest arts of political and industrial self-government, and, if necessary, regulating the growth of population, so as to produce a small and highly-qualitative species of humanity. Granting the desirability of an expansion of England, that expansion might have been confined to the colonization of territories upon which we could live and work under conditions which did not bring our civilization into direct contact with other civilizations; that is to say, we might have confined ourselves to countries with natural conditions not widely different from our own, which were virtually unpeopled. The economy of such expansion

is evidently sounder and more profitable than one which implies direct contact with large peoples of a different or a "lower" civilization, and in natural conditions widely different from our own. We cannot, of course, predict *à priori* that it is unprofitable for English civilization to graft itself upon the civilization or the barbarism of an alien race. Such crossing of races and of civilizations might be profitable in the highest degree. It is at least likely that the numerous crossings out of which the existing English race is formed, and the still more numerous and diverse crossings which are making an American race, are chief sources of strength and of capacity for progress. But where races and civilizations are widely divergent, such forced alliances are wasteful and even vain expenditures of energy; they involve the maintenance of two discordant civilizations upon the same area with attempts at fusion that react detrimentally upon both. If the British occupation of India enabled us to settle permanently in considerable numbers in India, this conflict and its double process of degeneration would become apparent; as matters actually stand, the utter futility of our attempts to do more than establish certain external and purely superficial signs of British civilization is apparent to all close students of Indian life. The "effective occupation" of China by large numbers of Europeans settling down to live and work would exhibit in even more striking form the impossibility of genuine fusion between widely-divergent civilizations and the wasteful economy of attempting it. The successful exploitation of certain sources of material wealth might, for a time, be taken as tokens of success, and as constituting a service to the world; but a wider range of vision would show that these material gains were purchased by great racial disturbances, which made the price too costly. It is not easy to ascertain how far the opening-up of Asia and Africa, for purposes of industrialism, can be safely attained; but if this opening-up involves a

serious attempt to impose the deeper essentials of European civilization upon these countries, it can scarcely be denied that the gravest dangers are involved. Such evidence as is available at present affords no prospect of success in grafting the civilization of Western Europe either upon "savage" peoples or upon the ancient civilizations of the Eastern world. "Education" is not merely discovered to be a slower process than we once confidently supposed, but there is reason to believe that such results as are attained belong to comparatively superficial strata of industrial and intellectual life, and do not seriously affect those fundamental sentiments and ideas which are the roots of national character.

When it is admitted that civilization is not uniform, but multiform, and that its various forms are largely determined by the extremely slow and gradual interaction between natural environment and racial character, so that both that character and the civilization through which it finds expression may be regarded as in large measure a product of the environment, profound modifications must take place in the policies by which the civilized nations of Europe seek "expansion."

How far should our energies be directed to intensive, how far to extensive, cultivation? In what directions may we most profitably expand, so as to avoid the waste of energy which comes from public attempts to unite with, or to replace, other civilizations, and the fatal reaction of such waste upon our national life? These questions a "world-economy" requires should be confronted and answered by such light as science and history can bring. A social unit, whether it be a city or a nation, must be deemed to possess at any given time a certain amount of energy. How to employ that energy over an area which is neither too small nor too large, so as to yield the largest and most satisfactory result in work and life, is an aspect of the Social Question which it is the business of every society to put and to answer as best it can.

CHAPTER XX

THE RANGE AND AREA OF "SOCIAL UTILITY"

It may have occurred to some who have followed this treatment of the Social Question that too little consideration has been given to history. This has been due to no desire to depreciate the importance of "the historical method," but arises from the strict limits I have felt it necessary to set upon my task. Although, in the course of the treatment, some definite attempts have been made to mark out more clearly the lines along which social progress must be sought, particularly in relation to the fundamental economic problems, my main object has been, not to fill in the exact contents of the art of social progress, but rather to find the laws of that art. In other words, I have sought to give a clearer setting to the social problem by marking its chief economic and psychical conditions, rather than to offer a solution which should be of immediate service to the practical politician or social reformer. In establishing the supreme claim of social utility as the ideal and the practical criterion, and in discussing some of the laws of social utility in relation to the "rights" of individuals and societies, both in their material and moral aspects, I have rather assumed than stated the contribution which history must make to the contents of that social utility as it is understood at any time and in any place. By thus doing, I have given to the standard social utility a vagueness and an apparent unreality,

which qualities do not, of course, attach to it in actual life. All the larger abstract terms which it is necessary to employ in getting any wide conception of social conduct, "greatest happiness of the greatest number," "realization of the cosmic purpose," etc., are necessarily lacking in substance, unless and until history fills in the concrete facts. So with "social utility." For a statesman or any common citizen in England to-day its worth and meaning as a vital principle will evidently depend in large measure upon the grasp of present and past fact which history discloses. The contents of social utility to him will become "real" and valid for conduct, just in proportion as knowledge of facts and of the laws of facts enables him to construct a feasible future in accordance with true principles of continuity. He will know what is possible, what is probable, in the future, from his knowledge of the past. If he has made history into an organic science, the full form and contents of social utility, at any given range and area, may even be deemed a direct product of historical study. But two considerations of great importance enter here. The history by means of which a social ideal of utility shall receive substance transcends the common acceptance of the term "history." It is no longer the accurate presentation of fact, but something which is really different—namely, facts ordered and interpreted. This process of ordering and interpretation is, in the last resort, the work not of the specialist historian or the statistician (who is a quantitative historian), but of the "philosopher." The notion that a social science capable of yielding an art of social progress can be formed upon inductive lines by setting a number of persons to study facts, and then by ordering these facts and extracting their common measures in laws and tendencies, is the futile product of an incapacity to think clearly upon the conditions of science. The laws or principles needed for the selection, the ordering, and the interpretation of concrete facts of history cannot be got out of these facts themselves,

but must be imposed by a process which, at any rate relatively to these facts, is *à priori*.

The failure to recognize this adequately, and the consequent disparagement of "philosophy" by many students of "history" and many practical reformers, is a grievous source of intellectual waste which is visible in defective correlation of intellectual forces. Whether the principles of order and interpretation required to utilize historic study are themselves reached inductively by prior study of historic facts is a question which would lead us back into one of the great intellectual "impasses"—viz. the statement of the true relations between the "forms" and the "contents" of thought, which need not concern us here. It is sufficient that, for the purpose of the statesman or the common citizen, conceptions which in relation to his facts are *à priori* are essential. To him there must be a "telos" which cannot be extracted directly and wholly from the concrete experience at his command, but which yet must be moulded into general consistency with that experience. Social principles can never be "ground out" of history in the almost mechanical way which the pure inductionist requires. If history really did "repeat itself," this might in some sense be done. But it is only to the superficial view that "history," in the objective meaning of the term, repeats itself; a closer view always discloses differences beneath apparent "repetition," and the more minute the investigation the greater the variety and number of these differences. This study of facts always discloses "the many," never "the one"; yet, if there is to be a "science of history," it will consist in this very discovery of the "one," the "unity," the "laws" of action, which induction alone is impotent to disclose. Indeed, one must go further, and insist that the mere historical researcher and the mere statistician are everywhere incapable of the processes of induction on which they rely. Induction implies and uses conceptions of uniformity in nature which are imposed *à priori*. It is not

too much to say that, without some large principles which are *à priori*, and may for convenience be called philosophic (since they must ultimately depend upon a conception of "order in the universe," with which philosophy is primarily concerned), history becomes a mere chaotic accumulation of unordered and, therefore, unintelligible facts, while statistics is really what some of its enemies have described it—*le mensonge en chiffres*.

Even if we take an ordered view of history, and accord to it the important place it must occupy in forming and correcting the conceptions of human life which are needed by the social utilitarian, another caution is required. Even when history is rightly used so as to yield laws and "principles," it can never satisfy the needs of the statesman or the social reformer. The knowledge of the past, even ordered and philosophically treated, cannot suffice as a guide to social utility. Although deeper study gives a new meaning to "history repeats itself" by the discovery of these laws, the laws cannot suffice for conduct. This is why the "armchair" economist or philosopher is commonly found to be the enemy of progress. He finds quite correctly that knowledge of the past does not justify the steps of progress he is called upon to take in the present. The authority of past experience always weighs heavily against important reforms. For "conduct" is always concerned with the unknown, and always involves "risks." The social reformer must take risks, and cannot even often know what or how great risks he is taking. To refuse to take these risks is not even conservatism or stagnation; it is necessary retrogression or decline, processes which, *ex hypothesi*, involve even graver risks. For things do not stand still, and, if we refuse to budge, the current of events flows by us. Man set for conduct must act, and a moral rational man must act by a standard of social utility, which is the creation of his own constructive imagination acting upon the material of experience furnished him by

history. Just in proportion as his mind is enriched by this true philosophy of history will he form strong ideals of social utility, and follow them with that confidence which is the shortest and, therefore, the most economical path to success. Every one of the separate questions into which the Social Problem breaks must be informed by special flows of ordered fact from channels of historic inquiry; but the gathering of these questions back into their unity, which is necessary in order to understand their organic interaction, and, therefore, to deal safely and profitably with any one of them, will transcend the study of "history," and will belong to "a sociology" which cannot be deferred on the ground that "it is so difficult," because no social conduct can be rationally ordered without it.

The question of area and focus introduces different considerations. It is impossible so to cast our conception of social utility as to include all humanity for all time; the wisest and most cosmopolitan of statesmen must take a shorter view and a narrower area than this. Every one knows more about himself and his own immediate interests than about the interests of his city; more about the interests of his city than about those of his nation; and more about the interests of his nation than about those of humanity. So far as this is so, where no clash between the stronger narrow areas of interest and the weaker, broader areas is discernible, he is rationally justified in devoting a larger portion of his energy to securing the more definite and confined interests. Such are the special claims of civism and patriotism. But the wiser he becomes, the more enlightened will be his view of his own interests and those of the narrower social areas and, with each increase of enlightenment, the identification of his narrower self with the larger social self to which he belongs by nature and by reason will be clearer and closer; so the proportion of the energy he rightly devotes directly to the welfare of the wider areas will advance. This is,

however, but in part a matter of comparative knowledge; more largely a matter of sympathy. The narrowly selfish man must chiefly seek his individual well-being, because he knows no other and feels no other. The man who is more truly cognizant of the interests of his wider self in his city, his nation, and humanity, will naturally give more energy to the realization of the wider ends, because they are relatively more important to him, alike by knowledge and by sympathy, than they are to the ignorant and self-engrossed man. The same is true of the time-focus. A man who cannot see beyond the present or whose vision of the future rapidly vanishes into complete darkness, will labour chiefly for the present good of his small area of social sympathy, caring little for immediate posterity, nothing for remote posterity. A thoughtful man, well stocked with knowledge of the past, and able better to forecast the future, and so to enter into vital sympathy with future generations, will estimate their welfare higher in comparison with the welfare of the present. Economists have realized this in their theory of the "discount" of future goods, and the rudest sociology regards as one of the most crucial tests of high civilization the larger foresight and forethought it brings. Each focus in social area or in time has its own standard of utility. It is difficult to say how far these differences of focus belong to the intellectual, how far to the emotional, faculties of man. The operations of the two are here, as elsewhere, organically related.

The value of these trite remarks consists in the light they throw upon different theoretical and practical views of every social question. Every radical difference of judgment rests upon the basis of a difference in valuation. Primarily these appear as temperamental. A only sees and cares for the immediate interests of himself and his family, conceiving these interests in terms of narrow material gain; B sees and cares for the material interests of the present

generation of his countrymen—is a typical patriot; C is a human-hearted man, of wider vision, taking mankind for his social area, and thinks and feels in centuries—a philanthropist in the sane sense. You cannot make A and B and C see any proposed course of conduct alike, because of their wide discrepancy of valuation resting upon a double difference of focus. It is *primâ facie* a difference of individual character and feeling. But even could you increase the range of vision of A and B to that of C, you still could not secure uniformity of judgment and of effort, for there would still remain that difference of soul, or character, ingrained in the individual nature, and to all appearance ineradicable, which would still keep their valuations different. How much is this elemental factor of temperament an obstacle to common sympathy and common action, or how far can these apparently radical differences be overcome by education? Here is the root-problem of psychology, which is of supreme interest for students of social reform. Much —how much we cannot tell—can be done by social education to enlarge the range of vision in both directions, as well as to quicken the sympathy. But, because social utility has for every man a different intellectual and emotional content, and must even widely fluctuate with his feelings and experience, it is none the less a real standard of conduct. So with the social group, the city, or nation, the organized reason and goodwill of the community have, at any given time, a fairly definite range in area and duration. Its definiteness and efficiency for conduct at any moment will largely depend upon the coherence and consistency of the individual units which contribute to it; but, just in proportion as a city or a state consciously pursues a policy, it does so by virtue of possessing some working standard of social utility.

It is precisely at this point that we perceive the ultimate dependence of all social reform upon factors in individual character which are, as operative forces, psychical. The

Social Question finds, perhaps, its clearest unity in that common education of the intelligence and goodwill of the citizen which, by enlarging the area and extending the time-range of social utility for all citizens alike, tends to assimilate their private valuations, and so gives increased definiteness, coherence, and strength to the public standard and the public policy. An organic social policy will be strong precisely in proportion as it expresses the enlightened and enlarged common sense and common feeling of the many.

Every social reform or palliative which, by raising, even for a time, the general level, economic or intellectual, of "the majority," tends to establish more solidly this common standard, makes for progress. Since all effective reforms will be the expressions of the organic life of the social whole, the smallest elevation of the common standard of character and life will be more effectual for true economy than a much larger elevation of the standard of a class or of favoured individuals.

This is the truth which underlies the distrust felt by many of the machinery of politics. Society as an organism must be animated by a common moral and intellectual life, vested in individuals who are working in conscious co-operation for a common end, if any substantial progressive economy of social life is to be attained. Turning to concrete politics as one large instrument of social reform, we are faced at every turn by this question: "You say that the collective action of municipalities and States must be enlarged, that their control of industries and their administration of property must be extended. How is the municipality or the State to be made an effective instrument for such work?" Everywhere the problem drives back into the region of individual character and motive. A well-planned mechanism of democracy, with just forms of political and industrial government, may be rendered quite ineffective by the inability

of the community to control a selfish bureaucracy. This is, in fact, everywhere the crux of democracy. It cannot be securely overcome by the most carefully-balanced series of constitutional checks. The ultimate good working of such a democracy will depend upon the intelligence and goodwill which the private citizens bring to bear upon the public life, and upon the existence of corresponding qualities and sentiments in the public servants. Only in proportion as civic life is so strengthened and so informed by common conceptions of social utility that the classes which are specialized for official work remain in deep and genuine sympathy with the body of citizens—so that the welfare of the community, and not the running of an official machine, is the leading motive in their work; while the ordinary citizen directs his intelligence and his goodwill towards public affairs so as to feel that he can truly exercise some influence upon their administration—do the moral conditions of sound social economy exist. The forms and institutions of a State and a society should be so shaped and so sized as to render this free and effective play of moral and intellectual forces possible.