

well-being will not grow spontaneously, and must ever necessitate man's labour both of body and mind. But for that very reason, it is deplorable that war, which creates a large number of unproductive consumers, Protection which creates a far larger number of only half-productive producers, and ignorance which keeps the bulk of mankind toiling in a faint-hearted manner on unremunerative work with semi-starvation as the result, should enormously curtail and stunt the production, and consequently the distribution of wealth.

As things now are, to take the world at large, the human race do not produce probably one hundredth part of what they might produce if their labour were properly and intelligently applied. Do away with the agencies that interfere with abundant production, and a largely multiplied amount of wealth will of necessity be created. What will be done with this surplus production? It must either be destroyed or consumed. If to be consumed, it must be distributed, as the lesser amount now created is distributed; but with this essential difference, that in the latter case many people run short, whereas in the former case there would, from the abundance of production, be plenty for all. This result may not be Elysium, but none will deny that it would be a vast improvement on the prevailing extremes of plethoric opulence and grim want.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Expansibility of Man's Productive Power—The Interests Advocated are not National, but Universal—Conclusion.

IN presenting wealth-creation as the great material desideratum necessary to produce a great moral improvement, we have only followed the natural order in which the moral is developed in man out of the physical. The *corpus sanum* is, as a rule, the best guarantee for the *mens sana*. An ill-balanced or unhealthy brain can hardly secrete a high order of thought. Even the soundest and most capacious brain becomes useless for good, and is often deflected to evil, under the influence, ere it is fully matured, of abject poverty or evil surroundings. There can be no mental development without a certain amount of ease, education, and leisure, which abundant wealth-creation alone can confer on the many. Of those men who can boast of a classical education, of cultured minds, of social, literary, or political success, how very few there are who do not owe their advantages to inherited competence? Surely it is not for these to disparage the laborious pursuit and hard-earned acquisition of that wealth which has bestowed on them such privileges.

But even among professed political economists we occasionally find men to whom "material interests" are objects of scorn—with whom gold is dross, and money-making contamination. For instance, Louis Reybaud, in his "Economistes Modernes," talking of the advocates for peace,

says, "Ils fouillent dans les cœurs pour y réveiller ce qu'ils renferment d'instincts et de sentimens inférieurs. Il y a un oubli du sens moral, contre lequel on ne saurait protester par des paroles trop sévères. Ces appels constants à l'intérêt, à l'intérêt seul, à un intérêt étroit, égoïste, exclusif, sont du plus détestable exemple, et s'ils étaient écoutés, ils aboutiraient infailliblement à l'abaissement des caractères, et à la décadence des institutions." Frothy declamation, it is true! But it represents the notions of a certain super-seraphic school which proclaims that every-day attention to material interests is utterly incompatible with the development of what they rather vaguely term "the highest instincts of man's nature." Are these, then, to be the exclusive apanage of the rich?

The expansion of man's mental faculties is intimately connected with the expansion and right direction of man's productive powers. The rapid and abundant creation of wealth would effect two objects. 1. Its abundance would provide for the material wants of all; 2. Its rapidity would leave leisure to all for mental cultivation. For, even under the present imperfect system which produces so very much less than might be produced, and wastes so very much more than need be wasted, enough wealth is produced to afford to the masses a scanty living in return for incessant toil. But under an improved system, which would promote the creation of wealth to its uttermost extent, by abolishing both the checks to it and the waste of it, not only would the wealth thus supplied for dis-

tribution be almost indefinitely increased, but an ample sufficiency of it might be produced with the expenditure of one-half the human labour by which nearly the entire waking life of the workers is now absorbed. Men's ultimate productive capabilities, when developed to their utmost in all people in all countries, would, irrespectively of the impulse which they might receive from fresh scientific discoveries and inventions, result in an amount of wealth (that is, "of such objects of human desire as are obtained or produced by human exertions") exceeding, to an incalculable degree, perhaps, in many instances, a hundred-fold or more, the amount now produced. Indeed, the only limits to its expansion would be the area of available land throughout the globe, and those unknown latent capabilities of the land which science might yet discover and develop. A large margin before progress received a check!

But without discussing ultimate results, let us take some intermediate and comparatively not distant stage of improvement, when the present yield of man's exertions should be multiplied only fourfold. If, in such a state of things, the number of hours spent each day in the work of production were reduced by one-half, it is clear that even with this deduction of the labour applied, twice the quantity of wealth now produced would be left for distribution among the same number of people. Thus, by means of active wealth-creation, leisure for mental cultivation might be easily obtained for the many, precisely as, at present, by means of wealth, whether of direct creation

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or acquired by inheritance, leisure for mental cultivation is the privilege of a few.

No doubt such a desirable state of things offers so vast a contrast to the prevailing condition of mankind, that it may at first sight appear to some too good to be within man's power of attainment. This view, however, chiefly arises when the two extremes of present misery and possible happiness are both at once present to the mind, without reference to the many slow and gradual steps which form the connecting links between the two. The reforms requisite to lead mankind from the one stage to the other are, though not innumerable, very numerous, and of difficult, though by no means of impossible, accomplishment. When the effects of these contributory steps are severally as well as collectively considered, the wonder will cease. So, to a person who might be unacquainted with the means resorted to, it would appear incredible that the ideas of a man in London should be almost instantaneously conveyed to another man in New York, whereas the wonder would cease were he made to understand the intricate appliances, and the great amount of science and skill, of capital and labour, expended on the construction of submarine telegraphic cables. The supposed miracle would then shrink into a commonplace fact.

We have all along granted that the complete realisation of the contemplated results may be distant, but that is only an additional reason why we should endeavour, by mooted the question, by dragging it into sight, by subjecting it to discus-

sion, and by urging its consideration, to abridge the interval that separates us from those results. And, after all, that same space of time which "cuts a monstrous cantle out" of the life of a human being, is but a moment in the history of the world. The succession of events, as well as the events themselves, bear quite a different relation to living men than they do to the race of man. In the mighty current and rush of human progress each of us individually is a mere effaceable and replaceable unit, and whoever may live or whoever may die, the aggregate stream of life will pursue its course and achieve its destiny with no very sensible change of direction or diminution of impetus.

We may venture further to remark that the reforms which we have submitted for consideration do not involve any organic changes in the framework of our social system, and that they are susceptible of partial and gradual adoption. They require no abrupt transition from one form of government to another. They are such as might be inaugurated by enlightened and beneficent rulers, under whatever denominations they may be known. It is by their works that political institutions must finally be judged, and not by their names. Some of the most arbitrary governments in the world have called themselves republics. It is, however, undeniable that the larger the infusion of the democratic element in the world's political institutions, the more rapid will be the advance and the more thorough the reforms. The welfare of the masses is the great business of the masses, and they must take their business in hand themselves

if they want it done quickly and effectually. If they will not bestir themselves in their own cause, they are accomplices in their own abasement. For instance, it is on the masses that the evil effects of protection chiefly fall, while the masses mostly remain inert, so that free trade for the present remains practically a middle-class contention, whereas it is essentially and vitally a poor man's question.

But that the masses should "take their own business in hand" is very far from implying recourse to physical force. The sword is but a clumsy and cruel mode of solving social problems. It may cut, but it does not untie, the knot. By far the more effectual weapon is moral force. Let the units of which the masses are composed but think, speak, write, and vote according to their lights, and the result (for truth is the certain outcome of free discussion) will be such a power of public opinion as would soon become irresistible. The changes which it would enforce might not be sudden or sweeping, but even if only effected gradually and by instalments, they would be all the more secure, since, being founded on reflection and conviction, they would prove the more substantial and enduring. A bit-by-bit reform may seem a tedious process, but it is not of necessity so slow as, at first sight, it may appear. For, 1. There is less resistance to its inception, and it therefore commences its work at an earlier date than would a complete measure of reform which provoked violent opposition. 2. One step in reform leads to another, slowly perhaps at first, but afterwards with accelerated speed, till, at the later stages,

the progress towards completeness is rapid and irresistible. 3. The improvements thus gradually effected are more durable and less reversible than those resulting from sudden or violent effort, which are generally followed by powerful and dangerous reaction.

It will be observed that in these pages we have set the interests of no one class in opposition to the interests of any other. On the contrary, it has been shown how those interests are all interwoven and dovetailed into each other. We have endeavoured to point out how the poor could be made less poor without making the rich less rich. By promoting wealth-creation to its utmost extent, largely increased wealth is produced for distribution among all, rich and poor. It is by directing labour and capital to their maximum productive results, and by reducing to a minimum the waste of those results, that we may look for ministering copiously to the wants of the poorer while increasing the enjoyments of the wealthier. Thus it is not by taking from one person to give to another that the removal of poverty is to be effected, but by expanding the general stock of wealth to that amplitude as shall fully suffice for the requirements of all.

We beg to add that this book is not intended merely as an English work, addressed to the English people, and treating of English interests. It is written in the English language, because it is the language in which we can most clearly and most correctly express our ideas, but the topics of which it treats, the evils and abuses which it ex-

poses, and the reforms which it recommends, are matters of universal and cosmopolitan interest. It is the entire brotherhood of man, not merely our English fellow-countrymen, that we have had in view when writing these pages. Whatever truths they may contain are founded on general principles, and are of universal application. To say that this work is addressed to all men in all countries, is tantamount to saying that it is specially addressed to the labour-sellers of the world, since they form the great bulk of "all men in all countries." In the question of which we treat is involved the welfare, not of the people of any particular country, but of the great bulk of the human race everywhere, without distinction of nationality, language, or religion. To them it is a question of happiness or misery—almost of life and death. For if the prevailing extremes of poverty and wealth be the result of an inexorable law—if they form a condition *sine qua non* of social organisation—then countless millions must yield to despair; they must continue, by incessant toil, to eke out a precarious and scanty subsistence; their higher instincts must be repressed; and that civilisation of which the only possible outcome is to deal out enjoyments to a small minority, and privations to a large majority, must be pronounced a failure.

It may be said that there is nothing new in our teachings, for everybody was aware that war was an evil, and that abundance of wealth was a good. Be it so; the point is not worth discussing. If the same argument in the same shape has been previously set forth by others, by all means let them

have the merit. We do not care the flap of a fly's wing for the personal question. It is the cause itself, and that only, which we have at heart. It is important that it should make progress—through whose efforts, it matters little. If, in its advocacy, we have been wanting in eloquence, we may at least lay claim to the fervour of earnestness; and the words of an earnest man often have the power of awakening an echo in the breasts of other men.

To the charge of occasional repetition and reiteration, we plead guilty. When we have deemed it necessary in order to enforce a truth or to combat an error, we have not scrupled again to use a weapon which had done service before. The same truth may suffice to rebut several forms of error, and it has therefore to be reproduced whenever those various forms of error present themselves.

Even from those who may differ from us as to the means which we have herein suggested, we claim sympathy with the objects which we have had in view. The feebleness of our performance may perhaps be pardoned in consideration of the noble ends at which we have aimed. A man can only put into his work as much as there is in him. If what we have put into this work be pronounced incomplete, inadequate, or unworthy of the great task undertaken, we are content to retire with the poor merit of good intentions, and to leave to abler men and more vigorous pens the substantial merit of effectively promoting the cause.

Our task is finished. We now, humbly but hopefully, submit to the world our views on one of

the most important themes that can engage men's attention. Humbly, because we are diffident of our own powers of analysis and exposition—and hopefully, because time and its developments are in our favour. We have faith in the perfectibility of the human race—not in the sense that it can ever attain actual perfection, but in the sense of its ever tending towards it; just as the asymptotes of the hyperbole are ever approaching to, without ever actually reaching, absolute convergence. We have faith in the thought-stirring effects of discussion and reflection, in the diffusion of knowledge, and in the active co-operation of those, few or many, who may concur in our views.

Nor shall we be at all dismayed or disheartened by opposition or criticism. On the contrary, not only we fully expect, but we cheerfully look forward to, them. For it is out of the conflicts of discussion that truth finally emerges triumphant. What we should chiefly regret and deprecate is neglect and indifference on the part of the great body of labour-sellers everywhere, in whose interest these pages were specially written. It is their battle that is being fought, and they ought not to stand aloof.

Every argument which bears upon the subject, whether it be favourable or adverse, deserves the fullest consideration, for it is a more or less important factor in the elucidation of truth. But there is one kind of influence that may be used, against which we must enter a decided protest. We mean the unsupported authority of great names. We may probably be told that such and

such profound thinkers who are dead, or that other profound thinkers who are alive, have pronounced our views to be untenable, our hopes to be chimerical, and our efforts to be futile—and that we are bound implicitly to bow to such authorities. To this arbitrary verdict we utterly refuse to submit. If the reasons by which those profound thinkers were themselves swayed should be laid before us, we will examine them, and they may, or may not, sway us also. But a mere *ipse dixit*, unsupported by corroborative arguments, has no force whatever over reasoning minds. We willingly yield to the weight of evidence, but refuse to be overborne by the weight of authority. We must be convinced, not silenced. We claim to retain our independence of thought, and cannot submit passively to the influence of great names. These have often and often led men astray. Indeed, experience teaches us that great names are frequently but splendid instances of human fallibility!

[For Appendix, see page 299.]