

There will always be an amount of arbitration, of registration, and organization that only a central authority can properly undertake; but the experience of the Co-operative movement would seem to show that, at all events under present social conditions, the sphere of governmental control should not be rapidly extended.

Co-operation and Progress.

Without stopping to discuss the question as to how we may radically differentiate what we so glibly term barbarism from civilization, we might ask, Can we rationally apply the latter term to a state of society in which a large bulk of the people have difficulty in earning a livelihood and are totally without the prospect of a stable future and a comfortable old age? Except for a few very erratic episodes, the condition of the masses in these respects has made little advance in historical times. It seems opposed to all our notions of Evolution to expect a sudden change, and we are inclined to think that those who imagine such a change to be possible misread the signs of the times. The process of civilization is essentially a mental process, and though material progress may be the chief factor in producing it, the fact seems to be that it is yet in its infancy. What are the lines upon which a true civilizing process must be carried on? First of all, there must be an appreciation of the solidarity—the interdependence of all sections of the race, and of the rights and duties of men towards each other. Though trade is often said to be our chief civilizing agent, the basis of trade to-day is as much like open war as it could be without the actual use of gunpowder, and in some cases even this reservation is unnecessary. But, as Mr. Holyoake's article shows, an immense progress has been made among the Co-operators during the last half-century in their ethical standard, even though the development of the movement has so far been mainly in the direction of distribution, to the neglect of production, without which the chief good effect of Co-operation cannot be attained—the elimination of the warfare between capital and labor, as between the storekeeper and the consumer.

The Jubilee and British Federation.

But when we come to the chief question, How shall the note of progress be sounded throughout the world? or why should we ask "the heathen" to adopt Paine's humanitarian motto, "The world is my country, mankind my brethren, to do good my religion?" we are met by the fact that the British Jubilee fleet is the biggest and the most powerful the world has ever seen, and that the British empire seems as ready as ever to be cajoled or frightened or bullied into war. That the fleet is necessary to the national existence seems evident; unless we assume that the other nations are more civilized than Britain. The reverse of this, however, seems probable, and the great question comes back to us, What are the best means available to secure as far as possible that peace, internal and external, which is essential for the development of civilizing influences? It is in view of this question that the Jubilee gives what appears to us to be its most valuable lesson. It has brought the question of a British Federation into the hands of practical politicians and statesmen, and we look upon it that such a federation would be the most influential for peace of any agency within our reach, and if it should lead in the future to a still wider federation of English-speaking peoples, we should imagine that the surest foundation for progress had been laid that man is likely to achieve for ages.