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Britain for the British
, by Robert Blatchford**

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**BRITAIN
FOR THE BRITISH**

**BY
ROBERT BLATCHFORD**

EDITOR OF THE CLARION



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DEDICATED
TO
A. M. THOMPSON
AND THE
CLARION FELLOWSHIP

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THE TITLE OF THIS BOOK

[Pg 1]

The motto of this book is expressed in its title: BRITAIN FOR THE BRITISH.

At present Britain does not belong to the British: it belongs to a few of the British, who employ the bulk of the population as servants or as workers.

It is because Britain does not belong to the British that a few are very rich and the many are very poor.

It is because Britain does not belong to the British that we find amongst the *owning* class a state of useless luxury and pernicious idleness, and amongst the *working* classes a state of drudging toil, of wearing poverty and anxious care.

This state of affairs is contrary to Christianity, is contrary to justice, and contrary to reason. It is bad for the rich, it is bad for the poor; it is against the best interests of the British nation and the human race.

The remedy for this evil state of things—the *only* remedy yet suggested—is *Socialism*. And *Socialism* is broadly expressed in the title and motto of this book: BRITAIN FOR THE BRITISH.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK

[Pg 2]

The purpose of this book is to convert the reader to *Socialism*: to convince him that the present system—political, industrial, and social—is bad; to explain to him why it is bad, and to prove to him that Socialism is the only true remedy.

FOR WHOM THIS BOOK IS INTENDED

[Pg 3]

This book is intended for any person who does not understand, or has, so far, refused to accept the principles of *Socialism*.

But it is especially addressed, as my previous book, *Merrie England*, was addressed, to JOHN

SMITH, a typical British working man, not yet converted to *Socialism*.

I hope this book will be read by every opponent of *Socialism*; and I hope it will be read by all those good folks who, though not yet *Socialists*, are anxious to help their fellow-creatures, to do some good in their own day and generation, and to leave the world a little better than they found it.

I hope that all lovers of justice and of truth will read this book, and that many of them will be thereby led to a fuller study of *Socialism*.

To the Tory and the Radical; to the Roman Catholic, the Anglican, and the Nonconformist; to the workman and the employer; to the scholar and the peer; to the labourer's wife, the housemaid, and the duchess; to the advocates of Temperance and of Co-operation; to the Trade Unionist and the non-Unionist; to the potman, the bishop, and the brewer; to the artist and the merchant; to the poet and the navy; to the Idealist and the Materialist; to the poor clerk, the rich financier, the great scientist, and the little child, I commend the following beautiful prayer from the Litany of the Church of England:—

That it may please thee to bring into the way of truth *all* such as have erred, and are deceived.

That it may please thee to strengthen such as do stand; and to comfort and help the weak-hearted; and to raise up them that fall; and finally to beat down Satan under our feet.

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That it may please thee to succour, help, and comfort *all* that are in danger, necessity, and tribulation.

That it may please thee to preserve *all* that travel by land or by water, *all* women labouring of child, *all* sick persons, and young children; and to shew thy pity upon *all* prisoners and captives.

That it may please thee to defend, and provide for, the fatherless children, and widows, and *all* that are desolate and oppressed.

That it may please thee to have mercy upon *all* men.

That it may please thee to forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers, and to turn their hearts.

That it may please thee to give and preserve to our use the kindly fruits of the earth, so as in due time we may enjoy them.

We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.

I have italicised the word "all" in that prayer to emphasise the fact that mercy, succour, comfort, and pardon are here asked for *all*, and not for a few.

I now ask the reader of this book, with those words of broad charity and sweet kindness still fresh in mind, to remember the unmerited miseries, the ill-requited labour, the gnawing penury, and the loveless and unhonoured lives to which an evil system dooms millions of British men and women. I ask the reader to discover for himself how much pity we bestow upon our "prisoners and captives," how much provision we make for the "fatherless children and widows," what nature and amount of "succour, help, and comfort" we vouchsafe to "all who are in danger, necessity, and tribulation." I ask him to consider, with regard to those "kindly fruits of the earth," who produces, and who enjoys them; and I beg him next to proceed in a judicial spirit, by means of candour and right reason, to examine fairly and weigh justly the means proposed by Socialists for abolishing poverty and oppression, and for conferring prosperity, knowledge, and freedom upon *all* men.

BRITAIN FOR THE BRITISH: that is our motto. We ask for a fair and open trial. We solicit an impartial hearing of the case for *Socialism*. Listen patiently to our statements; consider our arguments; accord to us a fair field and no favour; and may the truth prevail.

THE METHOD OF THIS BOOK

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As to the method of this book, I shall begin by calling attention to some of the evils of the present industrial, social, and political system.

I shall next try to show the sources of those evils, the causes from which they arise.

I shall go on to explain what *Socialism* is, and what *Socialism* is not.

I shall answer the principal objections commonly urged against *Socialism*.

And I shall, in conclusion, point out the chief ways in which I think the reader of this book may help the cause of *Socialism* if he believes that cause to be just and wise.

FOREWORDS

Years ago, before *Socialism* had gained a footing in this country, some of us democrats used often to wonder how any working man could be a Tory.

To-day we Socialists are still more puzzled by the fact that the majority of our working men are not Socialists.

How is it that middle class and even wealthy people often accept *Socialism* more readily than do the workers?

Perhaps it is because the men and women of the middle and upper classes are more in the habit of reading and thinking for themselves, whereas the workers take most of their opinions at second-hand from priests, parsons, journalists, employers, and members of Parliament, whose little knowledge is a dangerous thing, and whose interests lie in bolstering up class privilege by darkening counsel with a multitude of words.

I have been engaged for more than a dozen years in studying political economy and *Socialism*, and in trying, as a Socialist, pressman, and author, to explain *Socialism* and to confute the arguments and answer the objections of non-Socialists, and I say, without any hesitation, that I have never yet come across a single argument against practical *Socialism* that will hold water.

I do not believe that any person of fair intelligence and education, who will take the trouble to study *Socialism* fairly and thoroughly, will be able to avoid the conclusion that *Socialism* is just and wise.

I defy any man, of any nation, how learned, eminent, and intellectual soever, to shake the case for practical *Socialism*, or to refute the reasoning contained in this book.

And now I will address myself to Mr. John Smith, a typical British workman, not yet converted to *Socialism*. [Pg 7]

Dear Mr. Smith, I assume that you are opposed to *Socialism*, and I assume that you would say that you are opposed to it for one or more of the following reasons:—

1. Because you think *Socialism* is unjust.
2. Because you think *Socialism* is unpractical.
3. Because you think that to establish *Socialism* is not possible.

But I suspect that the real reason for your opposition to *Socialism* is simply that you do not understand it.

The reasons you generally give for opposing *Socialism* are reasons suggested to you by pressmen or politicians who know very little about it, or are interested in its rejection.

I am strongly inclined to believe that the *Socialism* to which you are opposed is not *Socialism* at all, but only a bogey erected by the enemies of *Socialism* to scare you away from the genuine *Socialism*, which it would be so much to your advantage to discover.

Now you would not take your opinions of Trade Unionism from non-Unionists, and why, then, should you take your opinions of *Socialism* from non-Socialists?

If you will be good enough to read this book you will find out what *Socialism* really is, and what it is not. If after reading this book you remain opposed to *Socialism*, I must leave it for some Socialist more able than I to convert you.

When it pleases those who call themselves your "betters" to flatter you, Mr. Smith (which happens oftener at election times than during strikes or lock-outs), you hear that you are a "shrewd, hard-headed, practical man." I hope that is true, whether your "betters" believe it or not.

I am a practical man myself, and shall offer you in this book nothing but hard fact and cold reason.

I assume, Mr. Smith, that you, as a hard-headed, practical man, would rather be well off than badly off, and that with regard to your own earnings you would rather be paid twenty shillings in the pound than five shillings or even nineteen shillings and elevenpence in the pound.

And I assume that as a family man you would rather live in a comfortable and healthy house than in an uncomfortable and unhealthy house; that you would be glad if you could buy beef, bread, gas, coal, water, tea, sugar, clothes, boots, and furniture for less money than you now pay for them; and that you would think it a good thing, and not a bad thing, if your wife had less work and more leisure, fewer worries and more nice dresses, and if your children had more sports, and better health, and better education. [Pg 8]

And I assume that you would like to pay lower rents, even if some rich landlord had to keep fewer

race-horses.

And I assume that as a humane man you would prefer that other men and women and their children should not suffer if their sufferings could be prevented.

If, then, I assure you that you are paying too much and are being paid too little, and that many other Britons, especially weak women and young children, are enduring much preventable misery; and if I assert, further, that I know of a means whereby you might secure more ease and comfort, and they might secure more justice, you will, surely, as a kind and sensible man, consent to listen to the arguments and statements I propose to place before you.

Suppose a stranger came to tell you where you could get a better house at a lower rent, and suppose your present landlord assured you that the man who offered the information was a fool or a rogue, would you take the landlord's word without investigation? Would it not be more practical and hard-headed to hear first what the bringer of such good news had to tell?

Well, the Socialist brings you better news than that of a lower rent. Will you not hear him? Will you turn your back on him for no better reason than because he is denounced as a fraud by the rich men whose wealth depends upon the continuation of the present system?

Your "betters" tell you that you always display a wise distrust of new ideas. But to reject an idea because it is new is not a proof of shrewdness and good sense; it is a sign of bigotry and ignorance. Trade Unionism was new not so long ago, and was denounced, and is still denounced, by the very same persons who now denounce *Socialism*. If you find a newspaper or an employer to be wrong when he denounces Trade Unionism, which you do understand, why should you assume that the same authority is right in denouncing *Socialism*, which you do not understand? You know that in attacking Trade Unionism the employer and the pressman are speaking in their own interest and against yours; why, then, should you be ready to believe that in counselling you against *Socialism* the same men are speaking in your interest and not in their own?

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I ask you, as a practical man, to forget both the Socialist and the non-Socialist, and to consider the case for and against *Socialism* on its merits. As I said in *Merrie England*—

Forget that you are a joiner or a spinner, a Catholic or a Freethinker, a Liberal or a Tory, a moderate drinker or a teetotaler, and consider the problem as a *man*.

If you had to do a problem in arithmetic, or if you were cast adrift in an open boat at sea, you would not set to work as a Wesleyan, or a Liberal Unionist; but you would tackle the sum by the rules of arithmetic, and would row the boat by the strength of your own manhood, and keep a lookout for passing ships under *any* flag. I ask you, then, Mr. Smith, to hear what I have to say, and to decide by your own judgment whether I am right or wrong.

I was once opposed to *Socialism* myself; but it was before I understood it.

When you understand it you will, I feel sure, agree with me that it is perfectly logical, and just, and practical; and you will, I hope, yourself become a *Socialist*, and will help to abolish poverty and wrong by securing BRITAIN FOR THE BRITISH.

CHAPTER I THE UNEQUAL DIVISION OF WEALTH

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Section A: the Rich

Non-socialists say that self-interest is the strongest motive in human nature.

Let us take them at their word.

Self-interest being the universal ruling motive, it behoves you, Mr. Smith, to do the best you can for yourself and family.

Self-interest being the universal ruling motive, it is evident that the rich man will look out for his own advantage, and not for yours.

Therefore as a selfish man, alive to your own interests, it is clear that you will not trust the rich man, nor believe in the unselfishness of his motives.

As a selfish man you will look out first for yourself. If you can get more wages for the work you do, if you can get the same pay for fewer hours and lighter work, self-interest tells you that you would be a fool to go on as you are. If you can get cheaper houses, cheaper clothes, food, travelling, and amusement than you now get, self-interest tells you that you would be a fool to go on paying present prices.

Your landlord, your employer, your tradesman will not take less work or money from you if he can get more.

Self-interest counsels you not to pay a high price if you can get what you want at a lower price.

Your employer will not employ you unless you are useful to him, nor will he employ you if he can get another man as useful to him as you at a lower wage.

Such persons as landlords, capitalists, employers, and contractors will tell you that they are useful, and even necessary, to the working class, of which class you are one. [Pg 11]

Self-interest will counsel you, firstly, that if these persons are really useful or necessary to you, it is to your interest to secure their services at the lowest possible price; and, secondly, that if you can replace them by other persons more useful or less costly, you will be justified in dispensing with their services.

Now, the Socialist claims that it is cheaper and better for the people to manage their own affairs than to pay landlords, capitalists, employers, and contractors to manage their affairs for them.

That is to say, that as it is cheaper and better for a city to make its own gas, or to provide its own water, or to lay its own roads, so it would be cheaper and better for the nation to own its own land, its own mines, its own railways, houses, factories, ships, and workshops, and to manage them as the corporation tramways, gasworks, and waterworks are now owned and managed.

Your "betters," Mr. Smith, will tell you that you might be worse off than you are now. That is not the question. The question is, Might you be better off than you are now?

They will tell you that the working man is better off now than he was a hundred years ago. That is not the question. The question is, Are the workers as well off now as they ought to be and might be?

They will tell you that the British workers are better off than the workers of any other nation. That is not the question. The question is, Are the British workers as well off as they ought to be and might be?

They will tell you that Socialists are discontented agitators, and that they exaggerate the evils of the present time. That is not the question. The question is, Do evils exist at all to-day, and if so, is no remedy available?

Your "betters" have admitted, and do admit, as I will show you presently, that evils do exist; but they have no remedy to propose.

The Socialist tells you that your "betters" are deceived or are deceiving you, and that *Socialism* is a remedy, and the only one possible.

Self-interest will counsel you to secure the best conditions you can for yourself, and will warn you not to expect unselfish service from selfish men. [Pg 12]

Ask yourself, then, whether, since self-interest is the universal motive, it would not be wise for you to make some inquiry as to whether the persons intrusted by you with the management of your affairs are managing your affairs to your advantage or to their own.

As a selfish man, is it sensible to elect selfish men, or to accept selfish men, to govern you, to make your laws, to manage your business, and to affix your taxes, prices, and wages?

The mild Hindoo has a proverb which you might well remember in this connection. It is this—

The wise man is united in this life with that with which it is proper he should be united.
I am bread; thou art the eater: how can harmony exist between us?

Appealing, then, entirely to your self-interest, I ask you to consider whether the workers of Britain to-day are making the best bargain possible with the other classes of society. Do the workers receive their full due? Do evils exist in this country to-day? and if so, is there a remedy? and if there is a remedy, what is it?

The first charge brought by Socialists against the present system is the charge of the unjust distribution of wealth.

The rich obtain wealth beyond their need, and beyond their deserving; the workers are, for the most part, condemned to lead laborious, anxious, and penurious lives. Nearly all the wealth of the nation is produced by the workers; most of it is consumed by the rich, who squander it in useless or harmful luxury, leaving the majority of those who produced it, not enough for human comfort, decency, and health.

If you wish for a plain and clear statement of the unequal distribution of wealth in this country, get Fabian Tract No. 5, price one penny, and study it well.

According to that tract, the total value of the wealth produced in this country is £1,700,000,000. Of this total £275,000,000 is paid in rent, £340,000,000 is paid in interest, £435,000,000 is paid in profits and salaries. That makes a total of £1,050,000,000 in rent, interest, profits, and salaries, nearly the whole of which goes to about 5,000,000 of people comprising the middle and upper classes. [Pg 13]

The balance of £650,000,000 is paid in wages to the remaining 35,000,000 of people comprising the working classes. Roughly, then, two-thirds of the national wealth goes to 5,000,000 of persons, quite half of whom are idle, and one-third is *shared* by seven times as many people, nearly half of whom are workers.

These figures have been before the public for many years, and so far as I know have never been questioned.

There are, say the Fabian tracts, more than 2,000,000 of men, women, and children living without any kind of occupation: that is, they live without working.

Ten-elevenths of all the land in the British Islands belong to 176,520 persons. The rest of the 40,000,000 own the other eleventh. Or, dividing Britain into eleven parts, you may say that one two-hundredth part of the population owns ten-elevenths of Britain, while the other one hundred and ninety-nine two-hundredths of the population own one-eleventh of Britain. That is as though a cake were divided amongst 200 persons by giving to one person ten slices, and dividing one slice amongst 199 persons. I told you just now that Britain does not belong to the British, but only to a few of the British.

In Fabian Tract No. 7 I read—

One-half of the *wealth* of the kingdom is held by persons who leave at death at least £20,000, exclusive of land and houses. *These persons form a class somewhat over 25,000 in number.*

Half the wealth of Britain, then, is held by one fifteen-hundredth part of the population. It is as if a cake were cut in half, one half being given to one man and the other half being divided amongst 1499 men.

How much cake does a working mechanic get?

In 1898 the estates of seven persons were proved at over £45,000,000. That is to say, those seven left £45,000,000 when they died.

Putting a workman's wages at £75 a year, and his working life at twenty years, it would take 30,000 workmen all their lives to *earn* (not to *save*) the money left by those seven rich men. [Pg 14]

Many rich men have incomes of £150,000 a year. The skilled worker draws about £75 a year in wages.

Therefore one man with £150,000 a year gets more than 2000 skilled workmen, and the workmen have to do more than 600,000 days' work for their wages, while the rich man does *nothing*.

One of our richest dukes gets as much money in one year for doing nothing, as a skilled workman would get for 14,000 years of hard and useful work.

A landowner is a millionaire. He has £1,000,000. It would take an agricultural labourer, at 10s. a week wages, nearly 40,000 years to earn £1,000,000.

I need not burden you with figures. Look about you and you will see evidences of wealth on every side. Go through the suburbs of London, or any large town, and notice the large districts composed of villas and mansions, at rentals of from £100 to £1000 a year. Go through the streets of a big city, and observe the miles of great shops stored with flaming jewels, costly gold and silver plate, rich furs, silks, pictures, velvets, furniture, and upholsteries. Who buys all these expensive luxuries? They are not for you, nor for your wife, nor for your children.

You do not live in a £200 flat. Your floor is not covered with a £50 Persian rug; your wife does not wear diamond rings, nor silk underclothing, nor gowns of brocaded silk, nor sable collars, nor Maltese lace cuffs worth many guineas. She does not sit in the stalls at the opera, nor ride home in a brougham, nor sup on oysters and champagne, nor go, during the heat of the summer, on a yachting cruise in the Mediterranean. And is not your wife as much to you as the duchess to the duke?

And now let us go on to the next section, and see how it fares with the poor.

Section B: The Poor

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At present the average age at death among the nobility, gentry, and professional classes in England and Wales is fifty-five years; but among the artisan classes of Lambeth it only amounts to twenty-nine years; and whilst the infantile death-rate among the well-to-do classes is such that only 8 children die in the first year of life out of 100 born, as many as 30 per cent. succumb at that age among the children of the poor in some districts of our large cities.

Dr. Playfair says that amongst the upper class 18 per cent. of the children die before they reach five years of age; of the tradesman class 36 per cent., and of the working class 55 per cent. of the children die before they reach five years of age.

Out of every 1000 persons 939 die without leaving any property at all worth mentioning.

About 8,000,000 persons exist always on the borders of starvation. About 20,000,000 are poor. More than half the national wealth belongs to about 25,000 people; the remaining 39,000,000 share the other half unequally amongst them.

About 30,000 persons own fifty-five sixths of the land and capital of the nation; but of the 39,000,000 of other persons only 1,500,000 earn (or receive) as much as £3 a week.

In London 1,292,737 persons, or 37.8 per cent. of the whole population, get less than a guinea a

week *per family*.

The number of persons in receipt of poor-law relief on any one day in the British Islands is over 1,000,000; but 2,360,000 persons receive poor-law relief during one year, or one in eleven of the whole manual labouring class.

In England and Wales alone 72,000 persons die each year in workhouse hospitals, infirmaries, or asylums.

In London alone there are 99,830 persons in workhouses, hospitals, prisons, or industrial schools.

In London one person out of every four will die in a workhouse, hospital, or lunatic asylum.

It is estimated that 3,225,000 persons in the British Islands live in overcrowded dwellings, with an average of three persons in each room. [Pg 16]

There are 30,000 persons in London alone whose *home* is a common lodging-house. In London alone 1100 persons sleep every night in casual wards.

From Fabian Tract No. 75 I quote—

Much has been done in the way of improvement in various parts of Scotland, but 22 per cent. of Scottish families still dwell in a single room each, and the proportion in the case of Glasgow rises to 33 per cent. The little town of Kilmarnock, with only 28,447 inhabitants, huddles even a slightly larger proportion of its families into single-room tenements. Altogether, there are in Glasgow over 120,000, and in all Scotland 560,000 persons (more than one-eighth of the whole population), who do not know the decency of even a two-roomed home.

A similar state of things exists in nearly all our large towns, the colliery districts being amongst the worst.

The working class.—The great bulk of the British people are overworked, underpaid, badly housed, unfairly taxed but besides all that, they are exposed to serious risks.

Read *The Tragedy of Toil*, by John Burns, M.P. (Clarion Press, 1d.).

In sixty years 60,000 colliers have been accidentally killed. In the South Wales coalfield in 1896, 232 were killed out of 71,000. In 1897, out of 76,000 no less than 10,230 were injured.

In 1897, of the men employed in railway shunting, 1 in 203 was killed and 1 in 12 was injured.

In 1897, out of 465,112 railway workers, 510 were killed, 828 were permanently disabled, and 67,000 were temporarily disabled.

John Burns says—

This we do know, that 60 per cent. of the common labourers engaged on the Panama Canal were either killed, injured, or died from disease every year, whilst 80 per cent. of the Europeans died. Out of 70 French engineers, 45 died, and only 10 of the remainder were fit for subsequent work.

The men engaged on the Manchester Ship Canal claim that 1000 to 1100 men were killed and 1700 men were severely injured, whilst 2500 were temporarily disabled.

Again—

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Taking mechanics first, and selecting one firm—Armstrong's, at Elswick—we find that in 1892 there were 588 accidents, or 7.9 per cent. of men engaged. They have steadily risen to 1512, or 13.9 per cent. of men engaged in 1897. In some departments, notably the blast furnace, 43 per cent. of the men employed were injured in 1897. The steel works had 296 injured, or 24.4 per cent. of its number.

Of sailors John Burns says—

The last thirteen years, 1884-85 to 1896-97, show a loss of 28,302 from wreck, casualties, and accidents, or an average of 2177 from the industrial risks of the sailor's life.

But the most startling statement is to come—

Sir A. Forwood has recently indicated, and recent facts confirm this general view, that

1 of every 1400 workmen is killed annually.
" " 2500 " is totally disabled.
" " 300 " is permanently partially disabled.
125 per 1000 are temporarily disabled for three or four weeks.

One workman in 1400 is killed annually. Let us say there are 6,000,000 workmen in the British Islands, and we shall find that no less than 4280 are killed, and 20,000 permanently or partially disabled.

That is as high as the average year's casualties in the Boer war.

But the high death-rate from accidents amongst the workers is not nearly the greatest evil to which the poor are exposed.

In the poorest districts of the great towns the children die like flies, and diseases caused by overcrowding, insufficient or improper food, exposure, dirt, neglect, and want of fuel and clothing, play havoc with the infants, the weakly, and the old.

What are the chief diseases almost wholly due to the surroundings of poverty? They are consumption, bronchitis, rheumatism, epilepsy, fevers, smallpox, and cancer. Add to those the evil influences with which some trades are cursed, such as rupture, lead and phosphorous poisoning, and irritation of the lungs by dust, and you have a whole arsenal of deadly weapons aimed at the lives of the laborious poor.

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The average death-rate amongst the well-to-do classes is less than 10 in the thousand. Amongst the poorer workers it is often as high as 70 and seldom as low as 20.

Put the average at 25 in the thousand amongst the poor: put the numbers of the poor at 10,000,000. We shall find that the difference between the death-rates of the poor and the well-to-do, is 15 to the thousand or 15,000 to the million.

We may say, then, that the 10,000,000 of poor workers lose every year 150,000 lives from accidents and diseases due to poverty and to labour.

Taking the entire population of the British Islands, I dare assert that the excess death-rate over the normal death-rate, will show that every year 300,000 lives are sacrificed to the ignorance and the injustice of the inhuman chaos which we call British civilisation.

Some have cynically said that these lives are not worth saving, that the death-rate shows the defeat of the unfit, and that if all survived there would not be enough for them to live on.

But except in the worst cases—where sots and criminals have bred human weeds—no man is wise enough to select the "fit" from the "unfit" amongst the children. The thin, pale child killed by cold, by hunger, by smallpox, or by fever, may be a seedling Stephenson, or Herschel, or Wesley; and I take it that in the West End the parents would not be consoled for the sacrifice of their most delicate child by the brutal suggestion that it was one of the "unfit." The "fit" may be a hooligan, a sweater, a fraudulent millionaire, a dissolute peer, or a fool.

But there are two sides to this question of physical fitness. To excuse the evils of society on the ground that they weed out the unfit, is as foolish as to excuse bad drainage on the same plea. In a low-lying district where the soil is marshy the population will be weeded swiftly; but who would offer that as a reason why the land should not be drained? This heartless, fatuous talk about the survival of the fittest is only another example of the insults to which the poor are subjected. It fills one with despair to think that working men—fathers and husbands—will read or hear such things said of their own class, and not resent them. It is the duty of every working man to fight against such pitiless savagery, and to make every effort to win for his class and his family, respect and human conditions of life.

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Moreover, the shoddy science which talks so glibly about the "weeding out" of little helpless children is too bleary-eyed to perceive that the same conditions of inhuman life which destroy the "weeds," *breed* the weeds. Children born of healthy parents in healthy surroundings are not weeds. But to-day the British race is deteriorating, and the nation is in danger because of the greed of money-seekers and the folly of rulers and of those who claim to teach. The nation that gives itself up to the worship of luxury, wealth, and ease, is doomed. Nothing can save the British race but an awakening of the workers to the dangerous pass to which they have been brought by those who affect to guide and to govern them.

But the workers, besides being underpaid, over-taxed, badly housed, and exposed to all manner of hardship, poverty, danger, and anxiety of mind, are also, by those who live upon them, denied respect.

Do you doubt this? Do not the "better classes," as they call themselves, allude to the workers as "the lower orders," and "the great unwashed"? Does not the employer commonly speak of the workers as "hands"? Does the fine gentleman, who raises his hat and airs his nicest manners for a "lady," extend his chivalry and politeness to a "woman"? Do not the silk hats and the black coats and the white collars treat the caps and the overalls and the smocks as inferiors? Do not the men of the "better class" address each other as "sir"? And when did you last hear a "gentleman" say "sir" to a train-guard, to a railway porter, or to the "man" who has come to mend the drawing-room stove?

Man cannot live by bread alone; neither can woman or child. And how much honour, culture, pleasure, rest, or love falls to the lot of the wives and children of the poor?

Do not think I wish to breed class hatred. I do not. Doubtless the "better class" are graceful, amiable, honourable, and well-meaning folks. Doubtless they honestly believe they have a just claim to all their wealth and privileges. Doubtless they are no more selfish, no more arrogant, no more covetous nor idle than any working man would be in their place.

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What of that? It is nothing at all to you. They may be the finest people in the world. But does their

fineness help you to pay your rent, or your wife to mend the clothes? or does it give you more wages, or her more rest? or does it in any way help to educate, and feed, and make happy your children?

It does not. Nor do all the graces and superiorities of the West End make the lot of the East less bitter, less anxious, or more human.

If self-interest be the ruling motive of mankind, why do not the working men transfer their honour and their service from the fine ladies and fine gentlemen to their own wives and children?

These need every atom of love and respect the men can give them. Why should the many be poor, be ignorant, despised? Why should the rich monopolise the knowledge and the culture, the graces and elegancies of life, as well as the wealth?

Ignorance is a curse: it is a deadlier curse than poverty. Indeed, but for ignorance, poverty and wealth could not continue to exist side by side; for only ignorance permits the rich to uphold and the poor to endure the injustices and the criminal follies of British society, as now to our shame and grief they environ us, like some loathly vision beheld with horror under nightmare.

Is it needful to tell you more, Mr. Smith, you who are yourself a worker? Have you not witnessed, perhaps suffered, many of these evils?

Yes; perhaps you yourself have smarted under "the insolence of office, and the spurns which patient merit of the unworthy takes"; perhaps you have borne the tortures of long suspense as one of the unemployed; perhaps on some weary tramp after work you have learned what it is to be a stranger in your own land; perhaps you have seen some old veteran worker, long known to you, now broken in health and stricken in years, compelled to seek the shameful shelter of a workhouse; perhaps you have had comrades of your own or other trades, who have been laid low by sickness, sickness caused by exposure or overstrain, and have died what coroners' juries call "natural deaths," or, in plain English, have been killed by overwork; perhaps you have known widows and little children, left behind by those unfortunate men, and can remember how much succour and compassion they received in this Christian country; perhaps as you think of the grim prophecy that one worker in four must die in a workhouse, you may yourself, despite your strength and your skill, glance anxiously towards the future, as a bold sailor glances towards a stormy horizon.

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Well, Mr. Smith, will you look through a book of mine called *Dismal England*, and there read how men and women and children of your class are treated in the workhouse, in the workhouse school, in the police court, in the chain works, on the canals, in the chemical hells, and in the poor and gloomy districts known as slums? I would quote some passages from *Dismal England* now, but space forbids.

Or, maybe, you would prefer the evidence of men of wealth and eminence who are not Socialists. If so, please read the testimony given in the next section.

Section C: Reliable Evidence

The Salvation Army see a great deal of the poor. Here is the evidence of General Booth—

444 persons are reported by the police to have attempted to commit suicide in London last year, and probably as many more succeeded in doing so. 200 persons died from starvation in the same period. We have in this one city about 100,000 paupers, 30,000 prostitutes, 33,000 homeless adults, and 35,000 wandering children of the slums. There is a standing army of out-of-works numbering 80,000, which is often increased in special periods of commercial depression or trade disputes to 100,000. 12,000 criminals are always inside Her Majesty's prisons, and about 15,000 are outside. 70,000 charges for petty offences are dealt with by the London magistrates every year. The best authorities estimate that 10,000 new criminals are manufactured per annum. We have tens of thousands of dwellings known to be overcrowded, unsanitary, or dangerous.

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Here is the evidence of a man of letters, Mr. Frederic Harrison—

To me, at least, it would be enough to condemn modern society as hardly an advance on slavery or serfdom, if the permanent condition of industry were to be that which we behold, that 90 per cent. of the actual producers of wealth have no home that they can call their own beyond the end of the week; have no bit of soil, or so much as a room that belongs to them; have nothing of value of any kind except as much old furniture as will go in a cart; have the precarious chance of weekly wages which barely suffice to keep them in health; are housed for the most part in places that no man thinks fit for his horse; are separated by so narrow a margin from destitution, that a month of bad trade, sickness, or unexpected loss brings them face to face with hunger and pauperism.... This is the normal state of the average workman in town or country.

Here is the evidence of a man of science, Professor Huxley—

Anyone who is acquainted with the state of the population of all great industrial centres, whether in this or other countries, is aware that amidst a large and increasing body of that population there reigns supreme ... that condition which the French call *la*

misère, a word for which I do not think there is any exact English equivalent. It is a condition in which the food, warmth, and clothing which are necessary for the mere maintenance of the functions of the body in their normal state cannot be obtained; in which men, women, and children are forced to crowd into dens wherein decency is abolished, and the most ordinary conditions of healthful existence are impossible of attainment; in which the pleasures within reach are reduced to brutality and drunkenness; in which the pains accumulate at compound interest in the shape of starvation, disease, stunted development, and moral degradation; in which the prospect of even steady and honest industry is a life of unsuccessful battling with hunger, rounded by a pauper's grave.... When the organisation of society, instead of mitigating this tendency, tends to continue and intensify it; when a given social order plainly makes for evil and not for good, men naturally enough begin to think it high time to try a fresh experiment. I take it to be a mere plain truth that throughout industrial Europe there is not a single large manufacturing city which is free from a vast mass of people whose condition is exactly that described, and from a still greater mass who, living just on the edge of the social swamp, are liable to be precipitated into it.

Here is the evidence of a British peer, Lord Durham—

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There was still more sympathy and no reproach whatever to be bestowed upon the children—perhaps waifs and strays in their earliest days—of parents destitute, very likely deserving, possibly criminal, who had had to leave these poor children to fight their way in life alone. What did these children know or care for the civilisation or the wealth of their native land? *What example, what incentive had they ever had to lead good and honest lives?* Possibly from the moment of their birth they had never known contentment, what it had been to feel bodily comfort. They were cast into that world, and looked upon it as a cruel and heartless world, with no guidance, no benign influence to guide them in their way, and *thus they were naturally prone to fall into any vicious or criminal habits which would procure them a bare subsistence.*

Here is the evidence of a Tory Minister, Sir John Gorst—

I do not think there is any doubt as to the reality of the evil; that is to say, that there are in our civilisation men able and willing to work who can't find work to do.... Work will have to be found for them.... What are usually called relief works may be a palliative for acute temporary distress, but they are no remedy for the unemployed evil in the long-run. Not only so; they tend to aggravate it.... If you can set 100 unemployed men to produce food, they are not taking bread out of other people's mouths. Men so employed would be producing what is now imported from abroad and what they themselves would consume. An unemployed man—*whether he is a duke or a docker*—is living on the community. If you set him to grow food he is enriching the community by what he produces. Therefore, my idea is that the direction in which a remedy for the unemployed evil is to be sought is in the production of food.

Here is the evidence of the Tory Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury—

They looked around them and saw a *growing* mass of *poverty* and *want of employment*, and of course the one object which every statesman who loved his country should desire to attain, was that there might be the largest amount of profitable employment for the mass of the people.

He did not say that he had any patent or certain remedy for *the terrible evils which beset us on all sides*, but he did say that it was time they left off mending the constitution of Parliament, and that they turned all the wisdom and energy Parliament could combine together in order to remedy the *sufferings* under which so *many* of their countrymen laboured.

Here is the evidence of the Colonial Secretary, the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P.—

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The rights of property have been so much extended that the rights of the community have almost altogether disappeared, and it is hardly too much to say that the prosperity and the comfort and the liberties of a great proportion of the population have been laid at the feet of a small number of proprietors, who "neither toil nor spin."

And here is further evidence from Mr. Chamberlain—

For my part neither sneers, nor abuse, nor opposition shall induce me to accept as the will of the Almighty, and the unalterable dispensation of His providence, a state of things under which *millions lead sordid, hopeless, and monotonous lives, without pleasure in the present, and without prospect for the future.*

And here is still stronger testimony from Mr. Chamberlain—

The ordinary conditions of life among a large proportion of the population are such that common decency is absolutely impossible; and all this goes on in sight of the mansions of the rich, where undoubtedly there are people who would gladly remedy it if they could. It goes on in presence of wasteful extravagance and luxury, which bring but little

pleasure to those who indulge in them; and private charity is powerless, religious organisations can do nothing, to remedy the evils which are so deep-seated in our social system.

You have read what these eminent men have said, Mr. Smith, as to the evils of the present time.

Well, Mr. Atkinson, a well-known American statistical authority, has said—

Four or five men can produce the bread for a thousand. With the best machinery one workman can produce cotton cloth for 250 people, woollens for 300, or boots and shoes for 1000.

How is it, friend John Smith, that with all our energy, all our industry, all our genius, and all our machinery, there are 8,000,000 of hungry poor in this country?

If five men can produce bread for a thousand, and one man can produce shoes for a thousand, how is it we have so many British citizens suffering from hunger and bare feet?

That, Mr. Smith, is the question I shall endeavour in this book to answer.

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Meanwhile, if you have any doubts as to the verity of my statements of the sufferings of the poor, or as to the urgent need for your immediate and earnest aid, read the following books, and form your own opinion:—

Labour and Life of the People. Charles Booth. To be seen at most free libraries.

Poverty: A Study of Town Life. By B. S. Rountree. Macmillan. 10s. 6d.

Dismal England. By R. Blatchford, 72 Fleet Street, E.C. 2s. 6d. and 1s.

No Room to Live. By G. Haw, 72 Fleet Street, E.C. 1s.

The White Slaves of England. By R. Sherard. London, James Bowden. 1s.

Pictures and Problems from the Police Courts. By T. Holmes. Ed. Arnold, Bedford Street, W.C.

And the Fabian Tracts, especially No. 5 and No. 7. These are 1d. each.

CHAPTER II

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WHAT IS WEALTH? WHERE DOES IT COME FROM? WHO CREATES IT?

Those who have read anything about political economy or *Socialism* must often have found such thoughts as these rise up in their minds—

How is it some are rich and others poor? How is it some who are able and willing to work can get no work to do? How is it that some who work very hard are so poorly paid? How is it that others who do not work at all have more money than they need? Why is one man born to pay rent and another to spend it?

Let us first face the question of why there is so much poverty.

This question has been answered in many strange ways.

It has been said that poverty is due to drink. But that is not true, for we find many sober people poor, and we find awful poverty in countries where drunkenness is almost unknown.

Drink does not cause the poverty of the sober Hindoos. Drink does not cause the poverty of our English women workers.

It has been said that poverty is due to "over-production," and it has been said that it is due to "under-consumption." Let us see what these phrases mean.

First, over-production. Poverty is due to over-production—of *what?* Of wealth. So we are to believe that the people are poor because they make too much wealth, that they are hungry because they produce too much food, naked because they make too many clothes, cold because they get too much coal, homeless because they build too many houses!

Next, under-consumption. We are told that poverty is due to under-consumption—under-consumption of *what?* Of wealth. The people are poor because they do not destroy enough wealth. The way for them to grow rich is by consuming riches. They are to make their cake larger by eating it.

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Alas! the trouble is that they can get no cake to eat; they can get no wealth to consume.

But I think the economists mean that the poor will grow richer if the rich consume more wealth.

A rich man has two slaves. The slaves grow corn and make bread. The rich man takes half the bread and eats it. The slaves have only one man's share between two.

Will it mend matters here if the rich man "consumes more"? Will it be better for the two slaves if the master takes half the bread left to them, and eats that as well as the bread he has already taken?

See what a pretty mess the economists have led us into. The rich have too much and the poor too little. The economist says, let the poor produce less and the rich consume more, and all will be well!

Wonderful! But if the poor produce less, there will be less to eat; and if the rich eat more, the share of the poor will be smaller than ever.

Let us try another way. Suppose the poor produce more and the rich consume less! Does it not seem likely that then the share of the poor would be bigger?

Well, then, we must turn the wisdom of the economists the other way up. We must say over-production of wealth *cannot* make poverty, for that means that the more of a thing is produced the less of that thing there is; and we must say that under-consumption *cannot* cause poverty, for that means that the more of a loaf you eat the more you will have left.

Such rubbish as that may do for statesmen and editors, but it is of no use to sensible men and women. Let us see if we cannot think a little better for ourselves than these very superior persons have thought for us. I think that we, without being at all clever or learned, may get nearer to the truth than some of those who pass for great men.

Now, what is it we have to find out? We want to know how the British people may make the best of their country and themselves. [Pg 28]

We know they are not making the best of either at present.

There must, therefore, be something wrong. Our business is to find out what is wrong, and how it may be righted.

We will begin by asking ourselves three questions, and by trying to answer them.

These questions are—

1. What is wealth?
2. Where does wealth come from?
3. Where does wealth go to?

First, then, what *is* wealth? There is no need to go into long and confusing explanations; there is no use in splitting hairs. We want an answer that is short and simple, and at the same time good enough for the purpose.

I should say, then, that wealth is all those things which we use.

Mr. Ruskin uses two words, "wealth" and "illth." He divides the things which it is good for us to have from the things which it is not good for us to have, and he calls the good things "wealth" and the bad things "illth"—or ill things.

Thus opium prepared for smoking is illth, because it does harm or works "ill" to all who smoke it; but opium prepared as medicine is wealth, because it saves life or stays pain.

A dynamite bomb is "illth," for it is used to destroy life, but a dynamite cartridge is wealth, for it is used in getting slate or coal.

Mr. Ruskin is right, and if we are to make the best of our country and of ourselves, we ought clearly to give up producing bad things, or "illth," and produce more good things, or wealth.

But, for our purpose, it will be simpler and shorter to call all things we use wealth.

Thus a good book is wealth and a bad book "illth"; but as it is not easy to agree as to which books are good, which bad, and which indifferent, we had better call all books wealth.

By this word wealth, then, when we use it in this book, we shall mean all the things we use.

Thus we shall put down as wealth all such things as food, clothing, fuel, houses, ornaments, musical instruments, arms, tools, machinery, books, horses, dogs, medicines, toys, ships, trains, coaches, tobacco, churches, hospitals, lighthouses, theatres, shops, and all other things that we *use*. [Pg 29]

Now comes our second question: Where does wealth come from?

This question we must make into two questions—

1. Where does wealth come from?
2. Who produces wealth?

Because the question, "Where does wealth come from?" really means, "How is wealth produced?"

All wealth comes from the land.

All food comes from the land—all flesh is grass. Vegetable food comes directly from the land; animal food comes indirectly from the land, all animals being fed on the land.

So the stuff of which we make our clothing, our houses, our fuel, our tools, arms, ships, engines, toys, ornaments, is all got from the land. For the land yields timber, metals, vegetables, and the food on which feed the animals from which we get feathers, fur, meat, milk, leather, ivory, bone, glue, and many other things.

Even in the case of the things that come from the sea, as sealskin, whale oil, fish, iodine, shells, pearls, and other things, we are to remember that we need boats, or nets, or tools to get them with, and that boats, nets, and tools are made from minerals and vegetables got from the land.

We may say, then, that all wealth comes from the land.

This brings us to the second part of our question: "Who produces wealth?" or "How is wealth produced?"

Wealth is produced by human beings. It is the people of a country who produce the wealth of that country.

Wealth is produced by labour. Wealth cannot be produced by any other means or in any other way. *All* wealth is produced *from* the LAND *by* human LABOUR.

A coal seam is not wealth; but a coalmine is wealth. Coal is not wealth while it is in the bowels of the earth; but coal is wealth as soon as it is brought up out of the pit and made available for use.

A whale or a seal is not wealth until it is caught.

In a country without inhabitants there would be no wealth.

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Land is not wealth. To produce wealth you must have land and human beings.

There can be no wealth without labour.

And now we come to the first error of the economists. There are some economists who tell us that wealth is not produced by labour, but by "capital."

There is neither truth nor reason in this assertion.

What is "capital"?

"Capital" is only another word for *stores*. Adam Smith calls capital "stock." Capital is any tools, machinery, or other stores used in producing wealth. Capital is any food, fuel, shelter, clothing supplied to those engaged in producing wealth.

The hunter, before he can shoot game, needs weapons. His weapons are "capital." The farmer has to wait for his wheat and potatoes to ripen before he can use them as food. The stock of food and the tools he uses to produce the wheat or potatoes, and to live on while they ripen, are "capital."

Robinson Crusoe's capital was the arms, food, and tools he saved from the wreck. On these he lived until he had planted corn, and tamed goats and built a hut, and made skin clothing and vessels of wood and clay.

Capital, then, is stores. Now, where do the stores come from? Stores are wealth. Stores, whether they be food or tools, come from the land, and are made or produced by human labour.

There is not an atom of capital in the world that has not been produced by labour.

Every spade, every plough, every hammer, every loom, every cart, barrow, loaf, bottle, ham, haddock, pot of tea, barrel of ale, pair of boots, gold or silver coin, railway sleeper or rail, boat, road, canal, every kind of tools and stores has been produced by labour from the land.

It is evident, then, that if there were no labour there would be no capital. Labour is *before* capital, for labour *makes* capital.

Now, what folly it is to say that capital produces wealth. Capital is used by labour in the production of wealth, but capital itself is incapable of motion and can produce nothing.

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A spade is "capital." Is it true, then, to say that it is not the navy but the spade that makes the trench?

A plough is capital. Is it true to say that not the ploughman but the plough makes the furrow?

A loom is capital. Is it true to say that the loom makes the cloth? It is the weaver who weaves the cloth. He *uses* the loom, and the loom was made by the miner, the smith, the joiner, and the engineer.

There are wood and iron and brass in the loom. But you would not say that the cloth was produced by the iron-mine and the forest! It is produced by miners, engineers, sheep farmers, wool-combers, sailors, spinners, weavers, and other workers. It is produced entirely by labour, and could not be produced in any other way.

How can capital produce wealth? Take a steam plough, a patent harrow, a sack of wheat, a bankbook, a dozen horses, enough food and clothing to last a hundred men a year; put all that capital down in a forty-acre field, and it will not produce a single ear of corn in fifty years unless you send a *man* to *labour*.

But give a boy a forked stick, a rood of soil, and a bag of seed, and he will raise a crop for you.

If he is a smart boy, and has the run of the woods and streams, he will also contrive to find food to live on till the crop is ready.

We find, then, that all wealth is produced *from* the land *by* labour, and that capital is only a part of wealth, that it has been produced by labour, stored by labour, and is finally used by labour in the production of more wealth.

Our third question asks, "What becomes of the wealth?"

This is not easy to answer. But we may say that the wealth is divided into three parts—not *equal* parts—called Rent, Interest, and Wages.

Rent is wealth paid to the landlords for the use of the land. Interest is wealth paid to the capitalists (the owners of tools and stores) for the use of the "capital."

Wages is wealth paid to the workers for their labour in producing *all* the wealth.

There are but a few landlords, but they take a large share of the wealth.

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There are but a few capitalists, but *they* take a large share of the wealth.

There are very many workers, but they do not get much more than a third share of the wealth they produce.

The landlord produces *nothing*. He takes part of the wealth for allowing the workers to use the land.

The capitalist produces nothing. He takes part of the wealth for allowing the workers to use the capital.

The workers produce *all* the wealth, and are obliged to give a great deal of it to the landlords and capitalists who produce nothing.

Socialists claim that the landlord is useless under *any* form of society, that the capitalist is not needed in a properly ordered society, and that the people should become their own landlords and their own capitalists.

If the people were their own landlords and capitalists, *all* the wealth would belong to the workers by whom it is all produced.

Now, a word of caution. We say that *all* wealth is produced by labour. *What is labour?*

Labour is work. Work is said to be of two kinds: hand work and brain work. But really work is of one kind—the labour of hand and brain together; for there is hardly any head work wherein the hand has no share, and there is no hand work wherein the head has no share.

The hand is really a part of the brain, and can do nothing without the brain's direction.

So when we say that all wealth is produced by labour, we mean by the labour of hand and brain.

I want to make this quite plain, because you will find, if you come to deal with the economists, that attempts have been made to use the word labour as meaning chiefly hand labour.

When we say labour produces all wealth, we do not mean that all wealth is produced by farm labourers, mechanics, and navvies, but that it is all produced by *workers*—that is, by thinkers as well as doers; by inventors and directors as well as by the man with the hammer, the file, or the spade.

CHAPTER III

HOW THE FEW GET RICH AND KEEP THE MANY POOR

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We have already seen that most of the wealth produced by labour goes into the pockets of a few rich men: we have now to find out how it gets there.

By what means do the landlords and the capitalists get the meat and leave the workers the bones?

Let us deal first with the land, and next with the capital.

A landlord is one who owns land.

Rent is a price paid to the landlord for permission to use or occupy land.

Here is a diagram of a square piece of land—

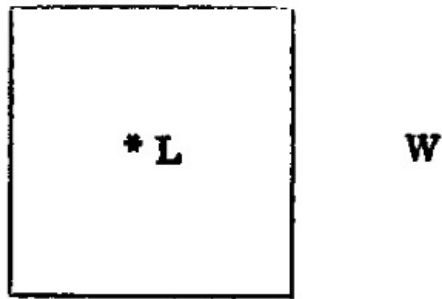


Fig. 1.

In the centre stands the landlord (L), outside stands a labourer (W).

The landlord owns the land, the labourer owns no land. The labourer cannot get food except from the land. The landlord will not allow him to use the land unless he pays rent. The labourer has no money. How can he pay rent?

He must first raise a crop from the land, and then give a part of the crop to the landlord as rent; or he may sell the crop and give to the landlord, as rent, part of the money for which the crop is sold.

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We find, then, that the labourer cannot get food without working, and cannot work without land, and that, as he has no land, he must pay rent for the use of land owned by some other person—a landlord.

We find that the labourer produces the whole of the crop, and that the landlord produces nothing; and we find that, when the crop is produced, some of it has to be given to the landlord.

Thus it is clear that where one man owns land, and another man owns no land, the landless man is dependent upon the landed man for permission to work and to live, while the landed man is able to live without working.

Let us go into this more fully.

Here (Fig. 2) are two squares of land—

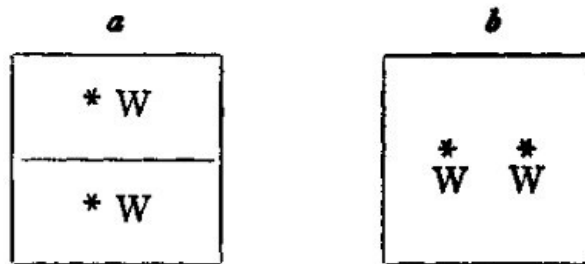


Fig. 2.

Each piece of land is owned and worked by two men. The field *a* is divided into two equal parts, each part owned and worked by one man. The field *b* is owned and worked by two men jointly.

In the case of field *a* each man has what he produces, and *all* he produces. In the case of field *b* each man takes half of *all* that *both* produce.

These men in both cases are their own landlords. They own the land they use.

But now suppose that field *b* does not belong to two men, but to one man. The same piece of land will be there, but only one man will be working on it. The other does not work: he lives by charging rent.

Therefore if the remaining labourer, now a *tenant*, is to live as well as he did when he was part owner, and pay the rent, he must work twice as hard as he did before.

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Take the field *a* (Fig. 2). It is divided into two equal parts, and one man tills each half. Remove one man and compel the other to pay half the produce in rent, and you will find that the man who has become landlord now gets as much without working as he got when he tilled half the field, and that the man left as tenant now has to till the whole field for the same amount of produce as he got formerly for tilling half of it.

We see, then, that the landlord is a useless and idle burden upon the worker, and that he takes a part of what the worker alone produces, and calls it rent.

The defence set up for the landlord is (1) that he has a right to the land, and (2) that he spends his wealth for the public advantage.

I shall show you in later chapters that both these statements are untrue.

Let us now turn to the capitalist. What is a capitalist? He is really a money-lender. He lends money, or machinery, and he charges interest on it.

Suppose Brown wants to dig, but has no spade. He borrows a spade of Jones, who charges him a price for the use of the spade. Then Jones is a capitalist: he takes part of the wealth Brown produces, and calls it *interest*.

Suppose Jones owns a factory and machinery, and suppose Brown is a spinner, who owns nothing but his strength and skill.

In that case Brown the spinner stands in the same relation to Jones the capitalist as the landless labourer stands in to the landlord. That is to say, the spinner cannot get food without money, and he can only get money by working as a spinner for the man who owns the factory.

Therefore Brown the spinner goes to Jones the capitalist, who engages him as a spinner, and pays him wages.

There are many other spinners in the same position. They work for Jones, who pays them wages. They spin yarn, and Jones sells it. Does Jones spin any of the yarn? Not a thread: the spinners spin it all. Do the spinners get all the money the yarn is sold for? No. How is the money divided? It is divided in this way—

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A quantity of yarn is sold for twenty shillings, but of that twenty shillings the factory owner pays the cost of the raw material, the wages of the spinners, the cost of rent, repairs to machinery, fuel and oil, and the salaries and commissions of clerks, travellers, and managers. What remains of the twenty shillings he takes for himself as *profit*.

This "profit," then, is the difference between the cost price of the yarn and the sale price. If a certain weight of yarn costs nineteen shillings to produce, and sells for twenty shillings, there is a profit of one shilling. If yarn which cost £9000 to produce is sold for £10,000, the profit is £1000.

This profit the factory owner, Jones the capitalist, claims as interest on his capital. It is then a kind of rent charged by him for the use of his money, his factory, and his machinery.

Now we must be careful here not to confuse the landlord with the farmer, nor the capitalist with the manager. I am, so far, dealing only with those who *own* and *let* land or capital, and not with those who manage them.

A capitalist is one who lends capital. A capitalist may use capital, but in so far as he uses capital he is a worker.

So a landlord may farm land, but in so far as he farms land he is a farmer, and therefore a worker.

The man who finds the capital for a factory, and manages the business himself, is a capitalist, for he lends his factory and machines to the men who work for him. But he is also a worker, since he conducts the manufacture and the sale of goods. As a capitalist he claims interest, as a worker he claims salary. And he is as much a worker as a general is a soldier or an admiral a sailor.

Well, the *idle* landlord and the *idle* capitalist charge rent or interest for the use of their land or capital.

The landlord justifies himself by saying that the land is *his*, and that he has a right to charge for it the highest rent he can get.

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The capitalist justifies himself by saying that the capital is *his*, and that he has a right to charge for it the highest rate of interest he can get.

Both claim that it is better for the nation that the land and the capital should remain in their hands; both tell us that the nation will go headlong to ruin if we try to dispense with their valuable services.

I am not going to denounce either landlord or capitalist as a tyrant, a usurer, or a robber. Landlords and capitalists may be, and very often are, upright and well-meaning men. As such let us respect them.

Neither shall I enter into a long argument as to whether it is right or wrong to charge interest on money lent or capital let, or as to whether it is right or wrong to "buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest."

The non-Socialist will claim that as the capital belongs to the capitalist he has a right to ask what interest he pleases for its use, and that he has also a perfect right to get as much for the goods he sells as the buyer will give, and to pay as little wages as the workers will accept.

Let us concede all that, and save talk.

But those claims being granted to the capitalist, the counter-claims of the worker and the buyer—the producer and the consumer—must be recognised as equally valid.

If the capitalist is justified in paying the lowest wages the worker will take, the worker is justified in paying the lowest interest the capitalist will take.

If the seller is justified in asking the highest price for goods, the buyer is justified in offering the lowest.

If a capitalist manager is justified in demanding a big salary for his services of management, the

worker and the consumer are justified in getting another capitalist or another manager at a lower price, if they can.

Surely that is just and reasonable. And that is what Socialists advise.

A capitalist owns a large factory and manages it. He pays his spinners fifteen shillings a week; he sells his goods to the public at the best price he can get; and he makes an income of £10,000 a year. He makes his money fairly and lawfully.

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But if the workers and the users of yarn can find their own capital, build their own factory, and spin their own yarn, they have a perfect right to set up on their own account.

And if by so doing they can pay the workers better wages, sell the yarn to the public at a lower price, and have a profit left to build other factories with, no one can accuse them of doing wrong, nor can anyone deny that the workers and the users have proved that they, the producers and consumers, have done better without the capitalist (or middleman) than with him.

But there is another kind of capitalist—the shareholder. A company is formed to manufacture mouse-traps. The capital is £100,000. There are ten shareholders, each holding £10,000 worth of shares. The company makes a profit of 10 per cent. The dividend at 10 per cent. paid to each shareholder will be £1000 a year.

The shareholders do no more than find the capital. They do not manage the business, nor get the orders, nor conduct the sales, nor make the mouse-traps. The business is managed by a paid manager, the sales are conducted by paid travellers, and the mouse-traps are made by paid workmen.

Let us now see how it fares with any one of these shareholders. He lends to the company £10,000. He receives from the company 10 per cent. dividend, or £1000 a year. In ten years he gets back the whole of his £10,000, but he still owns the shares, and he still draws a dividend of £1000 a year. If the company go on working and making 10 per cent. for a hundred years they will still be paying £1000 a year for the loan of the £10,000. It will be quite evident, then, that in twenty years this shareholder will have received his money twice over; that is to say, his £10,000 will have become £20,000 without his having done a stroke of work or even knowing anything about the business.

On the other hand, the manager, the salesman, and the workman, who have done all the work and earned all the profits, will receive no dividend at all. They are paid their weekly wages, and no more. A man who starts at a pound a week will at the end of twenty years be still working for a pound a week.

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The non-Socialist will claim that this is quite right; that the shareholder is as much entitled to rent on his money as the worker is entitled to wages for his work. We need not contradict him. Let us keep to simple facts.

Suppose the mouse-trap makers started a factory of their own. Suppose they fixed the wages of the workers at the usual rate. Suppose they borrowed the capital to carry on the business. Suppose they borrowed £100,000. They would not have to pay 10 per cent. for the loan, they would not have to pay 5 per cent. for the loan. But fix it at 5 per cent. interest, and suppose that, as in the case of the company, the mouse-trap makers made a profit of 10 per cent. That would give them a profit of £10,000 a year. In twenty years they would have made a profit of £200,000. The interest on the loan at 5 per cent. for twenty years would be £100,000. The amount of the loan is £100,000. Therefore after working twenty years they would have paid off the whole of the money borrowed, and the business, factory, and machinery would be their own.

Thus, instead of being in the position of the men who had worked twenty years for the mouse-trap company, these men, after receiving the same wages as the others for twenty years, would now be in possession of the business paying them £10,000 a year over and above their wages.

But, the non-Socialist will object, these working men could not borrow £100,000, as they would have no security. That is quite true; but the Corporation of Manchester or Birmingham could borrow the money to start such a work, and could borrow it at 3 per cent. And by making their own mouse-traps, or gas, or bread, instead of buying them from a private maker or a company, and paying the said company or maker £10,000 a year for ever and ever amen, they would, in less than twenty years, become possessors of their own works and machinery, and be in a position to save £10,000 a year on the cost of mouse-traps or gas or bread.

This is what the Socialist means by saying that the capitalist is unnecessary, and is paid too much for the use of his capital.

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Against the capitalist or landlord worker or manager the same complaint holds good; the large profits taken by these men as payment for management or direction are out of all proportion to the value of their work. These profits, or salaries, called by economists "the wages of ability," are in excess of any salary that would be paid to a farmer, engineer, or director of any factory either by Government, by the County Council, by a Municipality, or by any capitalist or company engaging such a person at a fixed rate for services. That is to say, the capitalist or landlord director is paid very much above the market value of the "wages of ability."

These facts generally escape the notice of the worker. As a rule his attention is confined to his own wages, and he thinks himself well off or ill off as his wages are what he considers high or

low. But there are two sides to the question of wages. It is not only the amount of wages received that matters, but it is also the amount of commodities the wages will buy. The worker has to consider how much he spends as well as how much he gets; and if he can get as much for 15s. as he used to get for £1, he is as much better off as he would be were his wages raised 25 per cent.

Now on every article the workman uses there is one profit or a dozen; one charge or many charges placed upon his food, clothing, house, fuel, light, travelling, and everything he requires by the landlord, the capitalist, or the shareholders.

Take the case of the coal bought by a poor London clerk at 30s. a ton. It pays a royalty to the royalty owner, it pays a profit to the mine owner, it pays a profit to the coal merchant, it pays a profit to the railway company, and these profits are over and above the cost in wages and wear and tear of machinery.

Yet this same London clerk is very likely a Tory, who says many bitter things against *Socialism*, but never thinks of resenting the heavy taxes levied on his small income by landlords, railway companies, water companies, building companies, ship companies, and all the other companies and private firms who live upon him.

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Imagine this poor London clerk, whose house stands on land owned by a peer worth £300,000 a year, whose "boss" makes £50,000 a year out of timber or coals, whose pipe pays four shillings taxes on every shilling's worth of tobacco (while the rich man's cigar pays a tax of five shillings in the pound), whose children go to the board school, while those of the coalowner, the company promoter, the railway director, and the landlord go to the university. Imagine this man, anxious, worried, overworked, poor, and bled by a horde of rich parasites. Imagine him standing in a well-dressed crowd, amongst the diamond shops, fur shops, and costly furniture shops of Regent Street, and asking with a bitter sneer where John Burns got his new suit of clothes.

Is it not marvellous? He does not ask who gets the 4s. on his pound of smoking mixture! Nor why he pays 4s. a thousand for bad gas (as I did in Finchley) while the Manchester clerk gets good gas for 2s. 2d.! Nor does he ask why the Duke of Bedford should put a tax on his wife's apple pudding or his children's bananas! He does not even ask what became of the £80,000,000 which the coal-owners wrung out of the public when he, the poor clerk, was paying 2s. per cwt. for coal for his tiny parlour grate! No. The question he asks is: Where Ben Tillet got his new straw hat!

How the Duke, and the Coalowner, and the Money-lender, and the Jerry-builder must laugh!

Yet so it is. It is not the landlord, the company promoter, the coalowner, the jerry-builder, and all the other useless rich who prey upon his wife and his children whom he mistrusts. His enemies, poor man, are the Socialists; the men and women who work for him, teach him, sacrifice their health, their time, their money, and their prospects to awaken his manhood, to sting his pride, to drive the mists of prejudice from his worried mind and give his common sense a chance. *These* are the men and women he despises and mistrusts. And he reads the *Daily Mail*, and shudders at the name of the *Clarion*; and he votes for Mr. Facing-both-ways and Lord Plausible, and is filled with bitterness because of honest John's summer trousers.

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Again I tell you, Mr. Smith, that I do not wish to stir up class hatred. Lady Dedlock, wife of the great ground landlord, is a charming lady, handsome, clever, and very kind to the poor.

But if I were a docker, and if my wife had to go out in leaky boots, or if my delicate child could not get sea air and nourishing food, I should be apt to ask whether his lordship, the great ground landlord, could not do with less rent and his sweet wife with fewer pearls. I should ask that. I should not think myself a man if I did not ask it; nor should I feel happy if I did not strain every nerve to get an answer.

Non-Socialists often reproach Socialists for sentimentality. But surely it is sentimentality to talk as the non-Socialist does about the personal excellences of the aristocracy. What have Lady Dedlock's amiability and beauty to do with the practical questions of gas rates and wages?

I am "setting class against class." Quite right, too, so long as one class oppresses another.

But let us reverse the position. Suppose you go to the Duke of Hebden Bridge and ask for an engagement as clerk in his Grace's colliery at a salary of £5000 a year. Will the duke give it to you because your wife is pretty and your daughter thinks you are a great man? Not at all. His Grace would say, "My dear sir, you are doubtless an excellent citizen, husband, and father; but I can get a better clerk at a pound a week, sir; and I cannot afford to pay more, sir."

The duke would be quite correct. He could get a better clerk for £1 a week. And as for the amiability of your family, or your own personal merits, what have they to do with business?

As a business man the duke will not pay £2 a week to a clerk if he can get a man as good for £1 a week.

Then why should the clerk pay 4s. a thousand for his gas if he can get it for 2s. 2d.? Or why should the docker pay the duke 5s. rent if he can get a house for 2s. 6d.?

Should I be offended with the duke for refusing to pay me more than I am worth? Should I accuse him of class hatred? Not at all. Then why should I be blamed for suggesting that it is folly to pay a duke more than he is worth? Or why should the duke mutter about class hatred if I suggest that we can get a colliery director at a lower salary than his Grace? Talk about sentimentality! Are we

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to pay a guinea each for dukes if we can get them three a penny? It is not business.

I grudge no man his wealth nor his fortune. I want nothing that is his. I do not hate the rich: I pity the poor. It is of the women and children of the poor I think when I am agitating for *Socialism*, not of the coffers of the wealthy.

I believe in universal brotherhood; nay, I go even further, for I maintain that the sole difference between the worst man and the best is a difference of opportunity—that is to say, that since heredity and environment make one man amiable and another churlish, one generous and another mean, one faithful and another treacherous, one wise and another foolish, one strong and another weak, one vile and another pure, therefore the bishop and the hooligan, the poet and the boor, the idiot, the philosopher, the thief, the hero, and the brutalised drab in the kennel *are all equal in the sight of God and of justice*, and that every word of censure uttered by man is a word of error, growing out of ignorance. As the sun shines alike upon the evil and the good, so must we give love and mercy to all our fellow-creatures. "Judgment is mine, saith the Lord."

But that does not prevent me from defending a brother of the East End against a brother of the West End. Truly we should love all men. Let us, then, begin by loving the weakest and the worst, for they have so little love and counsel, while the rich and the good have so much.

We will not, Mr. Smith, accuse the capitalist of base conduct. But we will say that as a money-lender his rate of interest is too high, and that as a manager his salary is too large. And we will say that if by combining we can, as workers, get better wages, and as buyers get cheaper goods, we shall do well and wisely to combine. For it is to our interest in the one case, as it is to the interest of the capitalist in the other case, to "buy in the cheapest market and to sell in the dearest."

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So much for the capitalist; but, before we deal with the landlord, we have to consider another very important person, and that is the inventor, or brain-worker.

CHAPTER IV THE BRAIN WORKER, OR INVENTOR

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It has, I think, never been denied that much wealth goes to the capitalist, but it has been claimed that the capitalist deserves all he gets because wealth is produced by capital. And although this is as foolish as to say that the tool does the work and not the hand that wields it, yet books have been written to convince the people that it is true.

Some of these books try to deceive us into supposing that capital and ability are interchangeable terms. That is to say, that "capital," which means "stock," is the same thing as "ability," which means cleverness or skill. We might as well believe that a machine is the same thing as the brain that invented it. But there is a trick in it. The trick lies in first declaring that the bulk of the national wealth is produced by "ability," and then confusing the word "ability" with the word "capital."

But it is one thing to say that wealth is due to the man who *invented* a machine, and it is quite another thing to say that wealth is due to the man who *owns* the machine.

In his book called *Labour and the Popular Welfare*, Mr. Mallock assures us that ability produces more wealth than is produced by labour.

He says that two-thirds of the national wealth are due to ability and only one-third to labour. A hundred years ago, Mr. Mallock says, the population of this country was 10,000,000 and the wealth produced yearly; £140,000,000, giving an average of £14 a head.

The recent production is £350,000,000 for every 10,000,000 of the population, or £35 a head.

The argument is that *labour* is only able to produce as much now as it could produce a hundred years ago, for labour does not vary. Therefore, the increase from £14 a head to £35 a head is not due to labour but to machinery.

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Now, we owe this machinery, not to labour, but to invention. Therefore the various inventors have enabled the people to produce more than twice as much as they produced a century back.

Therefore, according to Mr. Mallock, all the extra wealth, amounting to £800,000,000 a year, is earned by the *machines*, and ought to be paid to the men who *own* the machines.

Pretty reasoning, isn't it? And Mr. Mallock is one of those who talk about the inaccurate thinking of Socialists.

Let us see what it comes to. John Smith invents a machine which makes three yards of calico where one was made by hand. Tom Jones buys the machine, or the patent, to make calico. Which of these men is the cause of the calico output being multiplied by three? Is it the man who owns the patent, or the man who invented the machine? It is the man who invented the machine. It is the ability of John Smith which caused the increase in the calico output. It is, therefore, the ability of John Smith which earns the extra wealth. Tom Jones, who bought the machines, is no more the producer of that *extra* wealth than are the spinners and weavers he employs.

To whom, then, should the extra wealth belong? To the man who creates it? or to the man who does not create it? Clearly the wealth should belong to the man who creates it. Therefore, the whole of the extra wealth should go to the inventor, to whose ability it is due, and *not* to the mere capitalist, who only uses the machine.

"But," you may say, "Jones bought the patent from Smith." He did. And he also buys their labour and skill from the spinners and weavers who work for him, and in all three cases he pays less than the thing he buys is worth.

Mr. Mallock makes a great point of telling us that men are not equally clever, that cleverness produces more wealth than labour produces, and that one man is worth more than another to the nation.

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Labour, he says, is common to all men, but ability is the monopoly of the few. The bulk of the wealth is produced by the few, and ought by them to be enjoyed.

But I don't think any Socialist ever claimed that all men were of equal value to the nation, nor that any one man could produce just as much wealth as any other. We know that one man is stronger than another, that one is cleverer than another, and that an inventor or thinker may design or invent some machine or process which will enable the workers to produce more wealth in one year than they could by their own methods produce in twenty.

Now, before we go into the matter of the inventor, or of the value of genius to the nation, let us test these ideas of Mr. W. H. Mallock's and see what they lead to.

A man invents a machine which does the work of ten handloom weavers. He is therefore worth more, as a weaver, than the ordinary weaver who invents nothing. How much more?

If his machine does the work of ten men, you might think he was worth ten men. But he is worth very much more.

Suppose there are 10,000 weavers, and all of them use his machine. They will produce not 10,000 men's work, but 100,000 men's work. Here, then, our inventor is equal to 90,000 weavers. That is to say, that his thought, his idea, his labour *produces* as much wealth as could be produced by 100,000 weavers without it.

On no theory of value, and on no grounds of reason that I know, can we claim that this inventor is of no more value, as a producer, than an ordinary, average handloom weaver.

Granting the claim of the non-Socialist, that every man belongs to himself; and granting the claim of Mr. Mallock, that two-thirds of our national wealth are produced by inventors; and granting the demand of exact mathematical justice, that every man shall receive the exact value of the wealth he produces; it would follow that two-thirds of the wealth of this nation would be paid yearly to the inventors, or to their heirs or assigns.

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The wealth is *not* to be paid to labour; that is Mr. Mallock's claim. And it is not to be paid to labour because it has been earned by ability. And Mr. Mallock tells us that labour does not vary nor increase in its productive power. Good.

Neither does the landlord nor the capitalist increase his productive power. Therefore it is not the landlord nor the capitalist who earns—or produces—this extra wealth; it is the inventor.

And since the labourer is not to have the wealth, because he does not produce it, neither should the landlord or capitalist have it, because he does not produce it.

So much for the *right* of the thing. Mr. Mallock shows that the inventor creates all this extra wealth; he shows that the inventor ought to have it. Good.

Now, how is it that the inventor does *not* get it, and how is it that the landlord and the capitalist *do* get it?

Just because the laws, which have been made by landlords and capitalists, enable these men to rob the inventor and the labourer with impunity.

Thus: A man owns a piece of land in a town. As the town increases its business and population, the owner of the land raises the rent. He can get double the rent because the town has doubled its trade, and the land is worth more for business purposes or for houses. Has the landlord increased the value? Not at all. He has done nothing but draw the rent. The increase of value is due to the industry or ability of the people who live and work in the town, chiefly, as Mr. Mallock claims, to different inventors. Do these inventors get the increased rent? No. Do the workers in the town get it? No. The landlord demands this extra rent, and the law empowers him to evict if the rent is not paid.

Next, let us see how the inventor is treated. If a man invents a machine and patents it, the law allows him to charge a royalty for its use for the space of fourteen years.

At the end of that time the patent lapses, and the invention may be worked by anyone.

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Observe here the difference of the treatment given to the inventor and the landlord.

The landlord does not make the land, he does not till the land, he does not improve the land; he only draws the rent, and he draws that *for ever*. His patent never lapses; and the harder the

workers work, and the more wealth inventors and workers produce, the more rent he draws—for nothing.

The inventor *does* make his invention. He is, upon Mr. Mallock's showing, the creator of immense wealth. And, even if he is lucky, he can only draw rent on his ability for fourteen years.

But suppose the inventor is a poor man—and a great many inventors are poor men—his chance of getting paid for his ability is very small. Because, to begin with, he has to pay a good deal to patent his invention, and then, often enough, he needs capital to work the patent, and has none.

What is he to do? He must find a capitalist to work the patent for him, or he must find a man rich enough to buy it from him.

And it very commonly happens, either that the poor man cannot pay the renewal fees for his patent, and so loses it entirely, or that the capitalist buys it out and out for an old song, or that the capitalist obliges him to accept terms which give a huge profit to the capitalist and a small royalty to the inventor.

The patent laws are so constructed as to make the poor inventor an easy prey to the capitalist.

Many inventors die poor, many are robbed by agents or capitalists, many lose their patents because they cannot pay the renewal fees. Even when an inventor is lucky he can only draw rent for fourteen years. We see, then, that the men who make most of the wealth are hindered and robbed by the law, and we know that the law has been made by capitalists and landlords.

Apply the same law to land that is applied to patents, and the whole land of England would be public property in fourteen years.

Apply the same law to patents that is applied to land, and every article we use would be increased in price, and we should still be paying royalties to the descendants, or to their assigns, of James Watt, George Stephenson, and ten thousand other inventors.

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And now will some non-Socialist, Mr. Mallock or another, write a nice new book, and explain to us upon what rules of justice or of reason the present unequal treatment of the useless, idle landlord and the valuable and industrious inventor can be defended?

CHAPTER V

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THE LANDLORD'S RIGHTS AND THE PEOPLE'S RIGHTS

Socialists are often accused of being advocates of violence and plunder. You will be told, no doubt, that Socialists wish to take the land from its present owners, by force, and "share it out" amongst the landless.

Socialists have no more idea of taking the land from its present holders and "sharing it out" amongst the poor than they have of taking the railways from the railway companies and sharing the carriages and engines amongst the passengers.

When the London County Council municipalised the tram service they did not rob the companies, nor did they share out the cars amongst the people.

Socialism does not mean the "sharing out" of property; on the contrary, it means the collective ownership of property.

"Britain for the British" does not mean one acre and half a cow for each subject; it means that Britain shall be owned intact by the whole people, and shall be governed and worked by the whole people, for the benefit of the whole people.

Just as the Glasgow tram service, the Manchester gas service, and the general postal service are owned, managed, and used by the citizens of Manchester and Glasgow, or by the people of Britain, for the general advantage.

You will be told that the present holders of the land have as much right to the land as you have to your hat or your boots.

Now, as a matter of law and of right, the present holders of the land have no fixed title to the land. But moderation, it has been well said, is the common sense of politics, and if we all got bare justice, "who," as Shakespeare asks, "would 'scape whipping?"

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Socialists propose, then, to act moderately and to temper justice with amity. They do not suggest the "confiscation" of the land. They do suggest that the land should be taken over by the nation, at a fair price.

But what is a fair price? The landlord, standing upon his alleged rights, may demand a price out of all reason and beyond all possibility.

Therefore I propose here to examine the nature of those alleged rights, and to compare the claims of the landholders with the practice of law as it is applied to holders of property in brains; that is to say, as it is applied to authors and to inventors.

Private ownership of land rests always on one of three pleas—

1. The right of conquest: the land has been stolen or "won" by the owner or his ancestors.
2. The right of gift: the land has been received as a gift, bequest, or grant.
3. The right of purchase: the land has been bought and paid for.

Let us deal first with the rights of gift and purchase. It is manifest that no man can have a moral right to anything given or sold to him by another person who had no right to the thing given or sold.

He who buys a watch, a horse, a house, or any other article from one who has no right to the horse, or house, or watch, must render up the article to the rightful owner, and lose the price or recover it from the seller.

If a man has no moral right to own land, he can have no moral right to sell or give land.

If a man has no moral right to sell or to give land, then another man can have no moral right to keep land bought or received in gift from him.

So that to test the right of a man to land bought by or given to him, we must trace the land back to its original title.

Now, the original titles of most land rest upon conquest or theft. Either the land was won from the Saxons by William the Conqueror, and by him given in fief to his barons, or it has been stolen from the common right and "enclosed" by some lord of the manor or other brigand.

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I am sorry to use the word brigand, but what would you call a man who stole your horse or watch; and it is a far greater crime to steal land.

Now, stolen land carries no title, except one devised by landlords. That is, there is no *moral* title.

So we come to the land "won" from the Saxons. The title of this land is the title of conquest, and only by that title can it be held, and only with that title can it be sold. What the sword has won the sword must hold. He who has taken land by force has a title to it only so long as he can hold it by force.

This point is neatly expressed in a story told by Henry George—

A nobleman stops a tramp, who is crossing his park, and orders him off *his* land. The tramp asks him how came the land to be his? The noble replies that he inherited it from his father. "How did *he* get it?" asks the tramp. "From his father," is the reply; and so the lord is driven back to the proud days of his origin—the Conquest. "And how did your great, great, great, etc., grandfather get it?" asks the tramp. The nobleman draws himself up, and replies, "He fought for it and won it." "Then," says the unabashed vagrant, beginning to remove his coat, "I will fight *you* for it."

The tramp was quite logical. Land won by the sword may be rewon by the sword, and the right of conquest implies the right of any party strong enough for the task to take the conquered land from its original conqueror.

And yet the very men who claim the land as theirs by right of ancient conquest would be the first to deny the right of conquest to others. They claim the land as theirs because eight hundred years ago their fathers took it from the English people, but they deny the right of the English people to take it back from them. A duke holds lands taken by the Normans under William. He holds them by right of the fact that his ancestor stole them, or, as the duke would say, "won" them. But let a party of revolutionaries propose to-day to win these lands back from him in the same manner, and the duke would cry out, "Thief! thief! thief!" and call for the protection of the law.

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It would be "immoral" and "illegal," the duke would say, for the British people to seize his estates.

Should such a proposal be made, the modern duke would not defend himself, as his ancestors did, by force of arms, but would appeal to the law. Who made the law? The law was made by the same gentlemen who appropriated and held the land. As the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain said in his speech at Denbigh in 1884—

The House of Lords, that club of Tory landlords, in its gilded chamber, has disposed of the welfare of the people with almost exclusive regard to the interests of a class.

Or, as the same statesman said at Hull in 1885—

The rights of property have been so much extended that the rights of the community have almost altogether disappeared, and it is hardly too much to say that the prosperity and the comfort and the liberties of a great proportion of the population have been laid at the feet of a small number of proprietors, who neither toil nor spin.

Well, then, the duke may defend his right by duke-made law. We do not object to that, for it justifies us in attacking him by Parliament-made law: by new law, made by a Parliament of the

people.

Is there any law of equity which says it is unjust to take by force from a robber what the robber took by force from another robber? Or is there any law of equity which says it is unjust that a law made by a Parliament of landlords should not be reversed by another law made by a Parliament of the people?

The landlords will call this an "immoral" proposal. It is based upon the claim that the land is wanted for the use and advantage of the nation. Their lordships may ask for precedent. I will provide them with one.

A landlord does not make the land; he holds it.

But if a man invent a new machine or a new process, or if he write a poem or a book, he may claim to have made the invention or the book, and may justly claim payment for the use of them by other men.

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An inventor or an author has, therefore, a better claim to payment for his work than a landlord has to payment for the use of the land he calls his. Now, how does the law act towards these men?

The landlord may call the land his all the days of his life, and at his death may bequeath it to his heirs. For a thousand years the owners of an estate may charge rent for it, and at the end of the thousand years the estate will still be theirs, and the rent will still be running on and growing ever larger and larger. And at any suggestion that the estate should lapse from the possession of the owners and become the property of the people, the said owners will lustily raise the cry of "Confiscation."

The patentee of an invention may call the invention his own, and may charge royalties upon its use for *a space of fourteen years*. At the end of that time his patent lapses and becomes public property, without any talk of compensation or any cry of confiscation. Thus the law holds that an inventor is well paid by fourteen years' rent for a thing he made himself, while the landlord is *never* paid for the land he did not make.

The author of a book holds the copyright of the book for a period of forty-four years, or for his own life and seven years after, whichever period be the longer. At the expiration of that time the book becomes public property. Thus the law holds that an author is well paid by forty-four years' rent for a book which he has made, but that the landlord is *never* paid for the land which he did not make.

If the same law that applies to the land applied to books and to inventions, the inheritors of the rights of Caxton and Shakespeare would still be able to charge, the one a royalty on every printing press in use, and the other a royalty on every copy of Shakespeare's poems sold. Then there would be royalties on all the looms, engines, and other machines, and upon all the books, music, engravings, and what not; so that the cost of education, recreation, travel, clothing, and nearly everything else we use would be enhanced enormously. But, thanks to a very wise and fair arrangement an author or an inventor has a good chance to be well paid, and after that the people have a chance to enjoy the benefits of his genius.

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Now, if it is right and expedient thus to deprive the inventor or the author of his own production after a time, and to give the use thereof to the public, what sense or justice is there in allowing a landowner to hold land and to draw an ever-swelling rent to the exclusion, inconvenience, and expense of the people for ever? And by what process of reasoning can a landlord charge me, an author, with immorality or confiscation for suggesting that the same law should apply to the land he did not make, that I myself cheerfully allow to be applied to the books I do make?

For the landlord to speak of confiscation in the face of the laws of patent and of copyright seems to me the coolest impudence.

But there is something else to be said of the landlord's title to the land. He claims the right to hold the land, and to exact rent for the land, on the ground that the land is lawfully his.

The land is *not* his.

There is no such thing, and there never was any such thing, in English law as private ownership of land. In English law the land belongs to the Crown, and can only be held in trust by any subject.

Allow me to give legal warranty for this statement. The great lawyer, Sir William Blackstone, says—

Accurately and strictly speaking, there is no foundation in nature or in natural law why a set of words on parchment should convey the dominion of land. Allodial (absolute) property no subject in England now has; it being a received and now undeniable principle in law, that all lands in England are holden mediately or immediately of the King.

Sir Edward Coke says—

All lands or tenements in England in the hands of subjects, are holden mediately or immediately of the King. For, in the law of England, we have not any subject's land that

is not holden.

And Sir Frederick Pollock, in *English Land Lords*, says—

No absolute ownership of land is recognised by our law books, except in the Crown. All lands are supposed to be held immediately or mediately of the Crown, though no rent or service may be payable and no grant from the Crown on record.

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I explained at first that I do not suggest confiscation. Really the land is the King's, and by him can be claimed; but we will let that pass. Here we will speak only of what is reasonable and fair. Let me give a more definite idea of the hardships imposed upon the nation by the landlords.

We all know how the landlord takes a part of the wealth produced by labour and calls it "rent." But that is only simple rent. There is a worse kind of rent, which I will call "compound rent." It is known to economists as "unearned increment."

I need hardly remind you that rents are higher in large towns than in small villages. Why? Because land is more "valuable." Why is it more valuable? Because there is more trade done.

Thus a plot of land in the city of London will bring in a hundredfold more rent than a plot of the same size in some Scottish valley. For people must have lodgings, and shops, and offices, and works in the places where their business lies. Cases have been known in which land bought for a few shillings an acre has increased within a man's lifetime to a value of many guineas a yard.

This increase in value is not due to any exertion, genius, or enterprise on the part of the landowner. It is entirely due to the energy and intelligence of those who made the trade and industry of the town.

The landowner sits idle while the Edisons, the Stephensons, the Jacquards, Mawdsleys, Bessemers, and the thousands of skilled workers expand a sleepy village into a thriving town; but when the town is built, and the trade is flourishing, he steps in to reap the harvest. He raises the rent.

He raises the rent, and evermore raises the rent, so that the harder the townsfolk work, and the more the town prospers, the greater is the price he charges for the use of his land. This extortionate rent is really a fine inflicted by idleness on industry. It is simple *plunder*, and is known by the technical name of unearned increment.

It is unearned increment which condemns so many of the workers in our British towns to live in narrow streets, in back-to-back cottages, in hideous tenements. It is unearned increment which forces up the death-rate and fosters all manner of disease and vice. It is unearned increment which keeps vast areas of London, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, and all our large towns ugly, squalid, unhealthy, and vile. And unearned increment is an inevitable outcome and an invariable characteristic of the private ownership of land.

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On this subject Professor Thorold Rogers said—

Every permanent improvement of the soil, every railway and road, every bettering of the general condition of society, every facility given for production, every stimulus applied to consumption, *raises rent*. The landowner sleeps, but thrives.

The volume of this unearned increment is tremendous. Mr. H. B. Haldane, M.P., speaking at Stepney in 1894, declared that the land upon which London stands would be worth, apart from its population and special industries, "at the outside not more than £16,000 a year." Instead of which "the people pay in rent for the land alone £16,000,000, and, with the buildings, £40,000,000 a year." Those £16,000,000 constitute a fine levied upon the workers of London by landlords.

A similar state of affairs exists in the country, where the farms are let chiefly on short leases. Here the tenant having improved his land has often lost his improvements, or, for fear of losing the improvements, has not improved his land nor even farmed it properly. In either case the landlord has been enriched while the tenant or the public has suffered.

A landlord has an estate which no farmer can make pay. A number of labourers take small plots at £5 an acre, and go in for flower culture. They work so hard, and become so skilful, that they get £50 an acre for their produce. And the landlord raises the rent to £40 an acre.

That is "unearned increment," or "compound rent." The landlord could not make the estate pay, the farmer could not make it pay. The labourer, by his own skill and industry, does make it pay, and the landlord takes the proceeds.

And these are the men who talk about confiscation and robbery!

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Do I blame the landlord? Not very much. But I blame the people for allowing him to deprive their wives and children of the necessaries, the decencies, and the joys of life.

But if you wish to know more about the treatment of tenants by landlords in England, Scotland, and Ireland, get a book called *Land Nationalisation*, by Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace, published by Swan Sonnenschein, at 1s.

That private landowners should be allowed to take millions out of the pockets of the workers is

neither just nor reasonable. There is no argument in favour of landlordism that would not hold good in the case of a private claim to the sea and the air.

Imagine a King or Parliament granting to an individual the exclusive ownership of the Bristol Channel or the air of Cornwall! Such a grant would rouse the ridicule of the whole nation. The attempt to enforce such a grant would cause a revolution.

But in what way is such a grant more iniquitous or absurd than is the claim of a private citizen to the possession of Monsall Dale, or Sherwood Forest, or Covent Garden Market, or the corn lands of Essex, or the iron ore of Cumberland?

The Bristol Channel, the river Thames, all our high roads, and most of our bridges are public property, free for the use of all. No power in the kingdom could wrest a yard of the highway nor an acre of green sea from the possession of the nation. It is right that the road and the river, the sea and the air should be the property of the people; it is expedient that they should be the property of the people. Then by what right or by what reason can it be held that the land—Britain herself—should belong to any man, or by any man be withheld from the people—who are the British nation?

But it may be thought, because I am a Socialist, and neither rich nor influential, that my opinion should be regarded with suspicion. Allow me to offer the authority of more eminent men.

The late Lord Chief-Justice Coleridge said, in 1887—

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These (our land laws) might be for the general advantage, and if they could be shown to be so, by all means they should be maintained; but if not, does any man, with what he is pleased to call his mind, deny that a state of law under which such mischief could exist, under which the country itself would exist, not for its people, but for a mere handful of them, ought to be instantly and absolutely set aside?

Two years later, in 1889, the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone said—

Those persons who possess large portions of the earth's space are not altogether in the same position as possessors of mere personality. Personality does not impose limitations on the action and industry of man and the well-being of the community as possession of land does, and therefore *I freely own that compulsory expropriation is a thing which is admissible, and even sound in principle.*

Speaking at Hull, in August 1885, the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain said—

The soil of every country originally belonged to its inhabitants, and if it has been thought expedient to create private ownership in place of common rights, at least that private ownership must be considered as a trust, and subject to the conditions of a trust.

And again, at Inverness, in September 1885, Mr. Chamberlain said—

When an exorbitant rent is demanded, which takes from a tenant the savings of his life, and turns him out at the end of his lease stripped of all his earnings, when a man is taxed for his own improvements, that is confiscation, and it is none the less reprehensible because it is sanctioned by the law.

These views of the land question are not merely the views of ignorant demagogues, but are fully indorsed by great lawyers, great statesmen, great authors, great divines, and great economists.

What is the principle which these eminent men teach? It is the principle enforced in the patent law, in the income tax, and in the law of copyright, that the privileges and claims, even the *rights* of the few, must give way to the needs of the many and the welfare of the whole.

What, then, do we propose to do? I think there are very few Socialists who wish to confiscate the land without any kind of compensation. But all Socialists demand that the land shall return to the possession of the people. Britain for the British! What could be more just?

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How are the people to get the land? There are many suggestions. Perhaps the fairest would be to allow the landowner the same latitude that is allowed to the inventor, who, as Mr. Mallock claims, is really the creator of two-thirds of our wealth.

We allow the inventor to draw rent on his patent for fourteen years. Why not limit the private possession of land to the same term? Pay the present owners of land the full rent for fourteen or, say, twenty years, or, in a case where land has been bought in good faith, within the past fifty years, allow the owner the full rent for thirty years. This would be more than we grant our inventors, though they *add* to the national wealth, whereas the landlord simply takes wealth away from the national store.

The method I here advise would require a "Compulsory Purchase Act" to compel landowners to sell their land at a fair price to the nation when and wherever the public convenience required it.

This view is expressed clearly in a speech made by the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain at Trowbridge in 1885—

We propose that local authorities shall have power in every case to take land by compulsion at a fair price for every public purpose, and that they should be able to let the land again, with absolute security of tenure, for allotments and for small holdings.

Others, again, recommend a land tax, and with perfect justice. If the City Council improves a street, at the cost of the ratepayer, the landlord raises his rent. What does that mean? It means that the ratepayer has increased the value of the landlord's property at the cost of the rates. It would only be just, then, that the whole increase should be taken back from the landlord by the city.

Therefore, it would be quite just to tax the landlords to the full extent of their "unearned increment."

In *Progress and Poverty*, and in the book on *Land Nationalisation* by Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace, you will find these subjects of the taxation and the purchase of land fully and clearly treated. [Pg 62]

My object is to show that it is to the interest of the nation that the private ownership of land should cease.

Books to Read on the Land:—

Progress and Poverty. By Henry George, 1s. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, & Co.

Land Nationalisation. By Alfred Russell Wallace, 1s. Swan Sonnenschein.

Five Precursors of Henry George. By J. Morrison Davidson. London, Labour Leader Office, 1s.

CHAPTER VI LUXURY AND THE GREAT USEFUL EMPLOYMENT FRAUD

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There is one excuse which is still too often made for the extravagance of the rich, and that is the excuse that "*The consumption of luxuries by the rich finds useful employment for the poor.*"

It is a ridiculous excuse, and there is no eminent economist in the world who does not laugh at it; but the capitalist, the landlord, and many pressmen still think it is good enough to mislead or silence the people with.

As it is the *only* excuse the rich have to offer for their wasteful expenditure and costly idleness, it is worth while taking pains to convince the workers that it is no excuse at all.

It is a mere error or falsehood, of course, but it is such an old-established error, such a plausible lie, and is repeated so often and so loudly by non-Socialists, that its disproof is essential. Indeed, I regard it as a matter of great importance that this subject of luxury and labour should be thoroughly understood of the people.

Here is this rich man's excuse, or defence, as it was stated by the Duke of Argyll about a dozen years ago. So slowly do the people learn, and so ignorant or dishonest does the Press remain, that the foolish statement is still quite up to date—

But there are at least some things to be seen which are in the nature of facts and not at all in the nature of speculation or mere opinion. Amongst these some become clear from the mere clearing up of the meaning of words such as "the unemployed." Employment in this sense is the hiring of manual labour for the supply of human wants. *The more these wants are stimulated and multiplied the more widespread will be the inducement to hire. Therefore all outcries and prejudices against the progress of wealth and of what is called "luxury" are nothing but outcries of prejudice against the very sources and fountains of all employment.* This conclusion is absolutely certain.

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I have no doubt at all that the duke honestly believed that statement, and I daresay there are hundreds of eminent persons still alive who are no wiser than he.

The duke is quite correct in saying that "the more the wants of the rich are stimulated" the more employment there will be for the people. But after all, that only means that the more the rich waste, the harder the poor must work.

The fact is, the duke has omitted the most essential factor from the sum: he does not say how the rich man gets his money, nor from *whom* he gets his money. A ducal landlord draws, say, £100,000 a year in rent from his estates.

Who pays the rent? The farmers. Who earns the rent? The farmers and the labourers.

These men earn and pay the rent, and the ducal landlord takes it.

What does the duke do with the rent? He spends it. We are told that he spends it in finding useful employment for the poor, and one intelligent newspaper says—

A rich man cannot spend his money without finding employment for vast numbers of

people who, without him, would starve.

That implies that the poor live on the rich. Now, I maintain that the rich live on the poor. Let us see.

The duke buys food, clothing, and lodging for himself, for his family, and for his servants. He buys, let us say, a suit of clothes for himself. That finds work for a tailor. And we are told that but for the duke the tailor must starve. *Why?*

The agricultural labourer is badly in want of clothes; cannot *he* find the tailor work? No. The labourer wants clothes, but he has no money. *Why* has he no money? *Because the duke has taken his clothing money for rent!*

Then in the first place it is because the duke has taken the labourer's money that the tailor has no work. Then if the duke did not take the labourer's money the labourer could buy clothes? Yes. Then if the duke did not take the labourer's money the tailor *would* have work? Yes. Then it is not the duke's money, but the labourer's money, which keeps the tailor from starving? Yes. Then in this case the duke is no use? He is worse than useless. The labourer, who *earns* the money, has no clothes, and the idle duke has clothes.

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So that what the duke really does is to take the earnings of the labourer and spend them on clothes for *himself*.

Well, suppose I said to a farmer, "You give me five shillings a week out of your earnings, and I will find employment for a man to make cigars, *I* will smoke the cigars."

What would the farmer say? Would he not say, "Why should I employ you to smoke cigars which I pay for? If the cigar maker needs work, why should I not employ him myself, and smoke the cigars myself, since I am to pay for them?"

Would not the farmer speak sense? And would not the labourer speak sense if he said to the duke, "Why should I employ you to wear out breeches which I pay for?"

My offer to smoke the farmer's cigars is no more impudent than the assertion of the Duke of Argyll, that he, the duke, finds employment for a tailor by wearing out clothes for which the farmer has to pay.

If the farmer paid no rent, *he* could employ the tailor, and he would have the clothes. The duke does nothing more than deprive the farmer of his clothes.

But this is not the whole case against the duke. The duke does not spend *all* the rent in finding work for the poor. He spends a good deal of it on food and drink for himself and his dependants. This wealth is consumed—it is *wasted*, for it is consumed by men who produce nothing. And it all comes from the earnings of the men who pay the rent. Therefore, if the farmer and his men, instead of giving the money to the duke for rent, could spend it on themselves, they would find more employment for the poor than the duke can, because they would be able to spend all that the duke and his enormous retinue of servants waste.

Although the duke (with the labourer's money) does find work for some tailors, milliners, builders, bootmakers, and others, yet he does not find work for them all. There are always some tailors, bootmakers, and builders out of work.

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Now, I understand that in this country about £14,000,000 a year are spent on horse-racing and hunting. This is spent by the rich. If it were not spent on horse-racing and hunting, it could be spent on useful things, and then, perhaps, there would be fewer tailors and other working men out of work.

But you may say, "What then would become of the huntsmen, jockeys, servants, and others who now live on hunting and on racing?" A very natural question. Allow me to explain the difference between necessaries and luxuries.

All the things made or used by man may be divided into two classes, under the heads of necessaries and luxuries.

I should count as necessaries all those things which are essential to the highest form of human life.

All those things which are not necessary to the highest form of human life I should call luxuries, or superfluities.

For instance, I should call food, clothing, houses, fuel, books, pictures, and musical instruments, necessaries; and I should call diamond ear-rings, racehorses, and broughams luxuries.

Now it is evident that all those things, whether luxuries or necessaries, are made by labour. Diamond rings, loaves of bread, grand pianos, and flat irons do not grow on trees; they must be made by the labour of the people. And it is very clear that the more luxuries a people produce, the fewer necessaries they will produce.

If a community consists of 10,000 people, and if 9000 people are making bread and 1000 are making jewellery, it is evident that there will be more bread than jewellery.

If in the same community 9000 make jewellery and only 1000 make bread, there will be more

jewellery than bread.

In the first case there will be food enough for all, though jewels be scarce. In the second case the people must starve, although they wear diamond rings on all their fingers.

In a well-ordered State no luxuries would be produced until there were enough necessaries for all.

Robinson Crusoe's first care was to secure food and shelter. Had he neglected his goats and his raisins, and spent his time in making shell-boxes, he would have starved. Under those circumstances he would have been a fool. But what are we to call the delicate and refined ladies who wear satin and pearls, while the people who earn them lack bread?

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Take a community of two men. They work upon a plot of land and grow grain for food. By each working six hours a day they produce enough food for both.

Now take one of those men away from the cultivation of the land, and set him to work for six hours a day at the making of bead necklaces. What happens?

This happens—that the man who is left upon the land must now work twelve hours a day. Why? Because although his companion has ceased to grow grain he has not ceased to *eat bread*. Therefore the man who grows the grain must now grow grain enough for two. That is to say, that the more men are set to the making of luxuries, the heavier will be the burden of the men who produce necessaries.

But in this case, you see, the farmer does get some return for his extra labour. That is to say, he gets half the necklaces in exchange for half his grain; for there is no rich man.

Suppose next a community of three—one of whom is a landlord, while the other two are farmers.

The landlord takes half the produce of the land in rent, but does no work. What happens?

We saw just now that the two workers could produce enough grain in six hours to feed two men for one day. Of this the landlord takes half. Therefore, the two men must now produce four men's food in one day, of which the landlord will take two, leaving the workers each one. Well, if it takes a man six hours to produce a day's keep for one, it will take him twelve hours to produce a day's keep for two. So that our two farmers must now work twice as long as before.

But now the landlord has got twice as much grain as he can eat. He therefore proceeds to *spend* it, and in spending it he "finds useful employment" for one of the farmers. That is to say, he takes one of the farmers off the land and sets him to building a house for the landlord. What is the effect of this?

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The effect of it is that the one man left upon the land has now to find food for all three, and in return gets nothing.

Consider this carefully. All men must eat, and here are two men who do not produce food. To produce food for one man takes one man six hours. To produce food for three men takes one man eighteen hours. The one man left on the land has, therefore, to work three times as long, or three times as hard, as he did at first. In the case of the two men, we saw that the farmer did get his share of the bead necklaces, but in the case of the three men the farmer gets nothing. The luxuries produced by the man taken from the land are enjoyed by the rich man.

The landlord takes from the farmer two-thirds of his produce, and employs another man to help him to spend it.

We have here three classes—

1. The landlord, who does no work.
2. The landlord's servant, who does work for the benefit of the landlord.
3. The farmer, who produces food for himself and the other two.

Now, all the peoples of Europe, if not of the world, are divided into those three classes.

And it is *most important* that you should thoroughly understand those three classes, never forget them, and never allow the rich man, nor the champions of the rich man, to forget them.

The jockeys, huntsmen, and flunkeys alluded to just now, belong to the class who work, but whose work is all done for the benefit of the idle.

Do not be deceived into supposing that there are but *two* classes: there are *three*. Do not believe that the people may be divided into workers and idlers: they must be divided into (1) idlers, (2) workers who work for the idlers, and (3) workers who support the idlers and those who work for the idlers.

These three classes are a relic of the feudal times: they represent the barons, the vassals, and the retainers.

The rich man is the baron, who draws his wealth from the workers; the jockeys, milliners, flunkeys, upholsterers, designers, musicians, and others who serve the rich man, and live upon his custom and employment, are the retainers; the workers, who earn the money upon which the

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rich man and his following exist, are the vassals.

Remember the *three* classes: the rich, who produce nothing; the employees of the rich, who produce luxuries for the rich; and the workers, who find everything for themselves and all the wealth for the other two classes.

It is like two men on one donkey. The duke rides the donkey, and boasts that he carries the flunkey on his back. So he does. But the donkey carries both flunkey and duke.

Clearly, then, the duke confers no favour on the agricultural labourer by employing jockeys and servants, for the labourer has to pay for them, and the duke gets the benefit of their services.

But the duke confers a benefit on the men he employs as huntsmen and servants, and without the duke they would starve? No; without him they would not starve, for the wealth which supports them would still exist, and they could be found other work, and could even add to the general store of wealth by producing some by their own labour.

The same remark applies to all those of the second class, from the fashionable portrait-painter and the diamond-cutter down to the scullery-maid and the stable-boy.

Compare the position of an author of to-day with the position of an author in the time of Dr. Johnson. In Johnson's day the man of genius was poor and despised, dependent on rich patrons: in our day the man of genius writes for the public, and the rich patron is unknown.

The best patron is the People; the best employer is the People; the proper person to enjoy luxuries is the man who works for and creates them.

My Lady Dedlock finds useful employment for Mrs. Jones. She employs Mrs. Jones to make her ladyship a ball-dress.

Where does my lady get her money? She gets it from her husband, Sir Leicester Dedlock, who gets it from his tenant farmer, who gets it from the agricultural labourer, Hodge. [Pg 70]

Then her ladyship orders the ball-dress of Mrs. Jones, and pays her with Hodge's money.

But if Mrs. Jones were not employed making the ball-dress for my Lady Dedlock, she could be making gowns for Mrs. Hodge, or frocks for Hodge's girls.

Whereas now Hodge cannot buy frocks for his children, and his wife is a dowdy, because Sir Leicester Dedlock has taken Hodge's earnings and given them to his lady to buy ball costumes.

Take a larger instance. There are many yachts which, in building and decoration, have cost a quarter of a million.

Average the wages of all the men engaged in the erection and fitting of such a vessel at 30s. a week. We shall find that the yacht has "found employment" for 160 men for twenty years. Now, while those men were engaged on that work they produced no necessaries for themselves. But they *consumed* necessaries, and those necessaries were produced by the same people who found the money for the owner of the yacht to spend. That is to say, that the builders were kept by the producers of necessaries, and the producers of necessaries were paid for the builders' keep, with money which they, the producers of necessaries, had earned for the owner of the yacht.

The conclusion of this sum being that the producers of necessaries had been compelled to support 160 men, and their wives and children, for twenty years; and for what?

That they might build *one yacht* for the pleasure of *one idle man*.

Would those yacht builders have starved without the rich man? Not at all. But for the rich man, the other workers would have had more money, could afford more holidays, and that quarter of a million spent on the one yacht would have built a whole fleet of pleasure boats.

And note also that the pleasure boats would find more employment than the yacht, for there would be more to spend on labour and less on costly materials.

So with other dependants of the rich. The duke's gardeners could find work in public parks for the people; the artists, who now sell their pictures to private collections, could sell them to public galleries; and some of the decorators and upholsterers who now work on the rich men's palaces might turn their talents to our town halls and hospitals and public pavilions. And that reminds me of a quotation from Mr. Mallock, cited in *Merrie England*. Mr. Mallock said— [Pg 71]

Let us take, for instance, a large and beautiful cabinet, for which a rich man of taste pays £2000. The cabinet is of value to him for reasons which we will consider presently; as possessed by him it constitutes a portion of his wealth. But how could such a piece of wealth be distributed? Not only is it incapable of physical partition and distribution, but, if taken from the rich man and given to the poor man, the latter is not the least enriched by it. Put a priceless buhl cabinet into an Irish labourer's cottage, and it will probably only add to his discomforts; or, if he finds it useful, it will only be because he keeps his pigs in it. A picture by Titian, again, may be worth thousands, but it is worth thousands only to the man who can enjoy it.

Now, isn't that a precious piece of nonsense? There are two things to be said about that rich man's cabinet. The first is, that it was made by some workman who, if he had not been so

employed, might have been producing what *would* be useful to the poor. So that the cabinet has cost the poor something. The second is, that a priceless buhl cabinet *can* be divided. Of course, it would be folly to hack it into shavings and serve them out amongst the mob; but if that cabinet is a thing of beauty and worth the seeing, it ought to be taken from the rich benefactor, whose benefaction consists in his having plundered it from the poor, and it ought to be put into a public museum where thousands could see it, and where the rich man could see it also if he chose. This, indeed, is the proper way to deal with all works of art, and this is one of the rich man's greatest crimes—that he keeps hoarded up in his house a number of things that ought to be the common heritage of the people.

Every article of luxury has to be paid for not in *money*, but in *labour*. Every glass of wine drunk by my lord, and every diamond star worn by my lady, has to be paid for with the sweat and the tears of the poorest of our people. I believe it is a literal fact that many of the artificial flowers worn at Court are actually stained with the tears of the famished and exhausted girls who make them.

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To say that the extravagance of the rich finds useful employment for the poor, is more foolish than to say that the drunkard finds useful employment for the brewers.

The drunkard may have a better defence than the duke, because he may perhaps have produced, or earned, the money he spends in beer, whereas the duke's rents are not produced by the duke nor earned by him.

That is clear, is it not? And yet a few weeks since I saw an article in a London weekly paper in which we were told that the thief was an indispensable member of society, because he found employment for policemen, gaolers, builders of gaols, and other persons.

The excuse for the thief is as valid as the excuse for the duke. The thief finds plenty of employment for the people. But who *pays* the persons employed?

The police, the gaolers, and all the other persons employed in catching, holding, and feeding the thief, are paid out of the rates and taxes. Who pays the taxes? The British public. Then the British public have to support not only the police and the rest, but the thief as well.

What do the police, the thief, and the gaoler produce? Do they produce any wealth? No. They consume wealth, and the thief is so useful that if he died out for ever, it would pay us better to feed the gaolers and police for doing nothing than to fetch the thief back again to feed him as well.

Work is useless unless it be productive work. It would be work for a man to dig a hole and then fill it up again; but the work would be of no benefit to the nation. It would be work for a man to grow strawberries to feed the Duke of Argyll's donkey on, but it would be useless work, because it would add nothing to the general store of wealth.

Policemen and gaolers are men withdrawn from the work of producing wealth to wait upon useless criminals. They, like soldiers and many others, do not produce wealth, but they consume it, and the greater the number of producers and the smaller the number of consumers the richer the State must be. For which family would be the better off—the family wherein ten earned wages and none wasted them, or the family in which two earned wages and eight spent them?

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Do not imagine, as some do, that increased consumption is a blessing. It is the amount of wealth you produce that makes a nation prosperous; and the idle rich man, who produces nothing, only makes his crime worse by spending a great deal.

The great mass of the workers lead mean, penurious, and joyless lives; they crowd into small and inconvenient houses; they occupy the darkest, narrowest, and dirtiest streets; they eat coarse and cheap food, when they do not go hungry; they drink adulterated beer and spirits; they wear shabby and ill-made clothes; they ride in third-class carriages, sit in the worst seats of the churches and theatres; and they stint their wives of rest, their children of education, and themselves of comfort and of honour, that they may pay rent, and interest, and profits for the idle rich to spend in luxury and folly.

And if the workers complain, or display any signs of suspicion or discontent, they are told that the rich are keeping them.

That is not *true*. It is the workers who are keeping the rich.

CHAPTER VII WHAT SOCIALISM IS NOT

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It is no use telling you what *Socialism* is until I have told you what it is not. Those who do not wish you to be Socialists have given you very false notions about *Socialism*, in the hope of setting you against it. They have brought many false charges against Socialists, in the hope of setting you against them. So you have come to think of *Socialism* as a thing foolish, or vile, and when it is spoken of, you turn up your noses (instead of trying to see beyond them) and turn your backs on it.

A friend offers to give you a good house-dog; but someone tells you it is mad. Your friend will be wise to satisfy you that the dog is *not* mad before he begins to tell you how well it can guard a house. Because, as long as you think the dog will bite you, you are not in the frame of mind to hear about its usefulness.

A sailor is offering to sell an African chief a telescope; but the chief has been told that the thing is a gun. Then before the sailor shows the chief what the glass is good for, he will be wise to prove to him that it will not go off at half-cock and blow his eye out.

So with *Socialism*: before I try to show you what it really is, I must try to clear your mind of the prejudice which has been sown there by those who wish to make you hate Socialism because they fear it.

As a rule, my friends, it will be wise for you to look very carefully and hopefully at anything which Parliament men, or employers, or pressmen, call bad or foolish, because what helps you hinders them, and the stronger you grow the weaker they become.

Well, the men who have tried to smash your unions, who have written against you, and spoken against you, and acted against you in all great strikes and lock-outs, are the same men who speak and write against *Socialism*.

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And what have they told you? Let us take their commonest statements, and see what they are made of.

They say that Socialists want to get up a revolution, to turn the country upside down by force, to seize all property, and to divide it equally amongst the whole people.

We will take these charges one at a time.

As to *Revolution*. I think I shall be right if I say that not one Socialist in fifty, at this day, expects or wishes to get *Socialism* by force of arms.

In the early days of *Socialism*, when there were very few Socialists, and some of those rash, or angry, men, it may have been true that *Socialism* implied revolution and violence. But to-day there are very few Socialists who believe in brute force, or who think a revolution possible or desirable. The bulk of our Socialists are for peaceful and lawful means. Some of them hope to bring *Socialism* to pass by means of a reformed Parliament; others hope to bring it to pass by means of a newer, wiser, and juster public opinion.

I have always been dead against the idea of revolution, for many reasons. I do not think a revolution is *possible* in Britain. Firstly, because the people have too much sense; secondly, because the people are by nature patient and kindly; thirdly, because the people are too *free* to make force needful.

I do not think a revolution is *advisable*. Because, firstly, it would be almost sure to fail; secondly, if it did not fail it would put the worst kind of men into power, and would destroy order and method before it was ready to replace them; thirdly, because a State built up on force is very likely to succumb to fraud; so that after great bloodshed, trouble, labour, and loss the people would almost surely slip down into worse evils than those against which they had fought, and would find that they had suffered and sinned in vain.

I do not believe in force, and I do not believe in haste. What we want is *reason* and *right*; and we can only hope to get reason and right by right and reasonable means.

The men who would come to the top in a civil war would be fighters and strivers; they would not be the kind of men to wisely model and patiently and justly rule or lead a new State. Your barricade man may be very useful—at the barricades; but when the fighting is over, and his work is done, he may be a great danger, for he is not the man, usually, to stand aside and make way for the builders to replace by right laws the wrong laws which his arms have destroyed.

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Revolution by force of arms is not desirable nor feasible; but there is another kind of revolution from which we hope great things. This is a revolution of *thought*. Let us once get the people, or a big majority of the people, to understand *Socialism*, to believe in *Socialism*, and to work for *Socialism*, and the *real* revolution is accomplished.

In a free country, such as ours, the almighty voice is the voice of public opinion. What the public *believe in* and *demand* has got to be given. Who is to refuse? Neither King nor Parliament can stand against a united and resolute British people.

And do not suppose, either, that brute force, which is powerless to get good or to keep it, has power to resist it or destroy it. Neither truncheons nor bayonets can kill a truth. The sword and the cannon are impotent against the pen and the tongue.

Believe me, we can overcome the constable, the soldier, the Parliament man, the landlord, and the man of wealth, without shedding one drop of blood, or breaking one pane of glass, or losing one day's work.

Our real task is to win the trust and help of the *people* (I don't mean the workers only, but the British people), and the first thing to be done is to educate them—to teach them and tell them what we mean; to make quite clear to them what *Socialism* is, and what it is *not*.

One of the things it is not, is British imitation of the French Revolution. Our method is

persuasion; our cause is justice; our weapons are the tongue and the pen.

Next: As to seizing the wealth of the country and sharing it out amongst the people. First, we do not propose to *seize* anything. We do propose to get some things,—the land, for instance,—and to make them the property of the whole nation; but we mean that to be done by Act of Parliament, and by purchase. Second, we have no idea of "sharing out" the land, nor the railways, nor the money, nor any other kind of wealth or property, equally amongst the people. To share these things out—if they *could* be shared, which they could not be—would be to make them *private* property, whereas we want them to be *public* property, the property of the British *nation*.

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Yet, how often have you been told that Socialists want to have the wealth equally divided amongst all? And how often have you been told that if you divided the wealth in that way it would soon cease to be equally divided, because some would waste and some would save?

"Make all men equal in possessions," cry the non-Socialists, "and in a very short time there would be rich and poor, as before."

This is no argument against *Socialism*, for Socialists do not seek any such division. But I want to point out to you that though it *looks* true, it is *not* true.

It is quite true that, did we divide all wealth equally to-morrow, there would in a short time be many penniless, and a few in a way of getting rich; but it is only true if we suppose that after the sharing we allowed private ownership of land and the old system of trade and competition to go on as before. Change those things: do away with the bad system which leads to poverty and to wealth, and we should have no more rich and poor.

Destroy all the wealth of England to-morrow—we will not talk of "sharing" it out, but *destroy* it—and establish *Socialism* on the ruins and the bareness, and in a few years we should have a prosperous, a powerful, and a contented nation. There would be no rich and there would be no poor. But the nation would be richer and happier than it ever has been.

Another charge against Socialists is that they are *Atheists*, whose aim is to destroy all religion and all morality.

This is not true. It is true that some Socialists are Agnostics and some are Atheists. But Atheism is no more a part of Socialism than it is a part of Toryism, or of Radicalism, or of Liberalism. Many prominent Socialists are Christians, not a few are clergymen. Many Liberal and Tory leaders are Agnostics or Atheists. Mr. Bradlaugh was a Radical, and an Atheist; Prof. Huxley was an opponent of Socialism, and an Agnostic. Socialism does not touch religion at any point. It deals with laws, and with *industrial* and *political* government.

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It is not sense to say, because some Atheists are Socialists, that all Socialists are Atheists.

Christ's teaching is often said to be socialistic. It is not socialistic; but it is communistic, and Communism is the most advanced form of the policy generally known as *Socialism*.

The charge of *Immorality* is absurd. Socialists demand a higher morality than any now to be found. They demand perfect *honesty*. Indeed, it is just the stern morality of *Socialism* which causes ambitious and greedy men to hate *Socialism* and resist it.

Another charge against Socialists is the charge of desiring *Free Love*.

Socialists, it has been said, want to destroy home life, to abolish marriage, to take the children from their parents, and to establish "Free Love."

"Free Love," I may say, means that all men and women shall be free to love as they please, and to live with whom they please. Therefore, that they shall be free to live as "man and wife" without marriage, to part when they please without divorce, and to take other partners as they please without shame or penalty.

Now, I say of this charge, as I have said of the others, that there may be some Socialists in favour of free love, just as there are some Socialists in favour of revolution, and some who are not Christians; but I say also that a big majority of Socialists are not in favour of free love, and that in any case free love is no more a part of *Socialism* than it is a part of Toryism or of Liberalism.

It is not sense to say, because some Free-Lovers are Socialists, that all Socialists are Free-Lovers.

I believe there is not one English Socialist in a hundred who would vote for doing away with marriage, or for handing over the children to the State. I for one would see the State farther before I would part with a child of mine. And I think you will generally find that those who are really eager to have all children given up to the State are men and women who have no children of their own.

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Now, I submit that a childless man is not the right man to make laws about children.

As for the questions of free love and legal marriage, they are very hard to deal with, and this is not the time to deal with them. But I shall say here that many of those who talk the loudest about free love do not even know what love *is*, or have not sense enough to see that just as love and lust are two very different things, so are free love and free lust very different things.

Again, you are not to fall into the error of supposing that the relations of the sexes are all they should be at present. Free *love*, it is true, is not countenanced; but free *lust* is very common.

And although some Socialists may be in favour of free *love*, I never heard of a Socialist who had a word to say in favour of prostitution. It may be a very wicked thing to enable a free woman to *give* her love freely; but it is a much worse thing to allow, and even at times compel (for it amounts to that, by force of hunger) a free woman to *sell* her love—no, not her *love*, poor creature; the vilest never sold that—but to sell her honour, her body, and her soul.

I would do a great deal for *Socialism* if it were only to do that one good act of wiping out for ever the shameful sin of prostitution. This thing, indeed, is so horrible that I never think of it without feeling tempted to apologise for calling myself a man in a country where it is so common as it is in moral Britain.

There are several other common charges against Socialists; as that they are poor and envious—what we may call Have-nots-on-the-Have; that they are ignorant and incapable men, who know nothing, and cannot think; that, in short, they are failures and wasters, fools and knaves.

These charges are as true and as false as the others. There may be some Socialists who are ignorant and stupid; there may be some who are poor *and* envious; there may be some who are Socialists because they like cakes and ale better than work; and there may be some who are clever, but not too good—men who will feather their nests if they can find any geese for the plucking.

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But I don't think that *all* Tories and Liberals are wise, learned, pure, unselfish, and clever men, eager to devote their talents to the good of their fellows, and unwilling to be paid, or thanked, or praised, for what they do.

I think there are fools and knaves,—even in Parliament,—and that some of the "Bounders-on-the-Bounce" find it pays a great deal better to toady to the "Haves" than to sacrifice themselves to the "Have-nots."

And I think I may claim that Socialists are in the main honest and sensible men, who work for *Socialism* because they believe in it, and not because it pays; for its advocacy seldom pays at all, and it never pays well; and I am sure that *Socialism* makes quicker progress amongst the educated than amongst the ignorant, and amongst the intelligent than amongst the dull.

As for brains: I hope such men as William Morris, Karl Marx, and Liebknecht are as well endowed with brains as—well, let us be modest, and say as the average Tory or Liberal leader.

But most of the charges and arguments I have quoted are not aimed at *Socialism* at all, but at Socialists.

Now, to prove that some of the men who espouse a cause are unworthy, is not the same thing as proving that the cause is bad.

Some parsons are foolish, some are insincere; but we do not therefore say that Christianity is unwise or untrue. Even if *most* parsons were really bad men we should only despise and condemn the clergy, and not the religion they dishonoured and misrepresented.

The question is not whether all Socialists are as wise as Mr. Samuel Woods, M.P., or as honest as Jabez Balfour; *the* question is whether *Socialism* is a thing in itself just, and wise, and *possible*.

If you find a Socialist who is foolish, laugh at him; if you find one who is a rogue, don't trust him; if you find one "on the make," stop his making. But as for *Socialism*, if it be good, accept it; if it be bad, reject it.

Here allow me to quote a few lines from *Merrie England*—

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Half our time as champions of Socialism is wasted in denials of false descriptions of Socialism; and to a large extent the anger, the ridicule, and the argument of the opponents of Socialism are hurled against a Socialism which has no existence except in their own heated minds.

Socialism does not consist in violently seizing upon the property of the rich and sharing it out amongst the poor.

Socialism is not a wild dream of a happy land where the apples will drop off the trees into our open mouths, the fish come out of the rivers and fry themselves for dinner, and the looms turn out ready-made suits of velvet with golden buttons without the trouble of coaling the engine. Neither is it a dream of a nation of stained-glass angels, who never say damn, who always love their neighbours better than themselves, and who never need to work unless they wish to.

And now, having told you what *Socialism is not*, it remains for me to tell you what *Socialism is*.

CHAPTER VIII WHAT SOCIALISM IS

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To those who are writing about such things as *Socialism* or Political Economy, one of the

stumbling-blocks is in the hard or uncommon words, and another in the tediousness—the "dryness"—of the arguments and explanations.

It is not easy to say what has to be said so that anybody may see quite clearly what is meant, and it is still harder to say it so as to hold the attention and arouse the interest of men and women who are not used to reading or thinking about matters outside the daily round of their work and their play. As I want this book to be plain to all kinds of workers, even to those who have no "book-learning" and to whom a "hard word" is a "boggart," and a "dry" description or a long argument a weariness of the flesh, I must beg those of you who are more used to bookish talk and scientific terms (or names) to bear with me when I stop to show the meaning of things that to you are quite clear.

If I can make my meaning plain to members of Parliament, bishops, editors, and other half-educated persons, and to labouring men and women who have had but little schooling, and have never been used to think or care about *Socialism*, or Economics, or Politics, or "any such dry rot"—as they would call them—if I can catch the ear of the heedless and the untaught, the rest of you cannot fail to follow.

The terms, or names, used in speaking of Socialism—that is to say, the names given to ideas, or "thoughts," or to kinds of ideas, or "schools" of thought, are not easy to put into the plain words of common speech. To an untaught labourer *Socialism* is a hard word, so is *Co-operation*; and such a phrase, or name, as *Political Economy* is enough to clear a taproom, or break up a meeting, or close a book.

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So I want to steer clear of "hard words," and "dry talk," and long-windedness, and I want to tell my tale, if I can, in "tinker's English."

What is Socialism?

There is more than one kind of *Socialism*, for we hear of State *Socialism*, of Practical *Socialism*, of Communal *Socialism*; and these kinds differ from each other, though they are all *Socialism*.

So you have different kinds of Liberals. There are old-school Whigs, and advanced Whigs, and Liberals, and Radicals, and advanced Radicals; but they are all *Liberals*.

So you have horse soldiers, foot soldiers, riflemen, artillery, and engineers; but they are all *soldiers*.

Amongst the Liberals are men of many minds: there are Churchmen, Nonconformists, Atheists; there are teetotalers and there are drinkers; there are Trade Union leaders, and there are leaders of the Masters' Federation. These men differ on many points, but they all agree upon *one* point.

Amongst the Socialists are many men of many minds: there are parsons, atheists, labourers, employers, men of peace, and men of force. These men differ on many points, but they all agree upon *one* point.

Now, this point on which men of different views agree is called a *principle*.

A principle is a main idea, or main thought. It is like the keelson of a ship or the backbone of a fish—it is the foundation on which the thing is built.

Thus, the *principle* of Trade Unionism is "combination," the combining, or joining together, of a number of workers, for the general good of all.

The *principle* of Democratic (or Popular) Government is the law that the will of the majority shall rule.

Do away with the "right of combination," and Trade Unionism is destroyed.

Do away with majority rule, and Popular Government is destroyed.

So if we can find the *principle* of *Socialism*, if we can find the one point on which all kinds of Socialists agree, we shall be able to see what *Socialism* really is.

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Now, here in plain words is the *principle*, or root idea, on which *all* Socialists agree—

That the country, and all the machinery of production in the country, shall belong to the whole people (the nation), and shall be used *by* the people and *for* the people.

That "principle," the root idea of Socialism, means two things—

1. That the land and all the machines, tools, and buildings used in making needful things, together with all the canals, rivers, roads, railways, ships, and trains used in moving, sharing (distributing) needful things, and all the shops, markets, scales, weights, and money used in selling or dividing needful things, shall be the property of (belong to) the whole people (the nation).

2. That the land, tools, machines, trains, rivers, shops, scales, money, and all the other things belonging to the people, shall be worked, managed, divided, and used by the whole people in such a way as the greater number of the whole people shall deem best.

This is the principle of collective, or national, ownership, and co-operative, or national, use and

control.

Socialism may, you see, be summed up in one line, in four words, as really meaning

BRITAIN FOR THE BRITISH.

I will make all this as plain as the nose on your face directly. Let us now look at the *other* side.

To-day Britain does *not* belong to the British; it belongs to a few of the British. There are bits of it which belong to the whole people, as Wimbledon Common, Portland Gaol, the highroads; but most of it is "private property."

Now, as there are Liberals and Tories, Catholics and Protestants, Dockers' Unions and Shipping Federations in England; so there are Socialists and non-Socialists.

And as there are different kinds of Socialists, so there are different kinds of non-Socialists.

As there is one point, or *principle*, on which all kinds of Socialists agree; so there is one point, or *principle*, on which all kinds of non-Socialists agree. [Pg 85]

Amongst the non-Socialists there are Liberals and Tories, Catholics and Protestants, masters and workmen, rich and poor, lords and labourers, publicans and teetotalers; and these folks, as you know, differ in their ideas, and quarrel with and go against each other; but they are all non-Socialists, they are all against *Socialism*, and they all agree upon *one point*.

So, if we can find the one point on which all kinds of non-Socialists agree, we shall find the *principle*, or root idea, of non-Socialism.

Well, the "principle" of non-Socialism is just the opposite of the "principle" of *Socialism*. As the "principle" of *Socialism* is national ownership, so the "principle" of non-Socialism is *private* ownership. As the principle of *Socialism* is *Britain for the British*, so the principle of non-Socialism is *Every Briton for Himself*.

Again, as the principle of *Socialism* means two things, so does the principle of non-Socialism mean two things.

As the principle of *Socialism* means national ownership and co-operative national management, so the principle of non-Socialism means *private ownership* and *private management*.

Socialism says that Britain shall be owned and managed *by* the people *for* the people.

Non-Socialism says Britain shall be owned and managed *by* some persons *for* some persons.

Under *Socialism* you would have *all* the people working *together* for the good of *all*.

Under non-Socialism you have all the *persons* working *separately* (and mostly *against* each other), each for the good of *himself*.

So we find *Socialism* means *Co-operation*, and non-Socialism means *Competition*.

Co-operation, as here used, means operating or working together for a common end or purpose.

Competition means competing or vying with each other for personal ends or gain.

I'm afraid that is all as "dry" as bran, and as sad as a half-boiled dumpling; but I want to make it quite plain. [Pg 86]

And now we will run over it all again in a more homely and lively way.

You know that to-day most of the land in Britain belongs to landlords, who let it to farmers or builders, and charge *rent* for it.

Socialists (*all* Socialists) say that *all* the land should belong to the British people, to the nation.

You know that the railways belong to railway companies, who carry goods and passengers, and charge fares and rates, to make *profit*.

Socialists *all* say that the railways should be bought by the people. Some say that fares should be charged, some that the railways should be free—just as the roads, rivers, and bridges now are; but all agree that any profit made by the railways should belong to the whole nation. Just as do the profits now made by the post office and the telegraphs.

You know that cotton mills, coalmines, and breweries now belong to rich men, or to companies, who sell the coal, the calico, or the beer, for profit.

Socialists say that all mines, mills, breweries, shops, works, ships, and farms should belong to the whole people, and should be managed by persons chosen by the people, or chosen by officials elected by the people, and that all the bread, beer, calico, coal, and other goods should be either *sold* to the people, or *given* to the people, or sold to foreign buyers for the benefit of the British nation.

Some Socialists would *give* the goods to the people, some would *sell* them; but *all* agree that any profit on such sales should belong to the whole people—just as any profit made on the sale of gas by the Manchester Corporation goes to the credit of the city.

Now you will begin to see what is meant by Socialism.

To-day the nation owns *some* things; under Socialism the nation would own *all* things.

To-day the nation owns the ships of the navy, the forts, arsenals, public buildings, Government factories, and some other things.

To-day the Government, *for the nation*, manages the post office and telegraphs, makes some of the clothes and food and arms for the army and navy, builds some of the warships, and oversees the Church, the prisons, and the schools. [Pg 87]

Socialists want the nation to own *all* the buildings, factories, lands, rivers, ships, schools, machines, and goods, and to manage *all* their business and work, and to buy and sell and make and use *all* goods for themselves.

To-day some cities (as Manchester and Glasgow) make gas, and supply gas and water to the citizens. Some cities (as London) let their citizens buy their gas and water from gas and water companies.

Socialists want *all* the gas and water to be supplied to the people by their own officials, as in Glasgow and Manchester.

Under *Socialism* all the work of the nation would be *organised*—that is to say, it would be "ordered," or "arranged," so that no one need be out of work, and so that no useless work need be done, and so that no work need be done twice where once would serve.

At present the work is *not* organised, except in the post office and in the various works of the Corporations.

Let us take a look at the state of things in England to-day.

To-day the industries of England are not ordered nor arranged, but are left to be disordered by chance and by the ups and downs of trade.

So we have at one and the same time, and in one and the same trade, and, often enough, in one and the same town, some men working overtime and other men out of work.

We have at one time the cotton mills making more goods than they can sell, and at another time we have them unable to fulfil their orders.

We have in one street a dozen small shops all selling the same kind of goods, and so spending in rent, in fittings, in wages of servants, and other ways, about four times as much as would be spent if all the work were done in one big shop.

We have one contractor sending men and tools and bricks and wood from north London to build a house in south London, and another contractor in south London going to the same trouble and expense to build a house in north London.

We have in Essex and other parts of England thousands of acres of good land lying idle because it does not *pay* to till it, and at the same time we have thousands of labourers out of work who would be only too glad to till it. [Pg 88]

So in one part of a city you may see hundreds of houses standing empty, and in another part of the same city you may see hard-working people living three and four families in a small cottage.

Then, under competition, where there are many firms in the same trade, and where each firm wants to get as much trade as it can, a great deal of money is spent by these firms in trying to get the trade from each other.

Thus all the cost of advertisements, of travellers' wages, and a lot of the cost of book-keeping, arise from the fact that there are many firms all trying to snatch the trade from each other.

Non-Socialists claim that this clumsy and costly way of going to work is really the best way there is. They say that competition gets the work done by the best men and at the lowest rate.

Perhaps some of them believe this; but it is not true. The mistake is caused by the fact that *competition* is better than *monopoly*.

That is to say, if there is only one tram company in a town the fares will be higher than if there are two; because when there are two one tries to undersell the other.

But take a town where there are two tram companies undercutting and working against each other, and hand the trams over to the Corporation, and you will find that the work is done better, is done cheaper, and the men are better paid than under competition.

This is because the Corporation is at less cost, has less waste, and does not want *profits*.

Well, under *Socialism* all the work of the nation would be managed by the nation—or perhaps I had better say by "the people," for some of the work would be *local* and some would be *national*. I will show you what I mean.

It might be better for each town to manage its own gas and water, to bake its own bread and brew its own beer. But it would be better for the post office to be managed by the nation, because that has to do with *all* the towns.

So we should find that some kinds of work were best done locally—that is, by each town or county—and that some were best done nationally, that is, by a body of officials acting for the nation.

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For instance, tramways would be local and railways national; gas and water would be local and collieries national; police would be local and the army and navy national.

The kind of *Socialism* I am advocating here is Collectivism, or *Practical Socialism*. Motto: Britain for the British, the land and all the instruments of production, distribution, and exchange to be the property of the nation, and to be managed *by* the nation *for* the nation.

The land and railways, collieries, etc., to be *bought* from the present owners, but not at fancy prices.

Wages to be paid, and goods to be sold.

Thus, you see, Collectivism is really an extension of the *principles*, or ideas, of local government, and of the various corporation and civil services.

And now I tell you that is Socialism, and I ask you what is there in it to prevent any man from being a Christian, or from attending a place of worship, or from marrying, or being faithful to his wife, or from keeping and bringing up his children at home?

There is nothing in it to destroy religion, and there is nothing in it to destroy the home, and there is nothing in it to foster vice.

But there *is* something in it to kill ignorance and to destroy vice. There is something in it to shut up the gaols, to do away with prostitution, to reduce crime and drunkenness, and wipe out forever the sweaters and the slums, the beggars and the idle rich, the useless fine ladies and lords, and to make it possible for sober and willing workers to live healthy and happy and honourable lives.

For Socialism would teach and train all children wisely; it would foster genius and devotion to the common good; it would kill scamping and loafing and jerrymandering; it would give us better health, better homes, better work, better food, better lives, and better men and women.

CHAPTER IX COMPETITION *v.* CO-OPERATION

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A comparison of competition with co-operation is a comparison of non-Socialism with Socialism.

For the principle of non-Socialism is competition, and the principle of Socialism is co-operation.

Non-Socialists tell us that competition is to the general advantage, because it lowers prices in favour of the consumer.

But competition in trade only seems desirable when we contrast it with private monopoly.

When we compare the effects of trade competition with the effects of State or Municipal co-operation, we find that competition is badly beaten.

Let us try to find the reasons of this.

The claim for the superior cheapness of competition rests on the theory that where two sellers compete against each other for trade each tries to undersell the other.

This sounds plausible, but, like many other plausible things, it is untrue. It is a theory, but the theory is incomplete.

If business men were fools the theory would work with mathematical precision, to the great joy and profit of the consumer; but business men are not built on those lines.

The seller of any article does not trade for trading's sake; he trades for profit.

It is a mistake to suppose that undercutting each other's prices is the only method of competing between rival firms in trade. There are other ways.

A trader, in order to defeat a rival, may

1. Give better quality at the same price, which is equal to giving more for the money, and is therefore a form of underselling; or
2. He may give the same quantity and quality at a lower price; or
3. He may balance the lowering of his price by resorting to adulteration or the use of inferior workmanship or material; or
4. He may try to overreach his rival by employing more travellers or by advertising more extensively.

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As to underselling. This is not carried on to such extremes as the theorists would have us believe.

The object of a trader is to make money. He only desires increased trade if it brings more money.

Brown and Jones make soap for sale. Each desires to get as much of the trade as he can, consistently with profits.

It will pay Brown better to sell 1000 boxes of soap at a profit of sixpence on each box than to sell 2000 boxes at a profit of twopence a box, and it will pay him better to sell 4000 boxes at a profit of twopence each than it will to sell 1000 boxes at a profit of sixpence each.

Now, suppose there is a demand for 20,000 boxes of soap in a week. If Brown and Jones are content to divide the trade, each may sell 10,000 boxes at a profit of sixpence, and so may clear a total profit of £250.

If, by repeated undercutting, the profit falls to a penny a box, Brown and Jones will have very little more than £80 to divide between them. And it is clear that it will pay them better to divide the trade, for it would pay either of them better to take half the trade at even a threepenny profit than to secure it all at a profit of one penny.

Well, Brown and Jones have the full use of their faculties, and are well aware of the number of beans that make five.

Therefore they will not compete beyond the point at which competition will increase their gross profits.

And so we shall find in most businesses, from great railways down to tooth brushes, that the difference in prices, quality being equal, is not very great amongst native traders, and that a margin of profit is always left.

At the same time, so far as competition *does* lower prices without lowering quality, the benefit is to the consumer, and that much is to be put to the credit of competition.

But even there, on its strongest line, competition is beaten by State or Municipal co-operation. [Pg 92]

Because, assuming that the State or Municipality can produce any article as cheaply as a private firm, the State or the Municipality can always beat the private trader in price to the extent of the trader's profit.

For no trader will continue to trade unless he makes some profit, whereas the State or Municipality wants no profit, but works for use or for service.

Therefore, if a private trader sells soap at a profit of one farthing a box, the State or Municipality can sell soap one farthing a box cheaper, other things being equal.

It is evident, then, that the trader must be beaten unless he can produce more cheaply than the State or Municipality.

Can he produce more cheaply? No. The State or Municipality can always produce more cheaply than the private trader, under equal conditions. Why? For the same reason that a large firm can beat a small one, or a trust can beat a number of large firms.

Suppose there are three separate firms making soap. Each firm must have its separate factory, its separate offices, its separate management, its separate power, its separate profits, and its separate plant.

But if one firm made all the soap, it would save a great deal of expense; for one large factory is cheaper than two of half its size, and one manager costs less than three.

If the London County Council made all the soap for London, it could make soap more cheaply than any one of a dozen private firms; because it would save so largely in rent, plant, and management.

Thus the State or Municipality scores over the private firm, and co-operation scores over competition in two ways: first, it cuts off the profit; and, second, it reduces the cost of production.

But that does not exhaust the advantages of co-operation over competition. There are two other forms of competition still to examine: these are adulteration and advertisement.

We all know the meaning of the phrase "cheap and nasty." We can get pianos, bicycles, houses, boots, tea, and many other things at various prices, and we find that many of the cheap pianos will not keep in tune, that the bicycles are always out of repair, that the houses fall down, the boots let in water, and the tea tastes like what it *is*—a mixture of dried tea leaves and rubbish. [Pg 93]

Adulteration, as John Bright frankly declared, is a form of competition. It is also a form of rascality and fraud. It is a device for retaining profits for the seller, but it is seriously to the disadvantage of the consumer.

This form of competition, then, has to be put to the debit of competition.

And the absence of this form of competition has to be put to the credit of the State or the Municipal supply. For since the State or Municipality has no competitor to displace, it never descends to the baseness of adulteration.

The London County Council would not build jerry houses for the citizens, nor supply them with tea leaves for tea, nor logwood and water for port wine.

The sale of wooden nutmegs is a species of enterprise confined exclusively to the private trader. It is a form of competition, but never of commercial co-operation. It is peculiar to non-Socialism: Socialists would abolish it entirely.

We come now to the third device of the private trader in competition: the employment of commercial travellers and advertisement.

Of two firms selling similar goods, of equal quality, at equal prices, that firm will do the larger trade which keeps the greater number of commercial travellers and spends the greater sum upon advertisement.

But travellers cost money, and advertising costs money. And so we find that travellers and advertisements add to the cost of distribution.

Therefore competition, although by underbidding it has a limited tendency to lower the prices of goods, has also a tendency to increase the price in another way.

If Brown lowers the price of his soap the user of soap is the gainer. But if Brown increases the cost of his advertisements and his staff of travellers, the user is the loser, because the extra cost has to be paid for in the price of soap.

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Now, if the London County Council made soap for all London, there would be

1. A saving in cost of rent, plant, and management.
2. A saving of profits by selling at cost price.
3. A saving of the whole cost of advertising.
4. A saving of the wages of the commercial travellers.

Under a system of trade competition all those four items (plus the effects of adulteration) have to be paid for by the consumer, that is to say, by the users of soap.

And what is true of soap is true of most other things.

That is why co-operation for use beats competition for sale and profit.

That is why the Municipal gas, water, and tram services are better and cheaper than the same services under the management of private companies.

That is *one* reason why Socialism is better than non-Socialism.

As an example of the difference between private and Municipal works, let us take the case of the gas supply in Liverpool and Manchester. These cities are both commercial, both large, both near the coalfields.

The gas service in Liverpool is a private monopoly, for profit; that of Manchester is a co-operative monopoly, for service.

In Liverpool (figures of 1897) the price of gas was 2s. 9d. per thousand feet. In Manchester the price of gas was 2s. 3d.

In Liverpool the profit on gas was 8-1/2d. per thousand feet. In Manchester the profit was 7-1/2d. per thousand feet.

In Liverpool the profits went to the company. In Manchester the profits went to the ratepayers.

Thus the Manchester ratepayer was getting his gas for 2s. 3d. less 7-1/2d., which means that he was getting it at 1s. 7-1/2d., while the Liverpool ratepayer was being charged 2s. 9d. The public monopoly of Manchester was, therefore, beating the private monopoly of Liverpool by 1s. 1-1/2d. per thousand feet in the price of gas.

In *To-day's Work*, by George Haw, and in *Does Municipal Management Pay?* by R. B. Suthers, you will find many examples as striking and conclusive as the one I have suggested above.

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The waste incidental to private traders' competition is enormous. Take the one item of advertisement alone. There are draughtsmen, paper-makers, printers, billposters, painters, carpenters, gilders, mechanics, and a perfect army of other people all employed in making advertisement bills, pictures, hoardings, and other abominations—for *what?* Not to benefit the consumer, but to enable one private dealer to sell more of his wares than another. In *Merrie England* I dealt with this question, and I quoted from an excellent pamphlet by Mr. Washington, a man of splendid talents, whose death we have unfortunately to deplore. Mr. Washington, who was an inventor and a thoroughly practical man of business, spoke as follows:—

Taking soap as an example, it requires a purchaser of this commodity to expend a shilling in obtaining sixpennyworth of it, the additional sixpence being requisite to cover the cost of advertising, travelling, etc. It requires him to expend 1s. 1-1/2d. to obtain twopennyworth of pills for the same reason. For a sewing machine he must, if spending £7 on it, part with £4 of this amount on account of unnecessary cost; and so

on in the case of all widely advertised articles. In the price of less-advertised commodities there is, in like manner, included as unnecessary cost a long string of middlemen's profits and expenses. It may be necessary to treat of these later, but for the present suffice it to say that in the price of goods as sold by retail the margin of unnecessary cost ranges from threepence to tenpence in the shilling, and taking an average of one thing with another, it may be safely stated that one-half of the price paid is rendered necessary simply through the foolish and inconvenient manner in which the business is carried on.

All this expense would be saved by State or Municipal production for use. The New York Milk Trust, I understand, on its formation dispensed with the services of 15,000 men.

You may ask what is to become of these men, and of the immense numbers of other men, now uselessly employed, who would not be needed under Socialism.

Well! What are these men now doing? Are they adding to the wealth of the nation? No. Are they not doing work that is unnecessary to the nation? Yes. Are they not now being paid wages? Yes.

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Then, since their work is useless, and since they are now being paid, is it not evident that under Socialism we could actually pay them their full wages for doing *nothing*, and still be as well off as we are now?

But I think under Socialism we could, and should, find a very great many of them congenial and useful work.

Under the "Trusts" they will be thrown out of work, and it will be nobody's business to see that they do not starve.

Yes: Socialism would displace labour. But does not non-Socialism displace labour?

Why was the linotype machine adopted? Because it was a saving of cost. What became of the compositors? They were thrown out of work. Did anybody help them?

Well, Socialism would save cost. If it displaces labour, as the machine does, should that prevent us from adopting Socialism?

Socialism would organise labour, and leave no man to starve.

But will the Trusts do that? No. And the Trusts are coming; the Trusts which will swallow up the small firms and destroy competition; the Trusts which will use their monopolies not to lower prices, but to make profits.

You will have your choice, then, between the grasping and grinding Trust and the beneficent Municipality.

Can any reasonable, practical, hard-headed man hesitate for one moment over his choice?

CHAPTER X FOREIGN TRADE AND FOREIGN FOOD

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We have heard a great deal lately about the danger of losing our foreign trade, and it has been very openly suggested that the only hope of keeping our foreign trade lies in reducing the wages of our British workers. Sometimes this idea is wrapped up, and called "reducing the cost of production."

Now, if we must have foreign trade, and as much of it as we have now, and if we can only keep it by competing against foreign dealers in price, then it is true that we must try to reduce the cost of production.

But as there are more ways of killing a dog besides that of choking him with butter, so there are other ways of reducing the cost of production besides that of reducing the wages of our British workers.

But on that question I will speak in the next chapter. Here I want to deal with foreign trade and foreign food.

It is very important that every worker in the kingdom should understand the relations of our foreign trade and our native agriculture.

The creed of the commercial school is that manufactures *pay* us better than agriculture; so that by making goods for export and buying food from abroad we are doing good business.

The idea is, that if by making cloth, cutlery, and other goods, we can buy more food than we can produce at home with the same amount of labour, it *pays* us to let the land go out of cultivation and make Britain the "workshop of the world."

Now, assuming that we *can* keep our foreign trade, and assuming that we can get more food by foreign trade than we could produce by the same amount of work, is it quite certain that we are

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making a good bargain when we desert our fields for our factories?

Suppose men *can* earn more in the big towns than they *could* earn in the fields, is the difference *all* gain?

Rents and prices are higher in the towns; the life is less healthy, less pleasant. It is a fact that the death-rates in the towns are higher, that the duration of life is shorter, and that the stamina and physique of the workers are lowered by town life and by employment in the factories.

And there is another very serious evil attached to the commercial policy of allowing our British agriculture to decay, and that is the evil of our dependence upon foreign countries for our food.

Of every 30 bushels of wheat we require in Britain, more than 23 bushels come from abroad. Of these 23 bushels 19 bushels come from America, and nearly all the rest from Russia.

You are told at intervals—when more money is wanted for battle-ships—that unless we have a strong fleet we shall, in time of war, be starved into surrender.

But the plain and terrible truth is that even if we have a perfect fleet, and keep entire control of the seas, we shall still be exposed to the risk of almost certain starvation during a European war.

Nearly four-fifths of our bread come from Russia and America. Suppose we are at war with France and Russia. What will happen? Will not the corn dealers in America put up the price? Will not the Russians stop the export of corn from their ports? Will not the French and Russian Governments try to corner the American wheat?

Then one-seventh of our wheat would be stopped at Russian ports, and the American supply, even if it could be safely guarded to our shores, would be raised to double or treble the present price.

What would our millions of poor workers do if wheat went up to 75s. or 100s. a quarter?

And every other article of food would go up in price at the same time: tea, coffee, sugar, meat, canned goods, cheese, would all double their prices.

And we must not forget that we import millions of pounds' worth of eggs, butter, and cheese from France, all of which would be stopped. [Pg 99]

Nor is that all. Do we not pay for our imported food in exported goods? Well, besides the risk and cost of carrying raw material to this country and manufactured goods to other countries across the seas, we should lose at one blow all our French and Russian trade.

That means that with food at famine prices many of our workers would be out of work or on short time.

The result would be that in less than half a year there would be 1,000,000 unemployed, and ten times that number on the borders of starvation.

And all these horrors might come upon us without a single shot being fired by our enemies. Talk about invasion! In a big European war we should be half beaten before we could strike a blow, and even if our fleets were victorious in a dozen battles we must starve or make peace.

Or suppose such a calamity as war with America! The Americans could close their ports to food and raw material, and stop half our food and a large part of our trade at one blow. And so we should be half beaten before a sword was drawn.

All these dangers are due to the commercial plan of sacrificing agriculture to trade. All these dangers must be placed to the debit side of our foreign trade account.

But apart from the dangers of starvation in time of war, and apart from all the evils of the factory system and the bad effects of overcrowding in the towns, it has still to be said that foreign trade only beats agriculture as long as it pays so well that we can buy more food with our earnings than we could ourselves produce with the same amount of labour.

Are we quite sure that it pays us as well as that *now*? And if it does pay as well as that now, can we hope that it will go on paying as well for any length of time.

In the early days of our great trade the commercial school wished Britain to be the "workshop of the world"; and for a good while she was the workshop of the world.

But now a change is coming. Other nations have opened world-workshops, and we have to face competition. [Pg 100]

France, Germany, Holland, Belgium, and America are all eager to take our coveted place as general factory, and China and Japan are changing swiftly from customers into rival dealers.

Is it likely, then, that we can keep all our foreign trade, or that what we keep will be as profitable as it is at present?

During the last few years there have emanated from the Press and from Chambers of Commerce certain ominous growlings about the evils of Trade Unionism. What do these growls portend? Much the same thing as the mutterings about the need for lowering wages.

Do we not remember how, when the colliers were struggling for a "living wage," the Press

scolded them for their "selfishness"? The Press declared that if the colliers persisted in having a living wage we should be beaten by foreign competitors and must lose our foreign trade.

That is what is hanging over us now. A demand for a general reduction of wages. That is the end of the fine talk about big profits, national prosperity, and the "workshop of the world." The British workers are to emulate the thrift of the Japanese, the Hindoos, and the Chinese, and learn to live on boiled rice and water. Why? So that they can accept lower wages and retain our precious foreign trade.

Yes; that is the latest idea. With brutal frankness the workers of Britain have been told again and again that "if we are to keep our foreign trade the British workers must accept the conditions of their foreign rivals."

And that is the result of our commercial glory! For that we have sacrificed our agriculture and endangered the safety of our empire.

Let us put the two statements of the commercial school side by side.

They tell us first that the workers must abandon the land and go into the factories, because there they can earn a better living.

They tell us now that the British worker must be content with the wages of a coolie, because foreign trade will pay no more. [Pg 101]

We are to give up agriculture because we can buy more food with exported goods than we can grow; and we must learn to live on next to nothing, or lose our foreign trade.

Well, since we left the land in the hope that the factories would feed us better, why not go back to the land if the factories fail to feed us at all?

Ah! but the commercial school have another string to their bow: "You cannot go back to the land, for it will not feed you all. This country will not produce enough food for its people to live upon."

So the position in which the workers are placed, according to the commercial school, is this: You cannot produce your own food; therefore you must buy it by export trade. But you will lose your export trade unless you work for lower wages.

Well, Mr. Smith, I for one do not believe those things. I believe—

1. That we can produce most of our food.
2. That we can keep as much of our trade as we need, and
3. That we can keep the trade without reducing the wages of the workers.

In my next chapter I will deal with the question of foreign trade and the workers' wages. We will then go on to consider the question of the food supply.

For the argument as to our defencelessness in time of war through the inevitable rise in the price of corn, I am indebted to a pamphlet by Captain Stewart L. Murray of the Gordon Highlanders. I strongly recommend all working men and women to read that pamphlet. It is entitled *Our Food Supply in Time of War*, and can be ordered through the *Clarion*. The price is 6d.

CHAPTER XI HOW TO KEEP FOREIGN TRADE

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The problem is how to keep our foreign export trade.

We are told that unless we can compete in price with foreign nations we must lose our foreign trade; and we are told that the only means of competing with foreign nations in price is to lower the wages of the British worker.

We will test these statements by looking into the conditions of one of our great industries, an industry upon which many other industries more or less depend: I mean the coal trade.

At the time of the great coal strike the colliers were asked to accept a reduction of wages because their employers could not get the price they were asking for coal.

The colliers refused, and demanded a "living wage." And they were severely censured by the Press for their "selfishness" in "keeping up the price of coal," and thereby preventing other trades, in which coal was largely used, from earning a living. They were reproached also with keeping the price of coal so high that the poor could not afford fires.

Now, if those other trades which used coal, as the iron and the cotton trades, could not carry on their business with coal at the price it was then at, and if those trades had no other ways and means of reducing expenses, and if the only factor in the price of coal had been the wages of the collier, there might have been some ground for the arguments of the Press against the colliers.

But in the iron trade one item of the cost of production is the *royalty* on the iron. Royalty is a kind

of rent paid to the landlord for getting the iron from his land.

Now, I want to ask about the iron trade, Would it not be as just and as possible to reduce the royalty on iron in order to compete with foreign iron dealers as to reduce the wages of the iron-worker or the collier? [Pg 103]

The collier and the iron-worker work, and work hard, but the royalty owner does nothing.

The twenty-five per cent. reduction in the colliers' wages demanded before the great strike would not have made a difference of sixpence a ton in the cost of coal.

Now the royalties charged upon a ton of manufactured pig iron in Cumberland at that time amounted to 6s. 3d.; whereas the royalties on a ton of manufactured pig iron in Germany were 6d., in France 8d., in Belgium 1s. 3d. Now read this—

In 1885 a firm in West Cumberland had half their furnaces idle, not because the firm had no work, but simply owing to the high royalties demanded by the landowner. This company had to import iron from Belgium to fulfil their contract with the Indian Government. With a furnace turning out about 600 tons of pig iron per week the royalties amounted to £202, while the wages to everyone, from the manager downwards, amounted to only £95. This very company is now amongst our foreign competitors.

The royalties were more than twice the amount of the wages, and yet we are to believe that we can only keep our iron trade by lowering the wages.

The fact is that in the iron trade our export goods are taxed by the idle royalty owner to an amount varying from five to twelve times that of the royalty paid by our French, German, and Belgian competitors.

Now think over the iron and cotton and other trades, and remember the analysis we made of the cost of production, and tell me why, since the rich landlord gets his rent, and since the rich capitalist gets his interest or profits out of cotton, wool, or iron, the invariable suggestion of those who would retain our foreign trade by reducing the cost of production amounts to no more nor less than a reduction of the poor workers' wages.

Let us go back to the coal trade. The collier was called selfish because his demand for a living wage kept up the price of coal. The reduction asked would not have come to 6d. a ton. Could not that sixpence have been saved from the rents, or interest, or profits, or royalties paid at the cost of the production of other goods? I think you will find that it could. [Pg 104]

But leave that point, and let us see whether there are not other factors in the cost of coal which could more fairly be reduced than could the wages of the collier.

Coals sells at prices from 10s. to 30s. a ton. The wages of the collier do not add up to more than 2s. 6d. a ton.

In the year before the last great coal strike 300,000 miners were paid £15,000,000, and in the same time £6,000,000 were paid in royalties. Sir G. Elliot's estimate of coal owners' *profits* for the same year was £11,000,000. This, with the £6,000,000 paid in royalties, made £17,000,000 taken by royalty owners and mine owners out of the coal trade in one year.

So there are other items in the price of coal besides the wages of the colliers. What are they? They may be divided into nine parts, thus—

1. Rent.
2. Royalties.
3. Coal masters' profits.
4. Profits of railway companies and other carriers.
5. Wages of railway servants and other carriers' labourers.
6. Profits of merchants and other "middlemen."
7. Profits of retailers.
8. Wages of agents, travellers, and other salesmen.
9. The wages of the colliers.

The prices of coal fluctuate (vary), and the changes in the prices of coal cause now a rise and now a fall in the wages and profits of coal masters, railway shareholders, merchants, and retailers.

But the fluctuations in the prices of coal cause very little fluctuation in rent and *none* in royalties.

Again, no matter how low the price of coal may be, the agents, travellers, and other salesmen always get a living wage, and the coal owners, railway shareholders, merchants, landlords, and royalty owners always get a great deal more than a living wage.

But what about the colliers and the carriers' labourers, such as railway men, dischargers, and carters?

These men perform nearly all the work of production and of distribution. They get the coal, and they carry the coal. [Pg 105]

Their wages are lower than those of any of the other seven classes engaged in the coal trade.

They work harder, they work longer hours, and they run more risk to life and limb than any other class in the trade; and yet!—

And yet the only means of reducing the price of coal is said to be *a reduction in the collier's wage*.

Now, I say that in reducing the price of coal the *last* thing we should touch is the collier's wage.

If we *must* reduce the price of coal, we should begin with the owners of royalties. As to the "right" of the royalty owner to exact a fine from labour, I will content myself with making two claims—

1. That even if the royalty owner has a "right" to a royalty, yet there is no reason why he, of all the nine classes engaged in the coal trade, should be the only one whose receipts from the sale of coal shall never be lessened, no matter how the price of coal may fall.
2. Since the royalty owner and the landlord are the only persons engaged in the trade who cannot make even a pretence of doing anything for their money, and since the price of coal must be lowered, they should be the first to bear a reduction in the amount they charge on the sale of it.

Next to the landlords and royalty owners I should place the railway companies. The prices charged for the carriage of coal are very high, and if the price of coal must be reduced, the profits made on the carriage should be reduced.

Third in order come the coal owners, with what they call "a fair rate of interest on invested capital."

How is it that the Press never reproaches any of those four idle and overpaid classes with selfishness in causing the poor workers of other trades to go short of fuel?

How is it that the Press never chides these men for their folly in trying to keep up profits, royalties, and interest in a "falling market"? [Pg 106]

It looks as if the "immutable laws" of political economy resemble the laws of the land. It looks as if there is one economic law for the rich and another for the poor.

The merchants, commission agents, and other middlemen I leave out of the question. These men are worse than worthless—they are harmful. They thwart; and hinder, and disorder the trade, and live on the colliers, the coal masters, and the public. There is no excuse, economic or moral, for their existence. But there is only one cure for the evil they do, and that is to drive them right out of the trade.

I claim, then, that if the price of coal must be reduced, the sums paid to the above-named three classes should be cut down first, because they get a great deal more, and do a great deal less, than the carriers' labourers and the colliers.

First as to the coal owners and the royalty owners. We see that the *whole sum* of the wages of the colliers for a year was only £6,000,000, while the royalty owners and the coal owners took £17,000,000, or nearly three times as much.

And yet we were told that the *miners*, the men who *work*, were "selfish" for refusing to have their wages reduced.

Nationalise the land and the mines, and you at once save £17,000,000, and all that on the one trade.

So with the railways. Nationalise the railways, and you may reduce the cost of the carriage of coal (and of all goods and passengers) by the amount of the profits now made by the railway companies, plus a good deal of the expense of management.

For if the Municipalities can give you better trams, pay the guards and drivers better wages for shorter hours, and reduce penny fares to halfpenny fares, and still clear a big profit, is it not likely that the State could lower the freights of the railways, and so reduce the cost of carrying foods and manufactured goods and raw material?

Our foreign trade, and our home industries also, are taxed and handicapped in their competition by every shilling paid in royalties, in rents, in interest, in profits, and in dividends to persons who do no work and produce no wealth; they are handicapped further by the salaries and commissions of all the superfluous managers, canvassers, agents, travellers, clerks, merchants, small dealers, and other middlemen who now live upon the producer and consumer. [Pg 107]

Socialism would abolish all these rents, taxes, royalties, salaries, commissions, profits, and interests, and thereby so greatly reduce the cost of production and of carriage that in the open market we should be able to offer our goods at such prices as to defy the competition of any but a Socialist State.

But there is another way in which British trade is handicapped in competition with the trade of other nations.

It is instructive to notice that our most dangerous rival is America, where wages are higher and

all the conditions of the worker better than in this country.

How, then, do the Americans contrive so often to beat us?

Is it not notorious that the reason given for America's success is the superior energy and acuteness of the American over the British manager and employer? American firms are more pushing, more up-to-date. They seek new markets, and study the desires of consumers; they use more modern machinery, and they produce more new inventions. Are the paucity of our invention and the conservatism of our management due to the "invincible ignorance" or restrictive policy of the British working man? They are due to quite other causes. The conservatism and sluggishness of our firms are due to British conceit: to the belief that when "Britain first at Heaven's command arose from out the azure main" she was invested with an eternal and unquestionable charter to act henceforth and for ever as the "workshop of the world"; and say what they will in their inmost hearts, her manufacturers still have unshaken faith in their destiny, and think scorn of any foreigner who presumes to cross their path. Therefore the British manufacturer remains conservative, and gets left by more enterprising rivals.

A word as to the superior inventiveness of the Americans. There are two great reasons why America produces more new and valuable patents. The first cause is the eagerness of the American manufacturer to secure the newest and the best machinery, and the apathetic contentment of the British manufacturer with old and cheap methods of production. There is a better market in America for inventions. The second cause is the superiority of the American patent law and patent office. [Pg 108]

In England a patentee has to pay £99 for a fourteen years' patent, and even then gets no guarantee of validity.

In America the patentee gets a seventeen years' patent for £7.

In England, out of 56,000 patents more than 54,000 were voided and less than 2000 survived.

In America there is no voiding.

One of the consequences of this is that American firms have a choice of thirty-two patents where our firms have *one*.

According to the American patent office report for 1897, the American patents had, in seventeen years, found employment for 1,776,152 persons, besides raising wages in many cases as much as 173 per cent.

These few figures only give a view of part of the disadvantage under which British inventors and British manufacturers suffer.

I suggest, as the lawyers say, that British commercial conservatism and the British patent law have as much to do with the success of our clever and energetic American rivals as has what the *Times* calls the "invincible ignorance" of the British workman who declines to sacrifice his Union to atone by longer hours and lower wages for the apathy of his employers and the folly of his laws.

I submit, then, that the remedy is not the destruction of the Trade Unions, nor the lowering of wages, nor the lengthening of hours, but the nationalisation of the land, the abolition of royalties, the restoration of agriculture, and the municipalisation or the nationalisation of the collieries, the iron mines, the steel works, and the railways.

The trade of this country *is* handicapped; but it is not handicapped by the poor workers, but by the rich idlers, whose enormous rents and profits make it impossible for England to retain the foremost place in the markets of the world. [Pg 109]

So I submit to the British workman that, since the Press, with some few exceptions, finds no remedy for loss of trade but in a reduction of his wages, he would do well to look upon the Press with suspicion, and, better still, to study these questions for himself.

CHAPTER XII

CAN BRITAIN FEED HERSELF?

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Is it impossible for this nation to produce food for 40,000,000 of people?

We cannot produce *all* our food. We cannot produce our own tea, coffee, cocoa, oranges, lemons, currants, raisins, figs, dates, bananas, treacle, tobacco, sugar, and many other things not suitable to our climate. But at a pinch, as during a war, we could do without most of these.

Can we produce our own bread, meat, and vegetables? Can we produce all, or nearly all, our butter, milk, eggs, cheese, and fruit?

And will it *pay* to produce these things if we are able to produce them at all?

The great essential is bread. Can we grow our own wheat? On this point I do not see how there can be any doubt whatever.

In 1841 Britain grew wheat for 24,000,000 of people, and at that time not nearly all her land was in use, nor was her farming of the best.

Now we have to find food, or at any rate bread and meat and vegetables, for 40,000,000.

Wheat, then, for 40,000,000. At present we consume 29,000,000 quarters. Can we grow 29,000,000 quarters in our own country?

Certainly we can. The *average* yield per acre in Britain is 28 bushels, or 3½ quarters. That is the *average* yield on British farms. It can be increased; but let us take it first upon that basis.

At 3½ quarters to the acre, 8,000,000 acres would produce 28,000,000 quarters; 9,000,000 acres would produce 31,500,000 quarters.

Therefore we require less than 9,000,000 acres of wheat land to grow a year's supply of wheat for 40,000,000 persons. [Pg 111]

Now we have in Great Britain and Ireland about 33,000,000 acres of cultivatable land. Deduct 9,000,000 for wheat, and we have 24,000,000 acres left for vegetables, fruit, cattle, sheep, pigs, and poultry.

Can any man say, in the face of these figures, that we are incapable of growing our own wheat?

Suppose the average is put too high. Suppose we could only average a yield of 20 bushels to the acre, or 2½ quarters, we could still grow 29,000,000 quarters on less than 12,000,000 acres.

It is evident, then, that we can at anyrate grow our own wheat.

Here I shall quote from an excellent book, *Fields, Factories, and Workshops*, by Prince Kropotkin. Having gone very carefully into the facts, the Prince has arrived at the following conclusions:—

1. If the soil of the United Kingdom were cultivated only as it *was* thirty-five years ago, 24,000,000 people could live on home-grown food.
2. If the cultivatable soil of the United Kingdom were cultivated as the soil is cultivated *on the average* in Belgium, the United Kingdom would have food for at least 37,000,000 inhabitants.
3. If the population of this country came to be doubled, all that would be required for producing food for 80,000,000 inhabitants would be to cultivate the soil as it is *now* cultivated in the best farms of this country, in Lombardy, and in Flanders.

Why, indeed, should we not be able to raise 29,000,000 quarters of wheat? We have plenty of land. Other European countries can produce, and do produce, their own food.

Take the example of Belgium. In Belgium the people produce their own food. Yet their soil is no better than ours, and their country is more densely populated, the figures being: Great Britain, per square mile, 378 persons; Belgium, per square mile, 544 persons.

Does that silence the commercial school? No. They have still one argument left. They say that even if we can grow our own wheat we cannot grow it as cheaply as we can buy it.

Suppose we cannot. Suppose it will cost us 2s. a quarter more to grow it than to buy it. On the 23,000,000 quarters we now import we should be saving £2,000,000 a year. [Pg 112]

Is that a very high price to pay for security against defeat by starvation in time of war?

A battle-ship costs £1,000,000. If we build two extra battle-ships in a year to protect our food supply we spend nearly all we gain by importing our wheat, even supposing that it costs us 2s. a quarter more to grow than to buy it.

But is it true that we cannot grow wheat as cheaply as we can buy it? If it is true, the fact may doubtless be put down to two causes. First, that we do not go to work in the best way, nor with the best machinery; second, that the farmer is handicapped by rent. Of course if we have to pay rent to private persons for the use of our own land, that adds to the cost of the rent.

One acre yields 28 bushels, or 3½ quarters of wheat in a year. If the land be rented at 21s. an acre that will add 6s. a quarter to the cost of wheat.

In the *Industrial History of England* I find the question of why the English farmer is undersold answered in this way—

The answer is simple. His capital has been filched from him surely, but not always slowly, by a tremendous increase in his rent. The landlords of the eighteenth century made the English farmer the foremost agriculturist in the world, but their successors of the nineteenth have ruined him by their extortions.... In 1799 we find land paying nearly 20s. an acre.... By 1850 it had risen to 38s. 6d.... £2 an acre was not an uncommon rent for land a few years ago, the average increase of English rents being no less than 26½ per cent. between 1854 and 1879.... The result has been that the average capital per acre now employed in agriculture is only about £4 or £5, instead of at least £10, as it ought to be.

If the rents were as high as £2 an acre when our poor farmers were struggling to make both ends

meet, it is little wonder they failed. A rent of £2 an acre means a land tax of more than 11s. a quarter on wheat. The price of wheat in the market at present is about 25s. a quarter. A rent charge of 21s. per acre would amount to more than £10,000,000 on the 9,000,000 we should need to grow all our wheat. A rent charge of £2 an acre would amount to £18,000,000. That would be a heavy sum for our farmers to lift before they went to market.

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Moreover, agriculture has been neglected because all the mechanical and chemical skill, and all the capital and energy of man, have been thrown into the struggle for trade profits and manufacturing pre-eminence. We want a few Faradays, Watts, Stephensons, and Cobdens to devote their genius and industry to the great food question. Once let the public interest and the public genius be concentrated upon the agriculture of England, and we shall soon get silenced the croakers who talk about the impossibility of the country feeding her people.

But is it true that under fair conditions wheat can be brought from the other side of the world and sold here at a price with which we cannot compete? Prince Kropotkin thinks not. He says the French can produce their food more cheaply than they can buy it; and if the French can do this, why cannot we?

But in case it should be thought that I am prejudiced in favour of Prince Kropotkin's book or against the factory system, I will here print a quotation from a criticism of the book which appeared in the *Times* newspaper, which paper can hardly be suspected of any leanings towards Prince Kropotkin, or of any eagerness to acknowledge that the present industrial system possesses "acknowledged evils."

Seriously, Prince Kropotkin has a great deal to say for his theories.... He has the genuine scientific temper, and nobody can say that he does not extend his observations widely enough, for he seems to have been everywhere and to have read everything.... Perhaps his chief fault is that he does not allow sufficiently for the ingrained conservatism of human nature and for the tenacity of vested interests. But that is no reason why people should not read his book, which will certainly set them thinking, and may lead a few of them to try, by practical experiments, to lessen some of the acknowledged evils of the present industrial system.

Just notice what the Tory *Times* says about "the tenacity of *vested interests*" and the "*acknowledged evils* of the present industrial system." It is a great deal for the *Times* to say.

But what about the meat?

Prince Kropotkin deals as satisfactorily with the question of meat-growing as with that of growing wheat, and his conclusion is this—

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Our means of obtaining from the soil whatever we want, under *any* climate and upon *any* soil, have lately improved at such a rate that we cannot foresee yet what is the limit of productivity of a few acres of land. The limit vanishes in proportion to our better study of the subject, and every year makes it vanish farther and farther from our sight.

I have, I think, quoted enough to show that there is no natural obstacle to our production in this country of all the food our people need. Britain *can* feed herself, and therefore, upon the ground of her use for foreign-grown food, the factory system is not necessary.

But I hope my readers will buy this book of Prince Kropotkin, and read it. For it is a very fine book, a much better book than I can write.

It can be ordered from the *Clarion* Office, 72 Fleet Street, and the price is 1s. 3d. post free.

As to the vegetables and the fruit, I must refer you to the Prince's book; but I shall quote a few passages just to give an idea of what *can* be done, and *is being done*, in other countries in the way of intensive cultivation of vegetables and fruit.

Prince Kropotkin says that the question of soil is a common stumbling-block to those who write about agriculture. Soil, he says, does not matter now, nor climate very much. There is a quite new science of agriculture which *makes* its own soil and modifies its climate. Corn and fruit can be grown on *any* soil—on rock, on sand, on clay.

Man, not Nature, has given to the Belgian soil its present productivity.

And now read this—

While science devotes its chief attention to industrial pursuits, a limited number of lovers of Nature, and a legion of workers whose very names will remain unknown to posterity, have created of late quite a new agriculture, as superior to modern farming as modern farming is superior to the old three-fields system of our ancestors.... Science seldom has guided them; they proceeded in the empirical way; but like the cattle-growers who opened new horizons to biology, they have opened a new field of experimental research for the physiology of plants. They have created a totally new agriculture. They smile when we boast about the rotation system having permitted us to take from the field one crop every year, or four crops each three years, because their ambition is to have six and nine crops from the very same plot of land during the twelve months. They do not understand our talk about good and bad soils, because they make

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the soil themselves, and make it in such quantities as to be compelled yearly to sell some of it: otherwise it would raise up the level of their gardens by half an inch every year. They aim at cropping, not five or six tons of grass on the acre, as we do, but from fifty to a hundred tons of vegetables on the same space; not £5 worth of hay, but £100 worth of vegetables of the plainest description—cabbage and carrots.

Look now at these figures from America—

At a recent competition, in which hundreds of farmers took part, the first ten prizes were awarded to ten farmers who had grown, on three acres each, from 262 to 346¾ bushels of Indian corn; in other words, *from 87 to 115 bushels to the acre*. In Minnesota the prizes were given for crops of 300 to 1120 bushels of potatoes to the acre, *i.e.* from 8¼ to 31 tons to the acre, while the average potato crop in Great Britain is only 6 tons.

These are *facts*, not theories. Here is another quotation from Prince Kropotkin's book. It also relates to America—

The crop from each acre was small, but the machinery was so perfected that in this way 300 days of one man's labour produced from 200 to 300 quarters of wheat; in other words, the areas of land being of no account, every man produced in one day his yearly bread food.

I shall only make one more quotation. It alludes to the intensive wheat-growing on Major Hallett's method in France, and is as follows:—

In fact, the 8½ bushels required for one man's annual food were actually grown at the Tomblaine station on a surface of 2250 square feet, or 47 feet square, *i.e.* on very nearly one-twentieth of an acre.

Now remember that our agricultural labourers crowd into the towns and compete with the town labourers for work. Remember that we have millions of acres of land lying idle, and generally from a quarter to three-quarters of a million of men unemployed. Then consider this position.

Here we have a million acres of good land producing nothing, and half a million men also producing nothing. Land and labour, the two factors of wealth production, both idle. Could we not set the men to work? Of course we could. Would it pay? To be sure it would pay. [Pg 116]

In America, on soil no better than ours, one man can by one day's labour produce one man's year's bread. That is, 8½ bushels of wheat.

Suppose we organise our out-of-workers under skilled farmers, and give them the best machinery. Suppose they only produce one-half the American product. They will still be earning more than their keep.

Or set them to work, under skilled directors, on the French or the Belgian plan, at the intensive cultivation of vegetables. Let them grow huge crops of potatoes, carrots, beans, peas, onions; and in the coal counties, where fuel is cheap, let them raise tomatoes and grapes, under glass, and they will produce wealth, and be no longer starvelings or paupers.

Another good plan would be to allow a Municipality to obtain land, under a Compulsory Purchase Act, at a fair rent and near a town, and to relet the land to gardeners and small farmers, to work on the French and Belgian systems. Let the local Corporation find the capital to make soil and lay down heating and draining pipes. Let the Corporation charge rent and interest, buy the produce from the growers and resell it to the citizens, and let the tenant gardeners be granted fixity of tenure and fair payment for improvements, and we shall increase and improve our food supply, lessen the overcrowding in our towns, and reduce the unemployed to the small number of lazy men who *will* not work.

It is the imperative duty of every British citizen to insist upon the Government doing everything that can be done to restore the national agriculture and to remove the dreadful danger of famine in time of war.

National granaries should be formed at once, and at least a year's supply of wheat should be kept in stock.

What are the Government doing in this way? Nothing at all.

The only remedy they have to suggest is *Protection!*

What is Protection? It is a tax on foreign wheat. What would be the result of Protection? The result would be that the landowner would get higher rents and the people would get dearer bread. [Pg 117]

How true is Tolstoy's gibe, that "the rich man will do anything for the poor man—except get off his back." "Our agriculture," the Tory protectionist shrieks, "is perishing. Our farmers cannot make a living. Our landlords cannot let their farms. The remedy is Protection." A truly practical Tory suggestion. "The farmers cannot pay our rents. British agriculture is dying out. Let us put a tax upon the poor man's bread."

Yes; Protection is a remedy, but it must be the protection of the farmer against the landlord. Give

our farmers fixity of tenure, compensation for improvements, and prevent the landlord from taxing the industry and brains of the farmer by increase of rent, and British agriculture will soon rear its head again.

Quite recently we have had an example of Protection. The coal owners combined and raised the price of coal some 6s. to 10s. a ton. It is said they cleared more than £60,000,000 sterling on the deal. What good did that do the workers? Did the colliers get any of the spoil in wages? No; that money is lying up ready to crush the colliers when they next strike.

It is the same story over and over again. We cannot have cheap coal because the rich owners demand big fortunes; we cannot have cheap houses or decent homes because the landlords raise the rents faster than the people can increase our trade; we cannot grow our food as cheaply as we can buy it because the rich owners of the land squeeze the farmer dry and make it impossible for him to live. And the harder the collier, the weaver, the farmer, and the mechanic work, the harder the landlord and the capitalist squeeze. The industry, skill, and perseverance of the workers avail nothing but to make a few rich and idle men richer and more idle.

As I have repeatedly pointed out before, we have by sacrificing our agriculture destroyed our insular position. As an island we may be, or *should be*, free from serious danger of invasion. But of what avail is our vaunted silver shield of the sea if we depend upon other nations for our food? We are helpless in case of a great war. It is not necessary to invade England in order to conquer her. Once our food supply is stopped we are shut up like a beleaguered city to starve or to surrender.

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Stop the import of food into England for three months, and we shall be obliged to surrender at discretion.

And our agriculture is to be ruined, and the safety and honour of the Empire are to be endangered, that a few landlords, coal owners, and money-lenders may wax fat upon the vitals of the nation.

So, I say, we do need Protection; but it is the protection of our farmers and colliers, our weavers and our mechanics, our homes, our health, our food, our cities, our children and women, yes, our national existence—against the rapacity of the rich lords, employers, and money-lenders, who impudently pose as the champions of patriotism and the expansion of the Empire.

Again, I recommend every Socialist to read the new edition of Prince Kropotkin's *Fields, Factories, and Workshops*.

CHAPTER XIII THE SUCCESSFUL MAN

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There are many who believe that if all the workers became abstainers, worked harder, lived sparsely, and saved every penny they could; and that if they avoided early marriages and large families, they would all be happy and prosperous without Socialism.

And, of course, these same persons believe that the bulk of the suffering and poverty of the poor is due to drink, to thriftlessness, and to imprudent marriages.

I know that many, very many, do believe these things, because I used to meet such persons when I went out lecturing.

Now I know that belief to be wrong. I know that if every working man and woman in England turned teetotaler to-morrow, if they all remained single, if they all worked like niggers, if they all worked for twelve hours a day, if they lived on oatmeal and water, and if they saved every farthing they could spare, they would, at the end of twenty years, be a great deal worse off than they are to-day.

Sobriety, thrift, industry, skill, self-denial, holiness, are all good things; but they would, if adopted by *all* the workers, simply enrich the idle and the wicked, and reduce the industrious and the righteous to slavery.

Teetotalism will not do; industry will not do; saving will not do; increased skill will not do; keeping single will not do; reducing the population will not do. Nothing *will* do but *Socialism*.

I mean to make these things plain to you if I can.

I will begin by answering a statement made by a Tory M.P. As reported in the Press, the M.P. said, "There was nothing to prevent the son of a crossing-sweeper from rising to be Lord Chancellor of England."

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This, at first sight, would seem to have nothing to do with the theories regarding thrift, temperance, and prudent marriages. But we shall find that it arises from the same error.

This error has two faces. On one face it says that any man may do well if he will try, and on the other face it says that those who do not do well have no one but themselves to blame.

The error rises from a slight confusion of thought. Men know that a man may rise from the lowest place in life to almost the highest, and they suppose that because one man can do it, *all* men can do it; they know that if one man works hard, saves, keeps sober, and remains single, he will get more money than other men who drink and spend and take life easily, and they suppose because thrift, single life, industry, and temperance spell success to one man, they would spell success to *all*.

I will show you that this is a mistake, and I will show you why it is a mistake. Let us begin with the crossing-sweeper.

We are told that "*there is nothing to prevent* the son of a crossing-sweeper from becoming Lord Chancellor of England." But our M.P. does not mean that there is nothing to prevent the son of some one particular crossing-sweeper from becoming Chancellor; he means that there is nothing to prevent *any* son of *any* crossing-sweeper, or the son of *any* very poor man, from becoming rich and famous.

Now, let me show you what nonsense this is.

There are in all England, let us say, some 2,000,000 of poor and friendless and untaught boys.

And there is *one* Lord Chancellor. Now, it is just possible for *one* boy out of the 2,000,000 to become Lord Chancellor; but it is quite impossible for *all* the boys, or even for one boy in 1000, or for one boy in 10,000, to become Lord Chancellor.

Our M.P. means that if a boy is clever and industrious he may become Lord Chancellor.

But suppose *all* the boys are as clever and as industrious as he is, they cannot *all* become chancellors.

The one boy can only succeed because he is stronger, cleverer, more pushing, more persistent, or more *lucky* than any other boy. [Pg 121]

In my story, *Bob's Fairy*, this very point is raised. I will quote it for you here. Bob, who is a boy, is much troubled about the poor; his father, who is a self-made man and mayor of his native town, tells Bob that the poor are suffering because of their own faults. The parson then tries to make Bob understand—

"Come, come, come," said the reverend gentleman, "you are too young for such questions. Ah—let me try to—ah—explain it to you. Here is your father. He is wealthy. He is honoured. He is mayor of his native town. Now, how did he make his way?"

Mr. Toppinroyd smiled, and poured himself out another glass of wine. His wife nodded her head approvingly at the minister.

"Your father," continued the minister, "made himself what he is by industry, thrift, and talent."

"If another man was as clever, and as industrious and thrifty as father," said Bob, "could he get on as well?"

"Of course he could," replied Mr. Toppinroyd.

"Then the poor are not like that?" asked Bob.

"I regret to say," said the parson, "that—ah—they are not."

"But if they were like father, they could do what he has done?" Bob said.

"Of course, you silly," exclaimed his mother.

Ned chuckled behind his paper. Kate turned to the piano.

Bob nodded and smiled. "How droll!" said he.

"What's droll?" his father asked sharply.

"Why," said Bob, "how funny it would be if all the people were industrious, and clever, and steady!"

"Funny?" ejaculated the parson.

"Funny?" repeated Mr. Toppinroyd.

"What do you mean, dear?" inquired Mrs. Toppinroyd mildly.

"If all the men in Loomborough were as clever and as good as father," said Bob simply, "there would be 50,000 rich mill-owners, and they would all be mayor of the same town."

Mr. Toppinroyd gave a sharp glance at his son, then leaned forward, boxed his ears, and said—

"Get to bed, you young monkey. Go!"

Do you see the idea? The poor cannot *all* be mayors and chancellors and millionaires, because

there are too many of them and not enough high places.

But they can all be asses, and they will be asses, if they listen to such rubbish as that uttered by this Tory M.P.

You have twenty men starting for a race. You may say, "There is nothing to prevent any man from winning the race," but you mean any one man who is luckier or swifter than the rest. You would never be foolish enough to believe that *all* the men could win. You know that nineteen of the men *must lose*. [Pg 122]

So we know that in a race for the Chancellorship *only one* boy can win, and the other 1,999,999 *must lose*.

It is the same thing with temperance, industry, and cleverness. Of 10,000 mechanics one is steadier, more industrious, and more skilful than the others. Therefore he will get work where the others cannot. But *why*? Because he is worth more as a workman. But don't you see that if all the others were as good as he, he would *not* be worth more?

Then you see that to tell 1,000,000 men that they will get more work or more wages if they are cleverer, or soberer, or more industrious, is as foolish as to tell the twenty men starting for a race that they can all win if they will all try.

If all the men were just as fast as the winner, the race would end in a dead heat.

There is a fire panic in a big hall. The hall is full of people, and there is only one door. A rush is made for that door. Some of the crowd get out, some are trampled to death, some are injured, some are burned.

Now, of that crowd of people, who are most likely to escape?

Those nearest to the door have a better chance than those farthest, have they not?

Then the strong have a better chance than the weak, have they not?

And the men have a better chance than the women, and the children the worst chance of all. Is it not so?

Then, again, which is most likely to be saved—the selfish man who fights and drags others down, who stands upon the fallen bodies of women and children, and wins his way by force; or the brave and gentle man who tries to help the women and the children, and will not trample upon the wounded?

Don't you know that the noble and brave man stands a poor chance of escape, and that the selfish, brutal man stands a good chance of escape? [Pg 123]

Well, now, suppose a man to have got out, perhaps because he was near the door, or perhaps because he was very strong, or perhaps because he was very lucky, or perhaps because he did not stop to help the women and children, and suppose him to stand outside the door, and cry out to the struggling and dying creatures in the burning hall, "Serves you jolly well right if you *do* suffer. Why don't you get out? *I* got out. You can get out if you *try*. *There is nothing to prevent any one of you from getting out.*"

Suppose a man talked like that, what would you say of him? Would you call him a sensible man? Would you call him a Christian? Would you call him a gentleman?

You will say I am severe. I am. Every time a successful man talks as this M.P. talks he inflicts a brutal insult upon the unsuccessful, many thousands of whom, both men and women, are worthier and better than himself.

But let us go back to our subject. That fire panic in the big hall is a picture of *life* as it is to-day.

It is a scramble of a big crowd to get through a small door. Those who get through are cheered and rewarded, and few questions are asked as to *how* they got through.

Now, Socialists say that there should be more doors, and no scramble.

But let me use this example of the hall and the panic more fully.

Suppose the hall to be divided into three parts. First the stalls, then the pit stalls, then the pit. Suppose the only door is the door in the stalls. Suppose the people in the pit stalls have to climb a high barrier to get to the stalls. Suppose those in the pit have to climb a high barrier to get to the pit stalls, and then the high barrier that parts the pit stalls from the stalls. Suppose there is, right at the back of the pit, a small, weak boy. Now, I ask you, as sensible men, is there "nothing to prevent" that boy from getting through that door? You know the boy has only the smallest of chances of getting out of that hall. But he has a thousand times a better chance of getting safely out of that door than the son of a crossing-sweeper has of becoming Lord Chancellor of England. [Pg 124]

In our hall the upper classes would sit in the stalls, the middle classes in the pit stalls, and the workers in the pit. *Whose son would have the best chance for the door?*

I compared the race for the Chancellorship just now to a foot-race of twenty men; and I showed you that if all the runners were as fleet as greyhounds only one could win, and nineteen *must* lose.

But the M.P.'s crossing-sweeper's son has to enter a race where there are millions of starters, and where the race is a *handicap* in which he is on scratch, with thousands of men more than half the course in front of him.

For don't you see that this race which the lucky or successful men tell us we can *all* win is not a fair race?

The son of the crossing-sweeper has terrible odds against him. The son of the gentleman has a long start, and carries less weight.

What are the qualities needed in a race for the Chancellorship? The boy who means to win must be marvellously strong, clever, brave, and persevering.

Now, will he be likely to be strong? He *may* be, but the odds are against him. His father may not be strong nor his mother, for they may have worked hard, and they may not have been well fed, nor well nursed, nor well doctored. They probably live in a slum, and they cannot train, nor teach, nor feed their son in a healthy and proper way, because they are ignorant and poor. And the boy gets a few years at a board school, and then goes to work.

But the gentleman's son is well bred, well fed, well nursed, well trained, and lives in a healthy place. He goes to good schools, and from school to college.

And when he leaves college he has money to pay fees, and he has a name, and he has education; and I ask you, what are the odds against the son of a crossing-sweeper in a race like that?

Well, there is not a single case where men are striving for wealth or for place where the sons of the workers are not handicapped in the same way. Now and again a worker's son wins. He may win because he is a genius like Stephenson or Sir William Herschel; or he may win because he is cruel and unscrupulous, like Jay Gould; or he may win because he is lucky. [Pg 125]

But it is folly to say that there is "nothing to prevent him" from winning. There is almost everything to prevent him. To begin with, his chances of dying before he's five years old are about ten times as numerous as the chances of a rich man's son.

Look at Lord Salisbury. He is Prime Minister of England. Had he been born the son of a crossing-sweeper do you think he would have been Prime Minister?

I would undertake to find a hundred better minds than Lord Salisbury's in any English town of 10,000 inhabitants. But will any one of the boys I should select become Prime Minister of England? You know they will not. But yet they ought to, if "there is nothing to prevent them."

But there is something to prevent them. There is poverty to prevent them, there is privilege to prevent them, there is snobbery to prevent them, there is class feeling to prevent them, there are hundreds of other things to prevent them, and amongst those hundreds of other things to prevent them from becoming Prime Ministers I hope that their own honesty and goodness and wisdom may be counted; for honesty and goodness and true wisdom are things which will often prevent a poor boy who is lucky enough to possess them from ever becoming what the world of politics and commerce considers a "successful man."

Do not believe the doctrine that the rich and poor, the successful and the unsuccessful, get what they deserve. If that were true we should find intelligence and virtue keeping level with income. Then the mechanic at 30s. a week would be half as good again as the labourer at 20s. a week; the small merchant, making £200 a year, would be a far better man than one mechanic; the large merchant, making £2000 a year, would be ten times as good as the small merchant; and the millionaire would be too intellectual, too noble, and too righteous for this sinful world.

But don't you know that there are stupid and drunken mechanics, and steady and intelligent labourers? And don't you know that some successful men are rascals, and that some very wealthy men are fools? [Pg 126]

Take the story of Jacob and Esau. After Jacob cheated his hungry brother into selling his birthright for a mess of pottage, Jacob was rich and Esau poor. Did each get what he deserved? Was Jacob the better man?

Christ lived poor, a homeless wanderer, and died the death of a felon. Jay Gould made millions of money, and died one of the wealthiest men in the world. Did each get what he deserved? Did the wealth of Gould and the poverty of Christ indicate the intellectual and moral merits of those two sons of men?

Some of us would get whipped if all of us got our deserts; but who would deserve applause and wealth and a crown?

In a sporting handicap the weakest have the most start: in real life the strongest have the start and the weakest are put on scratch.

And I *have* heard it hinted that the man who runs the straightest does not always win.

TEMPERANCE AND THRIFT

I said in the previous chapter that if *all* the workers were very thrifty, sober, industrious, and abstemious they would be worse off in the matter of wages than they are now.

This, at first sight, seems strange, because we know that the sober and thrifty workman is generally better off than the workman who drinks or wastes his money.

But why is he better off? He is better off because, being a steady man, he can often get work when an unsteady man cannot. He is better off because he buys things that add to his comfort, or he saves money, and so grows more independent. And he is able to save money, and to make his home more cosy, because, while he is more regularly employed than the unsteady men, his wages remain the same, or, perhaps, are something higher than theirs.

That is to say, he benefits by his own steadiness and thrift because his steadiness makes him a more reliable, and therefore a more valuable, workman than one who is not steady.

But, you see, he is only more valuable because other men are less steady. If all the other workmen were as steady as he is he would be no more valuable than they are. Not being more valuable than they are, he would not be more certain of getting work.

That is to say, if all the workers were sober and thrifty, they would all be of equal value to the employer.

But you may say they would still be better off than if they drank and wasted their wages. They would have better health, and they would have happier lives and more comfortable homes.

Yes, so long as their wages were as high as before. But their wages would *not* be as high as before. [Pg 128]

You must know that as things now are, where all the work is in the gift of private employers, and where wages and prices are ruled by competition, and where new inventions of machinery are continually throwing men out of work, and where farm labourers are always drifting to the towns, there are more men in need of work than work can be found for.

Therefore, there is always a large number of workers out of work.

Now, under competition, where two men offer themselves for one place, you know that the place will be given to the man who will take the lower wage.

And you know that the thrifty and the sober man can live on less than the thriftless man.

And you know that where two or more employers are offering their goods against each other for sale in the open market, the one who sells his goods the cheapest will get the trade. And you know that in order to sell their goods at a cheaper rate than other dealers, the employers will try to *get* their goods at the cheapest rate possible.

And you know that with most goods the chief cost is the cost of the labour used in the making—that is to say, the wages of the workers.

Very well, you have more workers than are needed, so that there is competition amongst those workers as to who shall be employed.

And those will be employed who are the cheapest.

And those who can live upon least can afford to work for least.

And all the workers being sober and thrifty, they can all live on less than when many of them were wasteful and fond of drink.

Then, on the other hand, all the employers are competing for the trade, and so are all wanting cheap labour; and so are eager to lower wages.

Therefore wages will come down, and the general thrift and steadiness of the workers will make them poorer. Do you doubt this? What is that tale the masters so often tell you? Do they not tell you that England depends upon her foreign trade for her food? And do they not tell you that foreign traders are stealing the trade from the English traders? And do they not tell you that the foreign traders can undersell us in the world's markets because their labour is cheaper? And do they not say that if the British workers wish to keep the foreign trade they will have to be as thrifty and as industrious and as sober as the foreign workers? [Pg 129]

Well, what does that mean? It means that if the British workers were as thrifty and sober and industrious as the foreign workers, they could live on less than they now need. It means that if you were all teetotalers and all thrifty, you could work for less wages than they now pay, and so they would be able to sell their goods at a lower price than they can now; and thus they would keep the foreign trade.

Is not that all quite clear and plain? And is it not true that in France, in Germany, and all other countries where the workers live more sparsely, and are more temperate than the workers are in England, the wages are lower and the hours of work longer?

And is it not true that the Chinese and the Hindoos, who are the most temperate and the most

thrifty people in the world, are always the worst paid?

And do you not know very well that the "Greeners"—the foreign Jews who come to England for work and shelter—are very sober and very thrifty and very industrious men, and that they are about the worst-paid workers in this country?

Take now, as an example, the case of the cotton trade. The masters tell you that they find it hard to compete against the Indian factories, and they say if Lancashire wants to keep the trade the Lancashire workers must accept the conditions of the Indian workers.

The Indian workers live chiefly on rice and water, and work far longer hours than do the English workers.

And don't you see that if the Lancashire workers would live upon rice and water, the masters would soon have their wages down to rice and water point?

And then the Indians would have to live on less, or work still longer hours, and so the game would go on. [Pg 130]

And who would reap the benefit? The English masters and the Indian masters (who are often one and the same) would still take a large share, but the chief benefit of the fall in price would go to the buyers—or users, or "consumers"—of the goods.

That is to say, that the workers of India and of England would be starved and sweated, so that the natives of other countries could have cheap clothing.

If you doubt what I say, look at the employers' speeches, read the newspapers which are in the employers' pay, add two and two together, and you will find it all out for yourselves.

To return to the question of temperance and thrift. You see, I hope, that if *all* the people were sober and thrifty they would be really worse off than they now are. This is because the workers must have work, must ask the employers to give them work, and must ask employers who, being in competition with each other, are always trying to get the work done at the lowest price.

And the lowest price is always the price which the bulk of the workers are content to live upon.

In all foreign nations where the standard of living is lower than in England, you will find that the wages are lower also.

Have we not often heard our manufacturers declare that if the British workers would emulate the thrift and sobriety of the foreigner they might successfully compete against foreign competition in the foreign market? What does that mean, but that thrift would enable our people to live on less, and so to accept less wages?

Why are wages of women in the shirt trade low?

It is because capitalism always keeps the wages down to the lowest standard of subsistence which the people will accept.

So long as our English women will consent to work long hours, and live on tea and bread, the "law of supply and demand" will maintain the present condition of sweating in the shirt trade.

If all our women became firmly convinced that they could not exist without chops and bottled stout, the wages *must* go up to a price to pay for those things. [Pg 131]

Because there would be no women offering to live on tea and bread; and shirts must be had.

But what is the result of the abstinence of these poor sisters of ours? Low wages for themselves, and, for others?—

A young merchant wants a dozen shirts. He pays 10s. each for them. He meets a friend who only gave 8s. for his. He goes to the 8s. shop and saves 2s. This is clear profit, and he spends it in cigars, or champagne, or in some other luxury; *and the poor seamstress lives on toast and tea.*

But although I say that sobriety and thrift, if adopted by *all* the workers, would result in lower wages, you are not to suppose that I advise you all to be drunkards and spendthrifts.

No. The proper thing is to do away with competition. At present the employers, in the scramble to undersell each other, actually fine you for your virtue and self-denial by lowering your wages, just as the landlords fine a tenant for improving his land or enlarging his house or extending his business—fine him by raising his rent.

And now we may, I think, come to the question of imprudent marriages.

The idea seems to be that a man should not marry until he is "in a position to keep a wife." And it is a very common thing for employers, and other well-to-do persons, to tell working men that they "have no right to bring children into the world until they are able to provide for them."

Now let us clear the ground a little before we begin to deal with this question on its economic side—that is, as it affects wages.

It is bad for men and women to marry too young. It is bad for two reasons. Firstly, because the body is not mature; and secondly, because the mind is not settled. That is to say, an over-early marriage has a bad effect on the health; and since young people must, in the nature of things, [Pg 132]

change very much as they grow older, an over-early marriage is often unhappy.

I think a woman would be wise not to marry before she is about four-and-twenty; and I think it is better that the husband should be from five to ten years older than the wife.

Then it is very bad for a woman to have many children; and not only is it bad for her health, but it destroys nearly all the pleasure of her life, so that she is an enfeebled and weary drudge through her best years, and is old before her time.

That much conceded, I ask you, Mr. John Smith, what do you think of the request that you shall work hard, live spare, and give up a man's right to love, to a home, to children, in order that you may be able to "make a living"? Such a living is not worth working for. It would be a manlier and a happier lot to die.

Here is the idea as it has been expressed by a working man—

Up to now I had thought that the object of life was to live, and that the object of love was to love. But the economists have changed all that. There is neither love nor life, sentiment nor affection. The earth is merely a vast workshop, where all is figured by debit and credit, and where supply and demand regulates everything. You have no right to live unless the industrial market demands hands; a woman has no business to bring forth a child unless the capitalist requires live stock.

I cannot really understand a *man* selling his love and his manhood, and talking like a coward or a slave about "imprudent marriages"; and all for permission to drudge at an unwelcome task, and to eat and sleep for a few lonely and dishonourable years in a loveless and childless world.

You don't think *that* is going to save you, men, do you? You don't think you are going to make the best of life by selling for the sake of drudgery and bread and butter your proud man's right to work for, fight for, and die for the woman you love?

For, having sold your love for permission to work, how long will you be before you sell your honour? Nay, is it not true that many of you have sold it already?

For every man who works at jerry work, or takes a part in any kind of adulteration, scampery, or trade rascality, is selling his honour for wages, and is just as big a scamp and a good deal more of a coward than a burglar or a highwayman.

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And the commercial travellers and the canvassers and the agents who get their living by telling lies,—as some of them do,—do you call those *men*?

And the gentlemen of the Press who write against their convictions for a salary, and for the sake of a suburban villa, a silk hat, and some cheap claret, devote their energies and talents to the perpetuation of falsehood and wrong—do you call *those* men?

If we cannot keep our foreign trade without giving up our love and our manhood and our honour, it is time the foreign trade went to the devil and took the British employers with it.

If the state of things in England to-day makes it impossible for men and women to love and marry, then the state of things in England to-day will not do.

Well, do you still think that single life, a crust of bread, and rags, will alone enable you to hold your own and to keep your foreign trade? And do you still think that poverty is a mark of unworthiness, and wealth the sure proof of merit? If so, just read these few lines from an article by a Tory Minister, Sir John Gorst—

The "won't-works" are very few in number, but the section of the population who cannot earn enough wages all the year round to live decently is very large.

Professional criminals are not generally poor, for when out of gaol they live very comfortably as a rule. There are wastrels, of course, who have sunk so low as to have a positive aversion to work, and it is people of this kind who are most noisy in parading their poverty. The industrious poor, on the other hand, shrink from exposing their wretchedness to the world, and strive as far as possible to keep it out of sight.

Now, contrast those sensible and kindly words with the following quotation from a mercantile journal:—

The talk about every man having a right to work is fallacious, for he can only have the right of every free man to do work if he can get it.

Yes! But he has other "rights." He has the right to combine to defeat attempts to rob him of work or to lower his wages; he has the right to vote for parliamentary and municipal candidates who will alter the laws and the conditions of society which enable a few greedy and heartless men to disorganise the industries of the nation, to keep the Briton off the land which is his birthright, to exploit the brain and the sinew of the people, and to condemn millions of innocent and helpless women and children to poverty, suffering, ignorance, and too often to disgrace or early death.

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A man, John Smith, has the right to *be a man*, and, if he is a Briton, has a right to be a free man. It is to persuade every man in Britain to exercise this right, and to do his duty to the children and the women of his class and family, that I am publishing this book.

"The right to do work if he can get it," John, and to starve if he cannot get it.

How long will you allow these insolent market-men to insult you? How long will you allow a mob of money-lending, bargain-driving, dividend-snatching parasites to live on you, to scorn you, and to treat you as "live stock"? How long? How long?

I shall have to write a book for the women, John.

CHAPTER XV THE SURPLUS LABOUR MISTAKE

[Pg 135]

Many non-Socialists believe that the cause of poverty is "surplus labour," or over-population, and they tell us that if we could reduce our population we should have no poor.

If this were true, we should find that in thinly populated countries the workers fare better than in countries where the population is more dense.

But we do not find anything of the kind.

The population of Ireland is thin. There are more people in London than in all Ireland. Yet the working people of Ireland are worse off than the working people of England.

The population of Scotland is thinner than that of England, but wages are higher in England.

In Australia there is a large country and a small population, but there is plenty of poverty.

In the Middle Ages the entire population of England would only be a few millions—say four or five millions—whereas it is now nearly thirty millions. Yet the working classes are very much better off to-day than they were in the eighth and ninth centuries.

Reduce the population of Britain to one million and the workers would be in no better case than they are now. Increase the population to sixty millions and the workers will be no worse off—at least so far as wages are concerned.

I will give you the reason for this in a few words, using an illustration which used to serve me for the same purpose in one of my lectures.

No one will deny that all wealth—whether food, tools, clothing, furniture, machines, arms, or houses—comes from *the land*.

For we feed our cattle and poultry on the land, and get from the land corn, malt, hops, iron, timber, and every other thing we use, except fish and a few sea-drugs; and we could not get fish without nets and boats, nor make nets and boats without fibre and wood and metals.

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Stand a decanter and a tumbler on a bare table. Call the table Britain, call the decanter a landlord, and call the tumbler a labourer.

Now no man can produce wealth without land. If, then, Lord de Canter owns all the land, and Tommy Tumbler owns none, how is Tommy Tumbler to get his living?

He will have to work for Lord de Canter, and he will have to take the wage his lordship offers him.

Now you cannot say that Britain is over-populated with only two men, nor that it is suffering from a superfluity of labour when there is only one labourer. And yet you observe that with only two men in the country one is rich and the other poor.

How, then, will a reduction of the population prevent poverty?

Look at this diagram. A square board, with two men on it; one is black and one is white.



Fig. 3.

Call the board England, the black pawn a landlord, and the white pawn a labourer.

Let me repeat that every useful thing comes out of the land, and then ask this simple question: If *all* the land—the whole of England—belongs to the black man, how is the white man going to get

his living?

You see, although the population of England consists of only two men, if one of these men owns *all* the land, the other man must starve, or steal, or beg, or work for wages. [Pg 137]

Now, suppose our white man works for wages—works for the black man—what is going to regulate the wages? Will the fact that there is only one beggar make that beggar any richer? If there were ten white men, and *all* the land belonged to the black man, the ten whites would be as well off as the one white was, for the landowner could find them all work, and could get them to work for just as much as they could live on.

No: that idea of raising wages by reducing the population is a mistake. Do not the workers *make* the wealth? They do. And is it not odd to say that we will increase the wealth by reducing the number of the wealth makers?

But perhaps you think the workers might get a bigger *share* of the wealth if there were fewer of them.

How? Our black man owns all England. He has 100 whites working for him at wages just big enough to keep them alive. Of those 100 whites 50 die. Will the black man raise the wages of the remaining 50? Why should he? There is no reason why he should. But there is this reason why he should not, viz. that as he has now only 50 men working for him, he will only be half as rich as he was when he had 100 men working for him. But the land is still his, and the whites are still in his power. He will still pay them just as much as they can live on, and no more.

But you may say that if the workers decreased and the masters did not decrease in numbers, wages must rise.

Suppose you have in the export cotton trade 100 masters and 100,000 workers. Half the workers die. You have now 100 masters and 50,000 workers.

Then you may say that, as foreign countries would still want the work of 100,000 workers, the 100 masters would compete as to which got the biggest orders, and so wages would rise.

But bear in mind two things. First, if the foreign workers were as numerous as before, the English masters could import hands; second, if the foreign workers died out as fast as the English, there would only be half as many foreigners needing shirts, and so the trade would keep pace with the decrease in workers, and the wages would remain as they were. [Pg 138]

To improve the wages of the English workers the price of cotton goods must rise or the profits of the masters must be cut down.

Neither of these things depends on the number of the population.

But now go back to our England with the three men in it. Here is the black landlord, rich and idle; and the two white workers, poor and industrious. One of the workers dies. The landlord gets less money, but the remaining worker gets no more. *There are only two men in all England, and one of them is poor.*

But suppose we have one black landlord and 100 white workers, and the workers adopt Socialism. Then every man of the 101 will have just what he earns, and *all* that he earns, and all will be free men.

Thus you see that under Socialism a big population will be better off than the smallest population can be under non-Socialism.

But, the non-Socialist objects, wages are ruled by competition, and must fall when the supply of labour exceeds the demand; and when that happens it is because the country is over-populated.

I admit that the supply of labour often exceeds the demand, and that when it does, wages may come down. But I deny that an excess of labour over the demand for labour proves the country to be over-populated. What it does prove is that the country is badly governed and under-cultivated.

A country is over-populated when its soil cannot yield food for its people. At present our population is about 40,000,000 and our soil would support more than double the number.

The country, then, is not over-populated; it is badly governed.

There are, let us say, more shoemakers and tailors than there is employment for. But are there no bare feet and ill-clothed backs? Certainly. The bulk of our workers are not properly shod or clothed. It is not, then, true to say that we have more tailors and shoemakers than we require; but we ought to say instead that our tailors and shoemakers cannot live by their trades because the rest of the workers are too poor to pay them. Now, why are the rest of the workers too poor to buy boots and clothing? Is it because there are too many of them? Let us take an instance: the farm labourer. He cannot afford boots. Why? He is too poor. Why? Not because there are too many farm labourers,—for there are too few,—but because the wages of farm labourers are low. Why are they low? Because agriculture is neglected, and because rents are high. So we come back to my original statement, that the evil is due to the private ownership of land. [Pg 139]

The many are poor because the few are rich.

But, again, it may be asserted that we have always about half a million of men unemployed, and

that these men prove the existence of superfluous labour.

Not at all. There are half a million of men out of work, but there are many millions of acres idle. Abolish private ownership of land, and the nation, being now owner of *all* land, can at once find work for that so-called "superfluous labour."

All wealth comes from the land. All wealth must be got from the land by labour. Given a sufficient quantity of land, one man can produce from the land more wealth than one man can consume. Therefore, as long as there is a sufficiency of land there can be no such thing as "superfluous labour," and no such thing as over-population. Given machinery and combination, and probably one man can produce from the land enough wealth for ten to consume. Why, then, should there be any such thing as poverty?

One fundamental truth of economics is that every able-bodied and willing worker is worth more than his keep.

There is such a thing as locked-out labour, but there is no such thing in this country as useless labour. While we have land lying idle, and while we have to import our food, how can we be so foolish as to call a man who is excluded from the land superfluous? He is one of the factors of wealth, and land is the other. Set the man on the land and he will produce wealth. At present he is out of work and the land out of use. But are either of them superfluous? No; we need both.

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CHAPTER XVI IS SOCIALISM POSSIBLE, AND WILL IT PAY?

[Pg 141]

Non-Socialists assert with the utmost confidence that Socialism is impossible. Let us consider this statement in a practical way.

We are told that Socialism is impossible. That means that the people have not the ability to manage their own affairs, and must, perforce, give nearly all the wealth they produce to the superior persons who at present are kind enough to own, to govern, and to manage Britain for the British.

A bold statement! The people *cannot* manage their own business: it is *impossible*. They cannot farm the land, and build the factories, and weave the cloth, and feed and clothe and house themselves; they are not able to do it. They must have landlords and masters to do it for them.

But the joke is that these landlords and masters do *not* do it for the people. The people do it for the landlords and masters; and the latter gentlemen make the people pay them for allowing the people to work.

But the people can only produce wealth under supervision; they must have superior persons to direct them. So the non-Socialist declares.

Another bold assertion, which is not true. For nearly all those things which the non-Socialist tells us are impossible *are being done*. Nearly all those matters of management, of which the people are said to be incapable, are being accomplished by the people *now*.

For if the nation can build warships, why can they not build cargo ships? If they can make rifles, why not sewing machines or ploughs? If they can build forts, why not houses? If they can make policemen's boots and soldiers' coats, why not make ladies' hats and mechanics' trousers? If they can pickle beef for the navy, why should they not make jam for the household? If they can run a railway across the African desert, why should they not run one from London to York?

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Look at the Co-operative Societies. They own and run cargo ships. They import and export goods. They make boots and foods. They build their own shops and factories. They buy and sell vast quantities of useful things.

Well, these places were started by working men, and are owned by working men.

Look at the post office. If the nation can carry its own letters, why not its own coals? If it can manage its telegraphs, why not its railways, its trams, its cabs, its factories?

Look at the London County Council and the Glasgow and Manchester Corporations. If these bodies of public servants can build dwelling-houses, make roads, tunnels, and sewers, carry water from Thirlmere to Manchester, manage the Ship Canal, make and supply gas, own and work tramways, and take charge of art galleries, baths, wash-houses, and technical schools, what is there that landlords or masters do, or get done, which the cities and towns cannot do better and more cheaply for themselves?

What sense is there in pretending that the colliers could not get coal unless they paid rent to a lord, or that the railways could not carry coal unless they paid dividends to a company, or that the weaver could not make shirtings, nor the milliners bonnets, nor the cutlers blades, just as well for the nation as for Mr. Bounderby or my Lord Tomnoddy?

"But," the "Impossibles" will say, "you have not got the capital."

Do not believe them. You *have* got the capital. Where? In your brains and in your arms, where *all* the capital comes from.

Why, if what the "Impossibles" tell us be true—if the people are not able to do anything for themselves as well as the private dealers or makers can do it for them—the gas and water companies ought to have no fear of being cut out in price and quality by any County Council or Corporation.

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But the "Impossibles" know very well that, directly the people set up on their own account, the private trader or maker is beaten. Let one district of London begin to make its own gas, and see what will happen in the other districts.

Twenty years ago this cry of "Impossible" was not so easy to dispose of, but to-day it can be silenced by the logic of accomplished facts. For within the last score of years the Municipalities of London, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, Bradford, Birmingham, Bolton, Leicester, and other large towns have *proved* that the Municipalities can manage large and small enterprises efficiently, and that in all cases it is to the advantage of the ratepayers, of the consumers, and of the workers that private management should be displaced by management under the Municipality.

Impossible? Why, the capital already invested in municipal works amounts to nearly £100,000,000. And the money is well invested, and all the work is prosperous.

Municipalities own and manage waterworks, gasworks, tramways, telephones, electric lighting, markets, baths, piers, docks, parks, farms, dwelling-houses, abattoirs, cemeteries, crematoriums, libraries, schools, art galleries, hotels, dairies, colleges, and technical schools. Many of the Municipalities also provide concerts, open-air music, science classes, and lectures; and quite recently the Alexandra Palace has been municipalised, and is now being successfully run by the people and for the people.

How, then, can *Socialism* be called impossible? As a matter of fact *Socialism* is only a method of extending State management, as in the Post Office, and Municipal management, as in the cases above named, until State and Municipal management becomes universal all through the kingdom.

Where is the impossibility of that? If a Corporation can manage trams, gas, and water, why can it not manage bread, milk, meat, and beer supplies?

If Bradford can manage one hotel, why not more than one? If Bradford can manage more than one hotel, why cannot London, Glasgow, Leeds, and Portsmouth do the same?

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If the German, Austrian, French, Italian, Belgian, and other Governments can manage the railway systems of their countries, why cannot the British Government manage theirs?

If the Government can manage a fleet of war vessels, why not fleets of liners and traders? If the Government can manage post and telegraph services, why not telephones and coalmines?

The answer to all these questions is that the Government and the Municipalities have proved that they can manage vast and intricate businesses, and can manage them more cheaply, more efficiently, and more to the advantage and satisfaction of the public than the same class of business has ever been managed by private firms.

How can it be maintained, then, that *Socialism* is impossible?

But, will it *pay*? What! *Will* it pay? It *does* pay. Read *To-Day's Work*, by George Haw, Clarion Press, 2s. 6d., and *Does Municipal Management Pay?* by R. B. Suthers, Clarion Press, 6d., and you will be surprised to find how well these large and numerous Municipal experiments in *Socialism* do pay.

From the book on Municipal Management, by R. B. Suthers, above mentioned, I will quote a few comparisons between Municipal and private tram and water services.

WATER

"In Glasgow they devote all profits to making the services cheaper and to paying off capital borrowed.

"Thus, since the Glasgow Municipality took control of the water supply, forty years ago, they have reduced the price of water from 1s. 2d. in the pound rental to 5d. in the pound rental for domestic supply.

"Compare that with the price paid by the London consumer under private enterprise.

"On a £30 house in Glasgow the water rate amounts to 12s. 6d.

"On a £30 house in Chelsea the water rate amounts to 30s.

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"On a £30 house in Lambeth the water rate is £2, 16s.

"On a £30 house in Southwark the water rate is 32s.

"And so on. The London consumer pays from two to five times as much as the Glasgow consumer. He does not get as much water, he does not get as good water, and a large part of the money he pays goes into the pockets of the water lords.

"Last year the water companies took just over a million in profits from the intelligent electors of the Metropolis.

"In Glasgow a part of the 5d. in the pound goes to paying off the capital borrowed to provide the waterworks. £2,350,000 has been so spent, and over one million of this has been paid back.

"Does Municipal management pay?"

"Look at Liverpool. The private companies did not give an adequate supply, so the Municipality took the matter in hand. What is the result?"

"The charge for water in Liverpool is a fixed rate of 3d. in the pound and a water rate of 7½d. in the pound.

"For this comparatively small amount the citizen of Liverpool, as Sir Thomas Hughes said, "can have as many baths and as many water closets as he likes, and the same with regard to water for his garden."

"In London the water companies make high charges for every separate bath and water closet."

TRAMWAYS

"In Glasgow from 1871 to 1894 a private company had a lease of the tramways from the Corporation.

"When the lease was about to expire the Corporation tried to arrange terms with the company for a renewal, but the company would not accept the terms offered.

"Moreover, there was a strong public feeling in favour of the Corporation working the tramways. The company service was not efficient; it was dear, and their bad treatment of their employees had roused general indignation.

"So the Corporation decided to manage the tramways, and the day after the company's lease expired they placed on the streets an entirely new service of cars, cleaner, handsomer, and more comfortable in every way than their predecessors'. [Pg 146]

"The result of the first eleven months' working was a triumph for Municipal management.

"The Corporation had many difficulties to contend with. Their horses were new and untrained, their staff was larger and new to the work, and the old company flooded the routes with 'buses to compete with the trams.

"Notwithstanding these difficulties, they introduced halfpenny fares, they lengthened the distance for a penny, they raised the wages of the men and shortened their hours, they refused to disfigure the cars with advertisements, thus losing a handsome revenue, and in the end were able to show a profit of £24,000, which was devoted to the common-good fund and to depreciation account.

"Since that time the success of the enterprise has been still more wonderful.

"The private company during the last four weeks of their reign carried 4,428,518 passengers.

"The Corporation in the corresponding four weeks of 1895 carried 6,114,789.

In the year 1895-6 the Corporation carried	87,000,000
In the year 1899-1900	127,000,000
In the year 1900-1	132,000,000
In 1895-6 the receipts were	£222,121
In 1899-1900 the receipts were	£464,886
In 1900-1 the receipts were	£484,872
In 1895 there were	31 miles of tramway
In 1901 there were	44½ miles of tramway
In 1895 the number of cars was	170
In 1901 the number of cars was	322

"The citizens of Glasgow have a much better service than the private company provided, the fares are from 30 to 50 per cent. lower, the men work four hours a day less, and get from 5s. a week more wages, and free uniforms, and the capital expended is being gradually wiped out.

"In thirty-three years the capital borrowed will be paid back from a sinking fund provided out of the receipts.

"The gross capital expenditure to May 1901 was £1,947,730.

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"The sinking fund amounts to £75,063.

"But the Corporation have, in addition, written off £153,796 for depreciation, they have placed £91,350 to a Permanent Way Renewal Fund, and they have piled up a general reserve fund of £183,428.

"Under a private company £100,000 would have gone into the pockets of a few shareholders *on*

last year's working—even if the private company had charged the same fares and paid the same wages as the Corporation did, which is an unlikely assumption."

If you will read the two books I have mentioned, by Messrs. Haw and Suthers, you will be convinced by *facts* that *Socialism* is possible, and that it *will* pay.

Bear in mind, also, that in all cases where the Municipality has taken over some department of public service and supply, the decrease in cost and the improvement in service which the ratepayers have secured are not the only improvements upon the management of the same work by private companies. Invariably the wages, hours, and conditions of men employed on Municipal work are superior to those of men employed by companies.

Another thing should be well remembered. The private trader thinks only of profit. The Municipality considers the health and comfort of the citizens and the beauty and convenience of the city.

Look about and see what the County Council have done and are doing for London; and all their improvements have to be carried out in the face of opposition from interested and privileged parties. They have to improve and beautify London almost by force of arms, working, as one might say, under the guns of the enemy.

But if the citizens were all united, if the city had one will to work for the general boon, as under *Socialism* happily it should be, London would in a score of years be the richest, the healthiest, and the most beautiful city in the world.

Socialism, Mr. Smith, is quite possible, and will not only pay but bless the nation that has the wisdom to afford full scope to its beneficence.

CHAPTER XVII THE NEED FOR A LABOUR PARTY

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I am now to persuade you, Mr. John Smith, a British workman, that you need a Labour Party. It is a queer task for a bookish man, a literary student, and an easy loungee through life, who takes no interest in politics and needs no party at all. To persuade you, a worker, that you need a worker's party, is like persuading you that you need food, shelter, love, and liberty. It is like persuading a soldier that he needs arms, a scholar that he needs books, a woman that she needs a home. Yet my chief object in writing this book has been to persuade you that you need a Labour Party.

Why should Labour have a Labour Party? I will put the answer first into the words of the anti-Socialist, and say, Because "self-interest is the strongest motive of mankind."

That covers the whole ground, and includes all the arguments that I shall advance in favour of a Labour Party.

For if self-interest be the leading motive of human nature, does it not follow that when a man wants a thing done for his own advantage he will be wise to do it himself.

An upper-class party may be expected to attend to the interests of the upper class. And you will find that such a party has always done what might be expected. A middle-class party may be expected to attend to the interests of the middle class. And history and the logic of current events prove that the middle class has done what might have been expected.

And if you wish the interests of the working class to be attended to, you will take to heart the lesson contained in those examples, and will form a working-class party.

Liberals will declare, and do declare, in most pathetic tones, that they have done more, and will do more, for the workers than the Tories have done or will do. And Liberals will assure you that they are really more anxious to help the workers than we Socialists believe.

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But those are side issues. The main thing to remember is, that even if the Liberals are all they claim to be, they will never do as much for Labour as Labour could do for itself.

Is not self-interest the ruling passion in the human heart? Then how should *any* party be so true to Labour and so diligent in Labour's service as a Labour Party would be?

What is a Trade Union? It is a combination of workers to defend their own interests from the encroachments of the employers.

Well, a Labour Party is a combination of workers to defend their own interests from the encroachments of the employers, or their representatives in Parliament and on Municipal bodies.

Do you elect your employers as officials of your Trade Unions? Do you send employers as delegates to your Trade Union Congress? You would laugh at the suggestion. You know that the employer *could* not attend to your interests in the Trade Union, which is formed as a defence against him.

Do you think the employer is likely to be more useful or more disinterested in Parliament or the County Council than in the Trade Union?

Whether he be in Parliament or in his own office, he is an employer, and he puts his own interest first and the interests of Labour behind.

Yet these men whom as Trade Unionists you mistrust, you actually send as politicians to "represent" you.

A Labour Party is a kind of political Trade Union, and to defend Trade Unionism is to defend Labour representation.

If a Liberal or a Tory can be trusted as a parliamentary representative, why cannot he be trusted as an employer?

If an employer's interests are opposed to your interests in business, what reason have you for supposing that his interests and yours are not opposed in politics?

Am I to persuade you to join a Labour Party? Then why should I not persuade you to join a Trade Union? Trade Union and Labour Party are both class defences against class aggression. [Pg 150]

If you oppose a man as an employer, why do you vote for him as a Member of Parliament? His calling himself a Liberal or a Tory does not alter the fact that he is an employer.

To be a Trade Unionist and fight for your class during a strike, and to be a Tory or a Liberal and fight against your class at an election, is folly. During a strike there are no Tories or Liberals amongst the strikers; they are all workers. At election times there are no workers; only Liberals and Tories.

During an election there are Tory and Liberal capitalists, and all of them are friends of the workers. During a strike there are no Tories and no Liberals amongst the employers. They are all capitalists and enemies of the workers. Is there any logic in you workers? Is there any perception in you? Is there any *sense* in you?

As I said just now, you never elect an employer as president of a Trades' Council, or a chairman of a Trade Union Congress, or as a member of a Trade Union. You never ask an employer to lead you during a strike. But at election times, when you ought to stand by your class, the whole body of Trade Union workers turn into black-legs, and fight for the capitalist and against the workers.

Even some of your Labour Members of Parliament go and help the candidature of employers against candidates standing for Labour. That is a form of political black-legging which I am surprised to find you allow.

But besides the conflict of personal interests, there are other reasons why the Liberal and Tory parties are useless to Labour.

One of these reasons is that the reform programmes of the old parties, such as they are, consist almost entirely of political reforms.

But the improvement of the workers' condition depends more upon industrial reform.

The nationalisation of the railways and the coalmines, the taxation of the land, and the handing over of all the gas, water, and food supplies, and all the tramway systems, to Municipal control, would do more good for the workers than extension of the franchise or payment of members. [Pg 151]

The old political struggles have mostly been fought for political reforms or for changes of taxation. The coming struggle will be for industrial reform.

We want Britain for the British. We want the fruits of labour for those who produce them. We want a human life for all. The issue is not one between Liberals and Tories; it is an issue between the privileged classes and the workers.

Neither of the political parties is of any use to the workers, because both the political parties are paid, officered, and led by capitalists whose interests are opposed to the interests of the workers. The Socialist laughs at the pretended friendship of Liberal and Tory leaders for the workers. These party politicians do not in the least understand what the rights, the interests, or the desires of the workers are; if they did understand, they would oppose them implacably. The demand of the Socialist is a demand for the nationalisation of the land and all other instruments of production and distribution. The party leaders will not hear of such a thing. If you want to get an idea how utterly destitute of sympathy with Labour the privileged classes really are, read carefully the papers which express their views. Read the organs of the landlords, the capitalists, and the employers; or read the Liberal and the Tory papers during a big strike, or during some bye-election when a Labour candidate is standing against a Tory and a Liberal.

It is a very common thing to hear a party leader deprecate the increase of "class representation." What does that mean? It means Labour representation. But the "class" concerned in Labour representation is the working class, a "class" of thirty millions of people. Observe the calm effrontery of this sneer at "class representation." The thirty millions of workers are not represented by more than a dozen members. The other classes—the landlords, the capitalists, the military, the law, the brewers, and idle gentlemen—are represented by something like six hundred members. This is class representation with a vengeance. [Pg 152]

It is colossal *impudence* for a party paper to talk against "class representation." Every class is over-represented—except the great working class. The mines, the railways, the drink trade, the land, finance, the army (officers), the navy (officers), the church, the law, and most of the big

industries (employers), are represented largely in the House of Commons.

And nearly thirty millions of the working classes are represented by about a dozen men, most of whom are palsied by their allegiance to the Liberal Party.

And, mind you, this disproportion exists not only in Parliament, but in all County and Municipal institutions. How many working men are there on the County Councils, the Boards of Guardians, the School Boards, and the Town Councils?

The capitalists, and their hangers-on, not only make the laws—they administer them. Is it any wonder, then, that laws are made and administered in the interests of the capitalist? And does it not seem reasonable to suppose that if the laws were made and administered by workers, they would be made and administered to the advantage of Labour?

Well, my advice to working men is to return working men representatives, with definite and imperative instructions, to Parliament and to all other governing bodies.

Some of the old Trade Unionists will tell you that there is no need for parliamentary interference in Labour matters. The Socialist does not ask for "parliamentary interference"; he asks for Government by the people and for the people.

The older Unionists think that Trade Unionism is strong enough in itself to secure the rights of the worker. This is a great mistake. The rights of the worker are the whole of the produce of his labour. Trade Unionism not only cannot secure that, but has never even tried to secure that. The most that Trade Unionism has secured, or can ever hope to secure, for the workers, is a comfortable subsistence wage. They have not always secured even that much, and, when they have secured it, the cost has been serious. For the great weapon of Unionism is a strike, and a strike is at best a bitter, a painful, and a costly thing.

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Do not think that I am opposed to Trade Unionism. It is a good thing; it has long been the only defence of the workers against robbery and oppression; were it not for the Trade Unionism of the past and of the present, the condition of the British industrial classes would be one of abject slavery. But Trade Unionism, although some defence, is not sufficient defence.

You must remember, also, that the employers have copied the methods of Trade Unionism. They also have organised and united, and, in the future, strikes will be more terrible and more costly than ever. The capitalist is the stronger. He holds the better strategic position. He can always outlast the worker, for the worker has to starve and see his children starve, and the capitalist never gets to that pass. Besides, capital is more mobile than labour. A stroke of the pen will divert wealth and trade from one end of the country to the other; but the workers cannot move their forces so readily.

One difference between Socialism and Trade Unionism is, that whereas the Unions can only marshal and arm the workers for a desperate trial of endurance, Socialism can get rid of the capitalist altogether. The former helps you to resist the enemy, the latter destroys him.

I suggest that you should join a Socialist Society and help to get others to join, and that you should send Socialist workers to sit upon all representative bodies.

The Socialist tells you that you are men, with men's rights and with men's capacities for all that is good and great—and you hoot him, and call him a liar and a fool.

The Politician despises you, declares that all your sufferings are due to your own vices, that you are incapable of managing your own affairs, and that if you were intrusted with freedom and the use of the wealth you create you would degenerate into a lawless mob of drunken loafers; and you cheer him until you are hoarse.

The Politician tells you that *his* party is the people's party, and that *he* is the man to defend your interests; and in spite of all you know of his conduct in the past, you believe him.

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The Socialist begs you to form a party of your own, and to do your work yourselves; and you call him a *dreamer*. I do not know whether the working man is a dreamer, but he seems to me to spend a good deal of his time asleep.

Still, there are hopeful signs of an awakening. The recent decision of the miners to pay one shilling each a year into a fund for securing parliamentary and other representation, is one of the most hopeful signs I have yet seen.

The matter is really a simple one. The workers have enough votes, and they can easily find enough money.

The 2,000,000 of Trade Unionists could alone find the money to elect and support more than a hundred labour representatives.

Say that election expenses for each candidate were £500. A hundred candidates at £500 would cost £50,000.

Pay for each representative at £200 a year would cost for a hundred M.P.s £20,000.

If 2,000,000 Unionists gave 1s. a year each, the sum would be £100,000. That would pay for the election of 100 members, keep them for a year, and leave a balance of £30,000.

With a hundred Labour Members in Parliament, and a proportionate representation of Labour on all County Councils, City, Borough, and Parish Councils, School Boards and Boards of Guardians, the interests of the workers would begin, for the first time in our history, to receive some real and valuable attention.

But not only is it desirable that the workers should strive for solid reforms, but it is also imperative that they should prepare to defend the liberties and rights they have already won.

A man must be very careless or very obtuse if he does not perceive that the classes are preparing to drive the workers back from the positions they now hold.

Two ominous words, "Conscription" and "Protection" are being freely bandied about, and attacks, open or covert, are being made upon Trade Unionism and Education. If the workers mean to hold their own they must attack as well as defend. And to attack they need a strong and united Labour Party, that will fight for Labour in and out of Parliament, and will stand for Labour apart from the Liberal and the Tory parties.

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And now let us see what the Liberal and Tory parties offer the worker, and why they are not to be trusted.

CHAPTER XVIII

WHY THE OLD PARTIES WILL NOT DO

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The old parties are no use to Labour for two reasons:—

1. Because their interests are mostly opposed to the interests of Labour.
2. Because such reform as they promise is mostly political, and the kind of reform needed by Labour is industrial and social reform.

Liberal and Tory politicians call us Socialists *dreamers*. They claim to be practical men. They say theories are no use, that reform can only be secured by practical men and practical means, and for practical men and practical means you must look to the great parties.

Being anxious to catch even the faintest streak of dawn in the dreary political sky, we *do* look to the great parties. I have been looking to them for quite twenty years. And nothing has come of it.

What *can* come of it? What are the "practical" reforms about which we hear so much?

Putting the broadest construction upon them, it may be said that the practical politics of both parties are within the lines of the following programme:—

1. Manhood Suffrage.
2. Payment of Members of Parliament.
3. Payment of Election Expenses.
4. The Second Ballot.
5. Abolition of Dual Voting.
6. Disestablishment of the Church.
7. Abolition of the House of Lords.

And it is alleged by large numbers of people, all of them, for some inexplicable reason, proud of their hard common sense, that the passing of this programme into law would, in some manner yet to be expounded, make miserable England into merry England, and silence the visionaries and agitators for ever.

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Now, with all deference and in all humility, I say to these practical politicians that the above programme, if it became law to-morrow, would not, for any practical purpose, be worth the paper it was printed on.

There are seven items, and not one of them would produce the smallest effect upon the mass of misery and injustice which is now crushing the life out of this nation.

No. All those planks are political planks, and they all amount to the same thing—the shifting of political power from the classes to the masses. The idea being that when the people have the political power they will use it to their own advantage.

A false idea. The people would not know *how* to use the power, and if they did know how to use it, it by no means follows that they would use it.

Some of the *real* evils of the time, the real causes of England's distress, are:—

1. The unjust monopoly of the land.
2. The unjust extortion of interest.
3. The universal system of suicidal competition.
4. The baseness of popular ideals.
5. The disorganisation of the forces for the production of wealth.
6. The unjust distribution of wealth.

7. The confusions and contradictions of the moral ethics of the nation, with resultant unjust laws and unfair conditions of life.

There I will stop. Against the seven remedies I will put seven evils, and I say that not one of the remedies can cure any one of the evils.

The seven remedies will give increased political power to the people. So. But, assuming that political power is the one thing needful, I say the people have it now.

Supposing the masses in Manchester were determined to return to Parliament ten working men. They have an immense preponderance of votes. They could carry the day at every poll? But *do* they? If not, why not?

Then, as to expenses. Assuming the cost to be £200 a member, that would make a gross sum of £2000 for ten members, which sum would not amount to quite fivepence a head for 100,000 voters. But do voters find this money? If not, why not? [Pg 158]

Then, as to maintenance. Allowing each member £200 a year, that would mean another fivepence a year for the 100,000 men. So that it is not too much to say that, without passing one of the Acts in the seven-branched programme, the workers of Manchester could, at a cost of less than one penny a month per man, return and maintain ten working men Members of Parliament?

Now, my practical friends, how many working-class members sit for Manchester to-day?

And if the people, having so much power now, make no use of it, why are we to assume that all they need is a little more power to make them healthy, and wealthy, and wise?

But allow me to offer a still more striking example—the example of America.

In the first place, I assume that in America the electoral power of the people is much greater than it is here. I will give one or two examples. In America, I understand, they have:—

1. No Established Church.
2. No House of Lords.
3. Members of the Legislature are paid.
4. The people have Universal Suffrage.

There are four out of the seven branches of the practical politicians' programme in actual existence. For the other three—

The Abolition of Dual Voting;
The Payment of Election Expenses; and
The Second Ballot—

I cannot answer; but these do not seem to have done quite as much for France as our practical men expect them to do for England.

Very well, America has nearly all that our practical politicians promise us. Is America, therefore, so much better off as to justify us in accepting the seven-branched programme as salvation?

Some years ago I read a book called *How the Other Half Lives*, written by an American citizen, and dealing with the conditions of the poor in New York. [Pg 159]

We should probably be justified in assuming that just as London is a somewhat intensified epitome of England, so is New York of America; but we will not assume that much. We will look at this book together, and we will select a few facts as to the state of the people in New York, and then I will ask you to consider this proposition:—

1. That in New York the people already enjoy all the advantages of practical politics, as understood in England.
2. That, nevertheless, New York is a more miserable and vicious city than London.
3. That this seems to me to indicate that practical politics are hopeless, and that practical politicians are—not quite so wise as they imagine.

About thirty years ago there was a committee appointed in New York to investigate the "great increase in crime." The Secretary of the New York Prison Association, giving evidence, said:—

Eighty per cent. at least of the crimes against property and against the person are perpetrated by individuals who have either lost connection with home life or never had any, or whose homes have ceased to be sufficiently separate, decent, and desirable to afford what are regarded as ordinary wholesome influences of home and family.

The younger criminals seem to come almost exclusively from the worst tenement-house districts.

These tenements, it seems, are slums. Of the evil of these places, of the miseries of them, we shall hear more presently. Our author, Mr. Jacob A. Riis, asserts again and again that the slums make the disease, the crime, and the wretchedness of New York:—

In the tenements all the influences make for evil, because they are the hot-beds that carry death to rich and poor alike; the nurseries of pauperism and crime, that fill our gaols and police-courts; that throw off a scum of forty thousand human wrecks to the island asylums and workhouses year by year; that turned out, in the last eight years, a round half-million of beggars to prey upon our charities; that maintain a standing army of ten thousand tramps, with all that that implies; because, above all, they touch the family life with moral contagion.

Well, that is what the American writer thinks of the tenement system—of the New York slums. [Pg 160]

Now comes the important question, What is the extent of these slums? And on this point Mr. Riis declares more than once that the extent is enormous:—

To-day (1891) three-fourths of New York's people live in the tenements, and the nineteenth century drift of the population to the cities is sending ever-increasing multitudes to crowd them.

Where are the tenements of to-day? Say, rather, where are they not? In fifty years they have crept up from the Fourth Ward Slums and the Fifth Points, the whole length of the island, and have polluted the annexed district to the Westchester line. Crowding all the lower wards, where business leaves a foot of ground unclaimed; strung along both rivers, like ball and chain tied to the foot of every street, and filling up Harlem with their restless, pent-up multitudes, they hold within their clutch the wealth and business of New York—hold them at their mercy, in the day of mob-rule and wrath.

So much, then, for the extent of these slums. Now for the nature of them. A New York doctor said of some of them—

If we could see the air breathed by these poor creatures in their tenements, it would show itself to be fouler than the mud of the gutters.

And Mr. Riis goes on to tell of the police finding 101 adults and 91 children in one Crosby Street House, 150 "lodgers" sleeping "on filthy floors in two buildings."

But the most striking illustration I can give you of the state of the working-class dwellings in New York is by placing side by side the figures of the population per acre in the slums of New York and Manchester.

The Manchester slums are bad—disgracefully, sinfully bad—and the overcrowding is terrible. But referring to the figures I took from various official documents when I was writing on the Manchester slums a few years ago, I find the worst cases of overcrowding to be:—

	District.	Pop. per Acre.
Ancoats	No. 3	256
Deansgate	No. 2	266
London Road	No. 3	267
Hulme	No. 3	270
St. George's	No. 6	274

These are the worst cases from some of the worst English slums. Now let us look at the figures for New York— [Pg 161]

DENSITY OF POPULATION PER ACRE IN 1890	
Tenth Ward	522
Eleventh Ward	386
Thirteenth Ward	428

The population of these three wards in the same year was over 179,000. The population of New York in 1890 was 1,513,501. In 1888 there were in New York 1,093,701 persons living in tenement houses.

Then, in 1889, there died in New York hospitals 6102; in lunatic asylums, 448; while the number of pauper funerals was 3815.

In 1890 there were in New York 37,316 tenements, with a gross population of 1,250,000.

These things are facts, and our practical politicians love facts.

But these are not all the facts. No. In this book about New York I find careful plans and drawings of the slums, and I can assure you we have nothing so horrible in all England. Nor do the revelations of Mr. Riis stop there. We have full details of the sweating shops, the men and women crowded together in filthy and noisome dens, working at starvation prices, from morning until late on in the night, "until brain and muscle break down together." We have pictures of the beggars, the tramps, the seamstresses, the unemployed, the thieves, the desperadoes, the lost women, the street arabs, the vile drinking and opium dens, and we have facts and figures to prove that this great capital of the great Republic is growing worse; and all this, my practical

friends, in spite of the fact that in America they have

Manhood Suffrage;
Payment of Members;
No House of Peers;
No State Church; and
Free Education;

which is more than our most advanced politicians claim as the full extent to which England can be taken by means of practical politics—as understood by the two great parties.

Now, I want to know, and I shall be glad if some practical friend will tell me, whether a programme of practical politics which leaves the metropolis of a free and democratic nation a nest of poverty, commercial slavery, vice, crime, insanity, and disease, is likely to make the English people healthy, and wealthy, and wise? And I ask you to consider whether this seven-branched programme is worth fighting for, if it is to result in a density of slum population nearly twice as great as that of the worst districts of the worst slums of Manchester? [Pg 162]

It seems to me, as an unpractical man, that a practical programme which results in 522 persons to the acre, 18 hours a day for bread and butter, and nearly 4000 pauper funerals a year in one city, is a programme which only *very* practical men would be fools enough to fight for.

At anyrate, I for one will have nothing to say to such a despicable sham. A programme which does not touch the sweater nor the slum; which does not hinder the system of fraud and murder called free competition; which does not give back to the English people their own country or their own earnings, may be good enough for politicians, but it is no use to men and women.

No, my lads, there is no system of economics, politics, or ethics whereby it shall be made just or expedient to take that which you have not earned, or to take that which another man has earned; there can be no health, no hope in a nation where everyone is trying to get more than he has earned, and is hocussing his conscience with platitudes about God's Providence having endowed men with different degrees of intellect and virtue.

How many years is it since the Newcastle programme was issued? What did it *promise* that the poor workers of America and France have not already obtained? What good would it do you if you got it? *And when do you think you are likely to get it?* Is it any nearer now than it was seven years ago? Will it be any nearer ten years hence than it is now if you wait for the practical politicians of the old parties to give it to you?

One of the great stumbling-blocks in the way of all progress for Labour is the lingering belief of the working man in the Liberal Party. [Pg 163]

In the past the Liberals were regarded as the party of progress. They won many fiscal and political reforms for the people. And now, when they will not, or cannot, go any farther, their leaders talk about "ingratitude" if the worker is advised to leave them and form a Labour Party.

But when John Bright refused to go any farther, when he refused to go as far as Home Rule, did the Liberal Party think of gratitude to one of their greatest men? No. They dropped John Bright, and they blamed *him* because he had halted.

They why should they demand that you shall stay with them out of gratitude now they have halted?

The Liberal Party claim to be the workers' friends. What have they done for him during the last ten years? What are they willing to do for him now, or when they get office?

Here is a quotation from a speech made some years ago by Sir William Harcourt—

An attempt is being sedulously made to identify the Liberal Government and the Liberal Party with dreamers of dreams, with wild, anarchical ideas, and anti-social projects. Gentlemen, I say, if I have a right to speak on behalf of the Liberal Party, that we have no sympathy with these mischief-makers at all. The Liberal Party has no share in them; their policy is a constructive policy; they have no revolutionary schemes either in politics, in society, or in trade.

You may say that is old. Try this new one. It is from the lips of Mr. Harmsworth, the "official Liberal candidate" at the last by-election in North-East Lanark—

My own opinion is that a *modus vivendi* should be arrived at between the official Liberal Party and such Labour organisations as desire parliamentary representation, provided, of course, that they are not *tainted with Socialist doctrines*. It should not be difficult to come to something like an amicable settlement. I must say that it came upon me with something of a shock to find that amongst those who sent messages to the Socialist candidate wishing success to him in his propaganda were two Members of Parliament who profess allegiance to the Liberal Party.

Provided, "of course," that *they are not tainted with Socialist doctrines*. With Socialist doctrines Sir William Harcourt and Mr. Harmsworth will have no dealings. [Pg 164]

Now, if you read what I have written in this book you will see that there is no possible reform

that can do the workers any real or lasting good unless that reform is *tainted with Socialist doctrines*.

Only legislation of a socialistic nature can benefit the working class. And that kind of legislation the Liberals will not touch.

It is true there are some individual members amongst the Radicals who are prepared to go a good way with the Socialists. But what can they do? In the House they must obey the Party Whip, and the Party Whip never cracks for socialistic measures.

I wonder how many Labour seats have been lost through Home Rule. Time after time good Labour candidates have been defeated because Liberal working men feared to lose a Home Rule vote in the House.

And what has Labour got from the Home Rule Liberals it has elected?

And where is Home Rule to-day?

Let me give you a typical case. A Liberal Unionist lost his seat. He at once became a Home Ruler, and was adopted as Liberal candidate to stand against a Labour candidate and against a Tory. The Labour candidate was a Home Ruler, and had been a Home Ruler when the Liberal candidate was a Unionist.

But the Liberal working men would not vote for the Labour man. Why? Because they were afraid he would not get in. If he did not get in the Tory would get in, and the Home Rule vote would be one less in the House.

They voted for the Liberal, and he was returned. That is ten years ago. What good has that M.P. done for Home Rule, and what has he done for Labour?

The Labour man could have done no more for Home Rule, but he would have worked hard for Labour, and no Party Whip would have checked him.

Well, during those ten years it is not too much to say that fifty Labour candidates have been sacrificed in the same way to Home Rule.

In ten years those men would have done good service. *And they were all Home Rulers.*

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Such is the wisdom of the working men who cling to the tails of the Liberal Party.

Return a hundred Labour men to the House of Commons, and the Liberal Party will be stronger than if a hundred Liberals were sent in their place, for there is not a sound plank in the Liberal programme which the Labour M.P. would wish removed.

But do you doubt for a moment that the presence in the House of a hundred Labour members would do no more for Labour than the presence in their stead of a hundred Liberals? A working man must be very dull if he believes that.

That is my case against the old parties. I could say no more if I tried. If you want to benefit your own class, if you want to hasten reform, if you want to frighten the Tories and wake up the Liberals, put your hands in your pockets, find a *farthing a week* for election and for parliamentary expenses, send a hundred Labour men to the House, and watch the effects. I think you will be more than satisfied. And *that* is what I call "practical politics."

Finally, to end as I began, if self-interest is the strongest motive in human nature, the man who wants his own advantage secured will be wise to attend to it himself.

The Liberal Party may be a better party than the Tory Party, but the *best* party for Labour is a *Labour* Party.

CHAPTER XIX TO-DAY'S WORK

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Self-interest being the strongest motive in human nature, he who wishes his interests to be served will be wise to attend to them himself.

If you, Mr. Smith, as a working man, wish to have better wages, shorter hours, more holidays, and cheaper living, you had better take a hand in the class war by becoming a recruit in the army of Labour.

The first line of the Labour army is the Trade Unions.

The second line is the Municipality.

The third line is Parliament.

If working men desire to improve their conditions they will be wise to serve their own interests by using the Trade Unions, the Municipalities, and the House of Commons for all they are worth; and they are worth a lot.

Votes you have in plenty, for all practical purposes, and of money you can yourselves raise more than you need, without either hurting yourselves or incurring obligations to men of other classes.

One penny a week from 4,000,000 of working men would mean a yearly income of £866,000.

We are always hearing that the working classes cannot find enough money to pay the election expenses of their own parliamentary candidates nor to keep their own Labour members if elected.

If 4,000,000 workers paid one penny a week (the price of a Sunday paper, or of one glass of cheap beer) they would have £866,000 at the end of a year.

Election expenses of 200 Labour candidates at £500 each would be £100,000.

Pay of 200 Labour members at £200 a year would be £40,000.

Total, £140,000: leaving a balance in hand of £726,000.

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Election expenses of 2000 candidates for School Board, Municipal Councils, and Boards of Guardians at £50 per man would be £100,000. Leaving a balance of £626,000.

Now the cause of Labour has very few friends amongst the newspapers. As I have said before, at times of strikes and other industrial crises, the Press goes almost wholly against the workers.

The 4,000,000 men I have supposed to wake up to their own interest could establish weekly and daily papers of *their own* at a cost of £50,000 for each paper. Say one weekly paper at a penny, one daily paper at a penny, or one morning and one evening paper at a halfpenny each.

These papers would have a ready-made circulation amongst the men who owned them. They could be managed, edited, and written by trained journalists engaged for the work, and could contain all the best features of the political papers now bought by working men.

Say, then, that the weekly paper cost £50,000 to start, and that the morning and evening papers cost the same. That would be £150,000, and the papers would pay in less than a year.

You see, then, that 4,000,000 of men could finance 3 newspapers, 200 parliamentary and 2000 local elections, and pay one year's salary to 200 Members of Parliament for £390,000, or less than *one halfpenny* a week for one year.

If you paid the full penny a week for one year you could do all I have said and have a balance in hand of £476,000.

Surely, then, it is nonsense to talk about the difficulty of finding money for election expenses.

But you might not be able to get 4,000,000 of men to pay even one penny.

Then you could produce the same result if *one* million (half your present Trade Union membership) pay twopence a week.

And even at a cost of twopence a week do you not think the result would be worth the cost? Imagine the effect on the Press, and on Parliament, and on the employers, and on public opinion of your fighting 200 parliamentary and 2000 municipal elections, and founding three newspapers. Then the moral effect of the work the newspapers would do would be sure to result in an increase of the Trade Union membership.

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A penny looks such a poor, contemptible coin, and even the poor labourer often wastes one. But remember that union is strength, and pennies make pounds. 1000 pennies make more than £4; 100,000 pennies come to more than £400; 1,000,000 pennies come to £4000; 1,000,000 pennies a week for a year give you the enormous sum of £210,000.

We *Clarion* men founded a paper called the *Clarion* with less than £400 capital, and with no friends or backers, and although we have never given gambling news, nor general news, and had no Trade Unions behind us, we have carried our paper on for ten years, and it is stronger now than ever.

Why, then, should the working classes, and especially the Trade Unions, submit to the insults and misrepresentations of newspapers run by capitalists, when they can have better papers of their own to plead their own cause?

Suppose it cost £100,000 to start a first-class daily Trade Union organ. How much would that mean to 2,000,000 of Unionists? If it cost £100,000 to start the paper, and if it lost £100,000 a year, it would only mean one halfpenny a week for the first year, and one farthing a week for the next. But I am quite confident that if the Unions did the thing in earnest they could start a paper for £50,000, and run it at a profit after the first six months.

Do not forget the power of the penny. If 10,000,000 of working men and women gave *one penny a year* it would reach a yearly income of *forty thousand pounds*. A good deal may be done with £40,000, Mr. Smith.

Now a few words as to the three lines of operations. You have your Trade Unions, and you have a very modest kind of Federation. If your 2,000,000 Unionists were federated at a weekly subscription of one penny per man, your yearly income would be nearly half a million: a very useful kind of fund. I should strongly advise you to strengthen your Trades Federation.

Next as to Municipal affairs. These are of more importance to you than Parliament. Let me give you an idea. Suppose, as in the case of Manchester and Liverpool, the difference between a private gas company and a Municipal gas supply amounts to more than a shilling on each 1000 feet of gas. Setting the average workman's gas consumption at 4000 feet per quarter, that means a saving to each Manchester working man of sixteen shillings a year, or just about fourpence a week.

Suppose a tram company carries a man to his work and back at one penny, and the Corporation carries him at one halfpenny. The man saves a penny a day, or 25s. a year. Now if 100,000 men piled up their tram savings for one year as a labour fund it would come to £125,000.

All that money those men are now giving to tram companies *for nothing*. Is that practical?

You may apply the same process of thought to all the other things you use. Just figure out what you would save if you had Municipal or State managed

Railways	Coalmines
Tramways	Omnibuses
Gas	Water
Milk	Bread
Meat	Butter and cheese
Vegetables	Beer
Houses	Shops
Boots	Clothing

and other necessaries.

On all those needful things you are now paying big percentages of profit to private dealers, all of which the Municipality would save you.

And you can municipalise all those things and save all that money by sticking together as a Labour Party, and by paying *one penny a week*.

Again I advise you to read those books by George Haw and R. B. Suthers. Read them, and give them to other workers to read.

And then set about making a Labour Party *at once*.

Next as to Parliament. You ought to put at least 200 Labour members into the House. Never mind Liberalism and Toryism. Mr. Morley said in January that what puzzled him was to "find any difference between the new Liberalism and the new Conservatism." Do not try to find a difference, John. Have a Labour Party.

"Self-interest is the strongest motive in human nature." Take care of your own interests and stand by your own class.

You will ask, perhaps, what these 200 Labour representatives are to do. They should do anything and everything they can do in the House of Commons for the interests of the working class.

But if you want programmes and lists of measures, get the Fabian Parliamentary and Municipal programmes, and study them. You will find the particulars as to price, etc., at the end of this book.

But here are some measures which you might be pushing and helping whenever a chance presents itself, in Parliament or out of Parliament.

Removal of taxation from articles used by the workers, such as tea and tobacco, and increase of taxation on large incomes and on land.

Compulsory sale of land for the purpose of Municipal houses, works, farms, and gardens.

Nationalisation of railways and mines.

Taxation to extinction of all mineral royalties.

Vastly improved education for the working classes.

Old age pensions.

Adoption of the Initiative and Referendum.

Universal adult suffrage.

Eight hours' day and standard rates of wages in all Government and Municipal works.

Establishment of a Department of Agriculture.

State insurance of life.

Nationalisation of all banks.

The second ballot.

Abolition of property votes.

Formation of a citizen army for home defence.

Abolition of workhouses.

Solid legislation on the housing question.

Government inquiry into the food question, with a view to restore British agriculture.

Those are a few steps towards the desired goal of *Socialism*.

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You may perhaps wonder why I do not ask you to found a Socialist Party. I do not think the workers are ready for it. And I feel that if you found a Labour Party every step you take towards the emancipation of Labour will be a step towards *Socialism*.

But I should like to think that many workers will become Socialists at once, and more as they live and learn.

The fact is, Mr. Smith, I do not want to ask too much of the mass of working folks, who have been taught little, and mostly taught wrong, and whose opportunities of getting knowledge have been but poor.

I am not asking working men to be plaster saints nor stained-glass angels, but only to be really what their flatterers are so fond of telling them they are now: shrewd, hard-headed men, distrusting theories and believing in facts.

For the statement that private trading and private management of production and distribution are the best, and the only "possible," ways of carrying on the business of the nation is only a *theory*, Mr. Smith; but the superiority of Municipal management in cheapness, in efficiency, in health, in comfort, and in pleasantness is a solid *fact*, Mr. Smith, which has been demonstrated just as often as Municipal and private management have been contrasted in their action.

One other question I may anticipate. How are the workers to form a Labour Party?

There are already two Labour parties formed.

One is the Trade Union body, the other is the Independent Labour Party.

The Trade Unions are numerous, but not politically organised nor united.

The Independent Labour Party is organised and united, but is weak in numbers and poor in funds.

I should like to see the Trade Unions fully federated, and formed into a political as well as an Industrial Labour Party on lines similar to those of the Independent Labour Party.

Or I should like to see the whole of your 2,000,000 of Trade Unionists join the Independent Labour Party.

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Or, best of all, I should like to see the Unions, the Independent Labour Party, and the great and growing body of unorganised and unattached Socialists formed into one grand Socialist Party.

But I do not want to ask too much.

Meanwhile, I ask you, as a reader of this book, not to sit down in despair with the feeling that the workers will not move, but to try to move them. Be you *one*, John Smith. Be you the first. Then you shall surely win a few, and each of those few shall win a few, and so are multitudes composed.

Let us make a long story short. I have here given you, as briefly and as plainly as I can, the best advice of which I am capable, after a dozen years' study and experience of Labour politics and economics and the lives of working men and women.

If you approve of this little book I shall be glad if you will recommend it to your friends.

You will find Labour matters treated of every week in the *Clarion*, which is a penny paper, published every Friday, and obtainable at 72 Fleet Street, London, E.C., and of all newsagents.

Heaven, friend John Smith, helps those who help themselves; but Heaven also helps those who try to help their fellow-creatures.

If you are shrewd and strong and skilful, think a little and work a little for the millions of your own class who are ignorant and weak and friendless. If you have a wife and children whom you love, remember the many poor and wretched women and children who are robbed of love, of leisure, of sunshine and sweet air, of knowledge and of hope, in the pent and dismal districts of our big, misgoverned towns. If you as a Briton are proud of your country and your race, if you as a man have any pride of manhood, or as a worker have any pride of class, come over to us and help in the just and wise policy of winning Britain for the British, manhood for *all* men, womanhood for *all* women, and love to-day and hope to-morrow for the children whom Christ loved, but who by many Christians have unhappily been forgotten.

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That it may please thee to succour, help, and comfort *all* that are in danger, necessity, and tribulation.

That it may please thee to defend, and provide for, the fatherless children, and widows, and *all* that are desolate and oppressed.

That it may please thee to have mercy upon *all* men.

I end as I began, by quoting those beautiful words from the Litany. If we would realise the prayer they utter, we must turn to *Socialism*; if we would win defence for the fatherless children and the widows, succour, help, and comfort for *all* that are in danger, necessity, or tribulation, and mercy for *all* men, we must win Britain for the British.

Without the workers we cannot win, with the workers we cannot fail. Will you be one to help us —*now?*

WHAT TO READ

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The following books and pamphlets treat more fully the various subjects dealt with in *Britain for the British*.

TO-DAY'S WORK. G. Haw. Clarion Press, 72 Fleet Street. 2s. 6d.

DOES MUNICIPAL MANAGEMENT PAY? By R. B. Suthers. 6d. Clarion Press, 72 Fleet Street.

LAND NATIONALISATION. A. R. Wallace. 1s. London, Swan Sonnenschein.

FIVE PRECURSORS OF HENRY GEORGE. By J. Morrison Davidson. 1s. *Labour Leader* Office, 53 Fleet Street, E.C.

DISMAL ENGLAND. By R. Blatchford. Clarion Press, 72 Fleet Street, E.C. 1s.

THE WHITE SLAVES OF ENGLAND. By R. Sherard. London, James Bowden. 1s.

NO ROOM TO LIVE. By G. Haw. 2s. 6d.

FIELDS, FACTORIES, AND WORKSHOPS. By Prince Kropotkin. 1s. *Clarion* Office, 72 Fleet Street, E.C.

THE FABIAN TRACTS, especially No. 5, No. 12, and Nos. 30-37. One penny each. Fabian Society, 3 Clement's Inn, Strand, or *Clarion* Office, 72 Fleet Street, E.C.

OUR FOOD SUPPLY IN TIME OF WAR. By Captain Stewart L. Murray. 6d. *Clarion* Office, 72 Fleet Street, E.C.

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THE CLARION. A newspaper for Socialists and Working Men. One penny weekly. Office, 72 Fleet Street, E.C.

The *Clarion* can be ordered of all newsagents

APPENDIX.

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The American workingman will not find it very hard to see that the lesson of "Britain for the British" applies with even greater force to the conditions in his own country.

American railroads, mines, and factories exploit, cripple and kill American laborers on an even larger scale than the British ones. We have even less laws for the protection of the workers and their children and what we have are not so well enforced.

No one will deny the ability of America to feed herself. She feeds the world to-day save that some American workers and their families are rather poorly fed. The great problem with American capitalists is how to get rid of the wealth produced and given to them by American laborers.

Where Liberal and Conservative parties are mentioned every American reader will find himself unconsciously substituting Democratic and Republican.

It will do the average American good to "see himself as others see him" and to know that manhood suffrage, freedom from established Church and Republican institutions do not prevent his becoming an economic slave and living in a slum.

But we fear that some American readers will be shrewd enough to call attention to the fact that municipal ownership has not abolished, or to any great extent improved the slums of London, Glasgow and Birmingham. It is certain some of the thousands of German laborers who are living in America would be quick to point out that although Bismark has nationalized the railroads and telegraphs of Germany this has not altered the fact of the exploitation of German workingmen. Worst of all, it would be hard to explain to the multitude of Russian exiles now living in America

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that they would have been better off had they remained at home, because the Czar has made more industries government property than belong to any other nation in the world.

Even native Americans would find it somewhat hard to understand how matters would be improved by transferring the ownership of the coal mines, for example, from a Hanna-controlled corporation to a Hanna-directed government. There would be one or two different links in the chain of connection uniting Hanna to the mines and the miners but they would be as well forged and as capable of holding the laborer in slavery as the present ones.

Happily the chapter on "Why the old Parties will not do" gives us a clue to the way out. While the government is controlled by capitalist parties government ownership of industries does little more than simplify the process of reorganization to be performed when a real labor party shall gain control. The victory of such a party will for the first time mean that government-owned industries will be owned and controlled by all the workers (who will also be all the people, since idlers will have disappeared).

American workers are fortunate in that there is a political party already in the field which exactly meets the ideal described in the last three chapters. The Socialist Party is a trade-union party, a labor party and the political expression of all the workers in America who have become intelligent enough to understand their own self-interest. Those who feel that they wish to lend a hand in securing the triumph of the ideas set forth in "Britain for the British" should at once join that party and work for its success.

A. M. SIMONS.

BOOKS BY ROBERT BLATCHFORD ("NUNQUAM.")

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MERRIE ENGLAND.—Cloth, crown 8vo, 2s, 6d., by Robert Blatchford.

A book on sociology. Called by the Review of Reviews: "The Poor Man's Plato." Over a million copies sold. Translated into Welsh, Dutch, French, Spanish, German, Hebrew, Norwegian, and Swedish.

TALES FOR THE MARINES.—A New Book of Soldier Stories. By Nunquam.

The Daily Chronicle says:

"This volume contains a batch of stories ('cuffers,' we understand is the correct technical term) supposed to be told by soldiers in the barrack-room after lights are out; and capital stories they are. If we were to call them 'rattling' and also 'ripping' we should not be saying a word too much. For our own part we never want to see a better fight than that between the bayonet and the sword in 'The Mousetrap,' or to read a sounder lecture on social philosophy than that delivered by Sergeant Wren in 'Dear Lady Disdain.' Mr. Blatchford knows the barrack-room from the inside, and obviously from the inside has learned to love and to enjoy it."

JULIE.—A Study of a Girl by a Man. Nunquam's Story of Slum Life. Price 2/6; by post, 2/8.

The Liverpool Review says:

"'Julie,' unlike 'The Master Christian,' is beautiful inside as well as out. Nunquam, like Corelli, has a mission to perform—to utilize romance as a finger-post to indicate social wrongs; but, unlike Corelli, he succeeds in his purpose. And why does he succeed where she fails? Because he goes at his task sympathetically, with a warm heart; whereas she goes at it sourly, with a pen dipped in gall. It is all a question of temperament. If you want an object-lesson in the effect which temperament has upon artistic achievement, read 'The Master Christian' and follow it up with 'Julie.'"

THE BOUNDER.—The Story of a Man by his Friend. By Nunquam. Price 2/6; by post, 2/8.

All who loved the Bounder and admired his work should avail themselves of the opportunity to possess this record of both, before the edition is exhausted.

A BOHEMIAN GIRL.—A Theatrical Novel. By Nunquam. Price 2/6; by post, 2/8.

Manchester City News:

"The swift interchange of thought and repartee in the conversations remind one of the brilliant 'Dolly Dialogues'; but there is an underlying earnestness and a deeper meaning in Mr. McGinnis's seemingly careless story than in Mr. Anthony Hope's society pictures."

MY FAVORITE BOOKS.—By Nunquam. Price 2/6; by post, 2/8. With Portrait of the Author.

The Christian Globe says:

"Instinct with generous and eloquent appreciation of what is brightest and best in our literature, we have only to complain that there is so little of it after all. Again we feel the spell of old times in the charmed garden; the breeze blows fresh, sweet is the odor of the roses, and we wander with

our guide wherever it pleases him to lead us. We can give the author no higher praise. May his book prosper as it deserves."

TOMMY ATKINS.—By Nunquam. Price 2/6; by post, 2/8. Paper, 1/-; by post, 1/3.

A soldier story of great popularity which has already gone through several editions, and was long ago pronounced by Sir Evelyn Wood, and other great authorities on the army, to be the best story on army life ever written.

DISMAL ENGLAND.—By Nunquam. Price 2/6; by post, 2/8. Paper, 1/-; by post, 1/2.

A thrilling and life-like series of sketches of life in its darker phases.

PINK DIAMONDS.—A Wild Story. By Nunquam. Cloth, 2/-; by post, 2/2. Paper, 6d.; by post, 8d.

A capital antidote to the dumps; full of rollicking action and wild humor.

THE NUNQUAM PAPERS.—2/-; by post, 2/2.

Some of Nunquam's best articles and sketches.

FANTASIAS.—By Nunquam. Cloth, 2/-; by post, 2/2. Paper, 6d.; by post, 8d.

Tales and essays of graphic, humorous and pathetic interest.

A MAN, A WOMAN, AND A DOG.—By The Whatnot. Cloth and gold, 2/6; by post, 2/8.

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TO-DAY'S WORK.—Municipal Government the Hope of Democracy. By George Haw, author of "No Room to Live." Price 2/6; by post, 2/8.

A reprint, with revisions and additional chapters, of The Outlaw's articles on Local Government, published in the Clarion under the heading, "What we can do to-day."

THE ART OF HAPPINESS.—By Mont Bloug. With portrait of the Author. Cloth, 2/-; by post, 2/2.

A mixture of fun and philosophy, of which the large edition is nearly exhausted, and is not likely to be reprinted. Those who have neglected to get it should do so while there is yet time. It is a book that any reader will be thankful for.

DANGLE'S MIXTURE.—By A. M. Thompson. Cloth, 1/6; by post, 1/8.

DANGLE'S ROUGH CUT.—By A. M. Thompson. Cloth, 1/6; by post, 1/8.

Capital examples of Dangular humor, of which it can be truthfully said that each is better than the other, while both are amusing enough to bring out a cheerful smile upon the glumest face.

CLARION PRESS, 72 Fleet Street, London, E. C.

Read
The Clarion

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