

would in practice be impossible to allow freedom to choose or to change an employment. We should have to take what was given to us and stick to it. This I call something like slavery. Or if the attempt was made to be fair by causing all men to take turns at working in different trades, then the waste of human power by thus undoing the division of labor and the increase of annoyance and discomfort would far exceed all the losses and waste of the present competitive system.

Fourthly comes the difficulty of wages. Either all must receive alike, skilled and unskilled, physician and farm laborer, all ranks of workers in the iron, the cotton, or the building trades, to the utter discouragement of skill and intelligence; or else there must be discrimination, some receiving more, others less, with no standard to go by. A municipality now can pay according to current local wages or trade union rates; but under Collectivism there would neither be trade unions or any outside wages with which to make a comparison. And thus we should have to do the very thing we should wish to avoid, and entrust our good fortune to the arbitrary decision of government officials. This I call wages at Bumble's discretion.

Lastly comes the difficulty of motives, and a blow struck at industry, care, and frugality. True that Socialists often argue from the natural goodness of man and his proneness to virtue from his youth up. But this appears a contradiction. If man is naturally so good and yet the world so full of injustice and oppression as the Socialists maintain, then the fact that they have allowed the world to drift into so bad a condition proves that mankind, however honest and well meaning, is thoroughly incompetent, and quite unfit to be trusted with collective management. Let us then confine the argument to real historical man, who appears an idle, careless, and self-indulgent personage unless properly trained and given an adequate motive for action. Take away the stimulus of hope and fear, especially when ennobled and fortified by regard for others, for infirm parents, for invalid brethren, for wife and young children, to avert from them suffering and poverty, to procure for them comfort, health, education and ease—let their future be secure, no longer in any way in our hands, and what shall save those hands from being smitten with a paralyzing slackness?

So, then, these five difficulties in the way of Socialism—the difficulty of organizing business, of supplying wants, of assigning employment, of adjudicating reward, and of furnishing a motive for industry and frugality—these five fatal difficulties pull down the second prop of Socialism, the argument from economy. There would no doubt be some saving in the waste of competition; but the losses would outbalance the saving more than a hundredfold! This I call being penny wise and pound foolish.

Socialism as a necessary remedy.
But there still remains the third prop of Socialism, the argument from necessity, that at all costs we must be freed from the evils of the present time, that anything is better than to leave things as they are. And most truly the evils are terrible and pressing: the miserable dwellings of so large a number of our people in town and country, the cruel advantage taken of weak, unorganized labor, the uncertainty of employment, the frequent triumph of dishonesty, the poverty-stricken old age that for so many is the dreary prospect ahead. But who recognised these evils more clearly than Pope Leo XIII.? Who told us more clearly than he that we are not to leave these things as they are? What a fallacy then for the Socialists to say, Society is sick, and therefore the only remedy is Collectivism, as though there were no other alternative. But another alternative there is that involves no injury to the Church, no injury to the State, no injury to family life, another alternative that, unlike Collectivism, is free from the five fatal

obstacles I have shown in the way of Collectivism; and this other alternative is Christian Social Reform.

An Alternative.
I have already mentioned Bishop Stang's volume on Socialism and Christianity, and will gladly follow his example of not meeting the new social gospel with mere negation, but with a positive programme of reform. I ask, therefore, and with the more confidence because I have an episcopal flag flying at my mast-head, whether in Great Britain we cannot unite our forces and follow social reform along the four lines of protected labour, of organized labor, of insured labor, and lastly of diffused ownership. This is not indeed all, but all that we need now consider.

As to protected labor or factory legislation, we have only to go on with what has been so well begun, and extend, improve, complete and copy any salutary examples from abroad. Thus the laws might be imitated that demand guarantees for the moral character of foremen, separation of the sexes, consent of parents or guardians before those under age may be employed. Then the actual law might be better enforced, and evasions stopped like those in the dressmaking trade, brought to public knowledge in Mrs. Lyttleton's play. And legal protection should be extended to the helpless crowd of workers, mostly young women, in the match factories, jam making, and cheap clothing trade.

Secondly, along the line of organized labor, let us aim at the spread, the elevation, and the legal incorporation of trade unions, so that as far as possible in all industries, all bargaining about work and wages may be collective bargaining, masters and men both organized, all disputes that conciliation cannot avert being conducted before a reasonable tribunal of arbitration; and an end made of the present scandalous uncertainty of the law regarding trade unions.

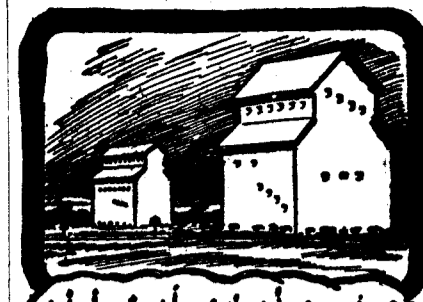
And here let me interpose a word suggested by what has already passed at this Conference. His Grace the Archbishop of Westminster alluded to a rumor that labor organisations were being abused to force their members to support non-religious education. If there is any truth—I hope there is not—in such a rumor, far from setting

Catholics against trade unions, it should stimulate them to take such a friendly and sympathetic attitude towards them in the legitimate industrial sphere, as to be able to protest with good effect if they go beyond that sphere. And here precisely is a case to which the words of Father Gerard apply, delivered in this hall last night, on the responsibility of Catholic men; a case where the resolute protest of all Catholic trade-unionists against the organisation of labor being thus turned from its proper purpose would have, on all concerned, the most beneficial effect.

Thirdly, along the line of insured labor we have an instalment in the Workman's Compensation Act, of 1897. But this only touches accidents and not the other great branches of workman's insurance, against sickness, against infirmity and against unemployment. Our trade unions and our friendly societies, for a select portion of our people, serve as insurance against sickness and infirmity; but I confess to a feeling of envy at the magnificent system of triple insurance that is the boast of Germany. But neither in Germany nor elsewhere in the final branch of insurance, viz., that against unemployment, yet established, though attempts have been made, the most conspicuous and practical for us being the great work of our English trade unions, who have spent on unemployed benefit in the twelve years ending 1903 considerably over four million pounds. And I agree with the suggestion in Mr. Percy Alden's recent admirable work, that a government contribution should be given in proportion to the sums thus voluntarily subscribed.

(To be continued.)

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