

It is in just such a way as this that Labor must seek to rid itself of the robbers that now levy upon its earnings. Brute strength will avail little unless guided by intelligence.

The first attempts of working-men to improve their condition are by combining to demand higher wages of their direct employers. Something can be done in this way for those within such organizations; but it is, after all, very little. For a trades-union can only artificially lessen competition within the trade; it cannot affect the general conditions which force men into bitter competition with each other for the opportunity to gain a living. And such organizations as the Knights of Labor, which are to trades-unions what the trades-union is to its individual members, while they give greater power, must encounter the same difficulties in their efforts to raise wages directly. All such efforts have the inherent disadvantage of struggling against general tendencies. They are like the attempts of a man in a crowd to gain room by forcing back those who press upon him—like attempts to stop a great engine by the sheer force of human muscle, without cutting off steam.

Thus, those who are at first inclined to put faith in the power of trades-unionism are beginning to see, and the logic of events must more and more lead them to see. But the perception that to accomplish large results general tendencies must be controlled, inclines those who do not analyze these tendencies into their causes to transfer faith from some form of the voluntary organization of labor to some form of governmental organization and direction.

All varieties of what is vaguely called socialism recognize with more or less clearness the solidarity of the interests of the masses of all countries. Whatever may be objected to socialism in its extreme forms, it has at least the merit of lessening national prejudices and aiming at the disbandment of armies and the suppression of war. It is thus opposed to the cardinal tenet of protectionism that the interests of the people of different "nations" are diverse and antagonistic. But, on the other hand, those who call themselves socialists, so far from being disposed to look with disfavor upon governmental interference and regulation, are disposed to sympathize with protection as in this respect in harmony with socialism, and to regard free trade, at least as it has been popularly presented, as involving a reliance on that principle of free competition which to their thinking means the crushing of the weak.

Let us endeavor, as well as can in brief be done, to trace the relations between the conclusions to which we have come and what, with various shades of meaning, is termed "socialism."

In socialism as distinguished from individualism there is an unquestionable truth—and that a truth to which (especially by those most identified with free trade principles) too little attention has been paid. Man is primarily an individual—a separate entity, differing from his fellows in desires and powers, and requiring for the exercise of those powers and the gratification of those desires individual play and freedom. But he is also a social being, having desires that harmonize with those of his fellows, and powers that can only be brought out in concerted action. There is thus a domain of individual action and a domain of social action—some things which can best be done when each acts for himself and some things which can best be done when society acts for all its members. And the natural tendency of advancing civilization is to make social conditions relatively more important, and more and more to enlarge the domain of social action. This has not been sufficiently regarded, and at the present time, evil unquestionably results from leaving to individual action functions that by reason of the growth of society and the development of the arts have passed into the domain of social action; just as on the other hand, evil unquestionably results from social interference with what properly belongs to the individual. Society ought not to leave the telegraph and the railway to the management and control of individuals; nor yet ought society to step in and collect individual debts or attempt to direct individual industry.

But while there is a truth in socialism which individualists forget, there is a school of socialists who in like manner ignore the truth there is in individualism, and whose propositions for the improvement of social conditions belong to the class I have called "super-adequate." Socialism in its narrow sense—the socialism that would have the state absorb capital and abolish competition—is the scheme of men who, looking upon society in its most complex organization, have failed to see that principles obvious in a simpler stage still hold true in the more intimate relations that result from the division of labor and the use of complex tools and methods, and have thus fallen into fallacies elaborated by the economists of a

totally different school, who have taught that capital is the employer and sustainer of labor, and have striven to confuse the distinction between property in land and property in labor-products. Their scheme is that of men who, while revolting from the heartlessness and hopelessness of the "orthodox political economy," are yet entangled in its fallacies and blinded by its confusions. Confounding "capital" with "means of production," and accepting the dictum that "natural wages" are the least on which competition can force the laborer to live, they essay to cut a knot they do not see how to unravel, by making the state the sole capitalist and employer, and abolishing competition.

The carrying on by government of all production and exchange, as a remedy for the difficulty of finding employment on the one side, and for overgrown fortunes on the other, belong to the same category as the prescription that all men should be good. That if all men were assigned proper employment and all wealth fairly distributed, then none would need employment and there would be no injustice in distribution, is as indisputable a proposition as that if all were good none would be bad. But it will not help a man perplexed as to his path to tell him that the way to get to his journey's end is to get there.

That all men should be good is the greatest desideratum, but it can only be secured by the abolition of conditions which tempt some and drive others into evil doing. That each should render according to his abilities and receive according to his needs, is indeed the very highest social state of which we can conceive, but how shall we hope to attain such perfection until we can first find some way of securing to every man the opportunity to labor and the fair earnings of his labor. Shall we try to be generous before we have learned how to be just?

All schemes for securing equality in the conditions of men by placing the distribution of wealth in the hands of government have the fatal defect of beginning at the wrong end. They pre-suppose pure government; but it is not government that makes society; it is society that makes government; and *until* there is something like substantial equality in the distribution of wealth we cannot expect pure government.

But to put all men on a footing of substantial equality, so that there could be no dearth of employment, no "over-production," no tendency of wages to the minimum of subsistence, no monstrous fortunes on the one side and no army of proletarians on the other, it is not necessary that the state should assume the ownership of all the means of production and become the general employer and universal exchanger; it is necessary only that the equal rights of all to that primary means of production which is the source of all other means of production are derived from, should be asserted. And this, so far from involving an extension of governmental functions and machinery, involves, as we have seen, their great reduction. It would thus tend to purify government in two ways—first by the betterment of the social conditions on which purity in government depends, and second, by the simplification of administration. This step taken, and we could safely begin to add to the functions of the state in its proper or co-operative sphere.

There is in reality no conflict between labor and capital; the true conflict is between labor and monopoly. That a rich employer "squeezes" needy workmen may be true. But does this squeezing power result from his riches or from their need? No matter how rich an employer might be, how would it be possible for him to squeeze workmen who could make a good living for themselves without going into his employment. The competition of workmen with workmen for employment, which is the real cause that enables, and even in most cases forces, the employer to squeeze his workmen, arises from the fact that men, debarred of the natural opportunities to employ themselves, are compelled to bid against one another for the wages of an employer. Abolish the monopoly that forbids men to employ themselves, and capital could not possibly oppress labor. In no case could the capitalist obtain labor for less than the laborer could get by employing himself. Once remove the cause of that injustice which deprives the laborer of the capital his toil creates, and the sharp distinction between capitalist and laborer would, in fact, cease to exist.

They who, seeing how men are forced by competition to the extreme of human wretchedness, jump to the con-

\*It must be remembered that nothing that can be classed either as labor or as land can be accounted capital in any definite use of the term, and that much that we commonly speak of as capital—such as solvent debts, government bonds, etc.—is in reality not even wealth—which all true capital must be. For a fuller elucidation of this, as of similar points, I must refer to *Progress and Poverty*.