

The Redemption of the World's Laborers.

The misery of our social life, who can see, hear and read about it, and not be moved to use their utmost endeavors to aid in a reform for the better.

Our privileged classes, the gilded butterflies of that social life, of course, can hardly complain. If they have health and strength, they can take a fair, comfortable view of life. Even as they are taking a fair share—by far too fair a share—of the good things this side of eternity. They hate and dread the word "Socialism," understanding thereby a state of things which would level them to the condition in which they try to keep their poorer brethren, and of which they themselves stand in most wholesome dread.

And often I hear even those refute Socialism who have everything to gain by it. For those we might say:—Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are saying; and further, that they have never gone in to think for themselves. Others, again, have just a little share of this world's goods—ay be it's but the proverbial cow—and they are like their betters in worldly possession, they cannot part with the little even, even if they had the assurance of getting more, unless that more was straightaway put into their hands. I fear that will not be so with Socialism. Inch by inch, and foot by foot, it will grow into a mighty system of universal power. So let us hope and wish and work. For what a sorry look out or look forward if our social life should remain as it is—in its unfair distribution of riches and pleasure, of poverty and of work.

Who with an awakened conscience would bring children into the world to no better prospects than our present social ones. For what does even the rich man know but what his pampered, tenderly-nurtured darling may have to pull the coach instead of riding in it, as Bellamy illustrates it in his book "Looking Backward," if competition and avarice holds its sway in the future as it has done in the past.

What will Socialism do for us? some ask, and often answer themselves: make everybody alike; and cannot possibly be. Here is a clever, hard working man, pushing his way up in the world, he is to get no more than one who is not half so clever, so pushing and hard working? And this question from our present social view of life is natural enough. But let us look at it from a Socialistic and truly human point of view; from a view which, when we become sensible and truly humanized, must prevail. The question is, does a man who is not half so clever, so pushing and hard working want less than the other? Can he do with less food, with less clothes, with less comfort, and with less pleasure? I am sure in most cases he cannot, although at present he very likely has to. Socialism will keep no idle drones, and so it stands to reason that no man will be overworked, that even the one who is not so well endowed as the other with bodily and mental strength will be able to do his share of life's labor. And if we really analyze the question of the so-called clever, pushing man. He is by no means always the most hard working, the man who gets on so well in life. It is mostly the man who overworks and underpays his fellow beings; or, in other words, he collects a goodly share of their remuneration and sustenance for himself. I think that is a definition of what we call the successful business man and capitalist.

Socialism will devise means to prevent such unfair dealings. However, it will not level down, as the capitalist fears, and would have us believe; nay, it will level up, so that even the hum-

blest worker shall have all necessities and refinements even to the highest standard of attained perfection. For if we cannot do without the humble work, it must be as valuable as the most refined. When once we have reached that height of civilization, for mark you, the slave, white or black, is an institution of savagery or barbarism, our world would indeed be fair. No eyesores, of poor, ragged, ignorant, half-starved humanity, nor their dilapidated dwellings shall disgrace our cities and our country towns. A finer, and nobler looking race we will be when the most needless, cruel slavery, poverty and starvation is abolished. The world is large enough for all its children, and with prudence ever will be.

There is not the slightest fear that Socialism would destroy individuality and originality. There will always be some that would rather work at sea than on land, and others in the field than indoors, some at books, others in handicraft. If one is indispensable to the other they should also be equally considered. And now we have come to that knowledge, we act criminally if we act against such knowledge. I have heard people deride Bellamy's work, "Looking Backward," wherein he pictures a perfected human society. I have heard some say it is but a madman who could write such stuff. And that it is but madness generally to think of equality, kind fellowship and common brotherhood. I can only answer, if we must be mad to attain to such sublime conditions, I wish to heaven the whole world were mad. But I fear as it is the whole world must be mad, to live in the prevailing cut-throat fashion, each trying to race the other out of existence—a perfect Bethel on a large scale. Let us hope for our children, and children's children's sake it will become sane before long—sane enough at all events to act in justice and equity if not in loving unity.

Anti-socialists would have us believe that did a state of existence prevail where we would fight each other for existence, all ambition and incentive for ambition and progress would disappear. I beg to differ, and so must everyone who thoughtfully studies the subject. To begin with, our religious reformers—(note Melancthon and Luther)—did they work for riches, comfort or reward? They had none of them, sometimes not even the necessities of life, or barely so. And still they worked on, no matter what obstacles in their way. For more illustration note our explorers and scientific men. Many of them born to comfort and even luxury, forsaking all to follow their inborn inclination for travel, discovery, and a longing to unravel and reveal the mysteries of the universe. Such traits existed in the human race ever since there has been a record of humanity. And who would say that such traits would disappear when we have more time and opportunity to perfect our higher qualities, than when the greatest effort and strength were required to maintain a barbarous struggle for existence. A struggle for existence is not all human—it is brutal and insane. We need never fear that socialism will destroy love for learning, earnest application to find out secrets of nature and genius, and ambition to advance such revelations for mutual benefit for all. From our former experience in past ages of mankind, it has not been the men who cared most for meat and drink and the pleasures of society, where our great reformers, inventors, and scientific geniuses have sprung from, but just the reverse, Great men like that forget all about self and surroundings; each little step of discovery that advances a theory, the tiniest little screw or spring that perfects the inventor's apparatus, is more joy and pleasure to them than all the gratification of self or society.

Such men will ever live while there is a field for exploration and improve-

ment. The great men of our time tell us that only a small area has been lightened up by the torches of thought and genius. All the other planets, though they may be specks of light to our eyes, are still but darkness and conjecture, so far as their substance and life on them is concerned. What a vast field of study in itself! If it is impossible to do without a distinction, or aristocracy of humanity, in justice and fairness for the future it must be an aristocracy of individual talent, merit, and nobility of charity. For such, even the Socialist would cheerfully work and elevate above the labor of actual existence. But for aristocracy whose distinction is titles, or hard cash only, inherited or acquired, even the anti-Socialist refuses to work and toil any longer. But to illustrate our present privileged aristocracy and the unblushing selfishness. Even from where I am writing I can see a grand palatial residence, the beautiful grounds whereon it stands are sloping right down to a river bank with the mild autumn sun shining up it—Eden itself could scarce have looked fairer. The mansion is shut up, no one remains but a caretaker and gardener somewhere located in the back premises. Its owner has gone to live in another beautiful mansion near a large city, where he and his family can enjoy the gaiety of the winter season. He soweth not, neither does he spin, neither does he make himself otherwise useful, he is an independent gentleman of a large fortune. Only a short distance from this beautiful mansion are a number of small cottages, more or less in preservation, mostly less; here the laborers live with their families, the men who toil, who sow, and who spin, to provide the rich man and his kindred with bread; the men who, to the best of their strength and ability, do their share of life's labor. Here they live, and children, huddled together in a few small rooms, and even these are the rich man's property.

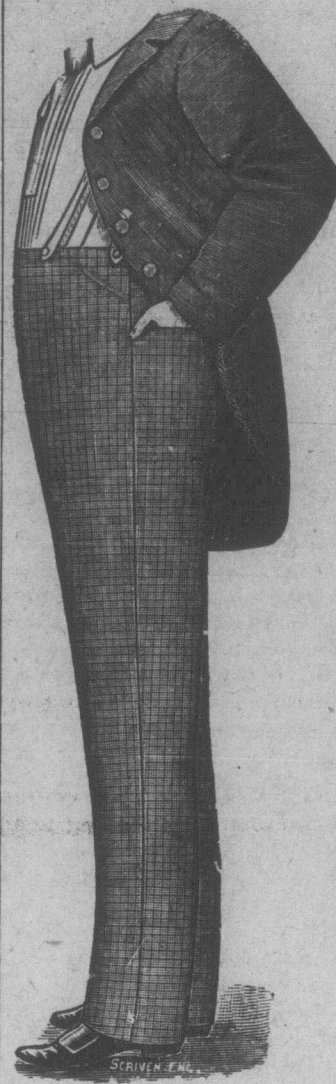
Now note what cruel waste this empty mansion, this beautiful garden, where the world's toilers dare not even enter without permission. Socialism will certainly not allow such waste; however, it will not destroy the beautiful mansion, and lovely grounds it will not level down. If it cannot give to each working toiler a mansion to himself, the many will share what the rich man now keeps exclusively for use, or no use for himself. Whoever would not be a Socialist to achieve such an end?

Once more, who would not be a Socialist, and help with might and strength to build a social structure where strife and fighting would cease. But I grant you, grant you with all my heart, that much remains to be done before such a happy future will be ours, the least of which is to make the majority of humanity more human. Ages of servility and white slavery, as well as black, must be eradicated, especially in the old world countries, and that we can only hope to effect in the young generation.

There is something beautiful and graceful in civility when offered from equal to equal, and a primary education with tuition of refinement and manners must make us equal in that respect no matter how we may choose to make ourselves useful in an after career.

There is something good and holy when reverence is paid by the young to their elders. But there is something loathsome and sickening in servility from man to man to a just and well-balanced mind.

How can each and all of us help to undo the evils of the past and present. By the ballot box certainly. By only giving votes to such men who, with a strong voice and hand, will abolish plural voting, which gives our large proprietors an undue advantage over the poor man.—"A Woman" in The Commonweal.



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