

## Our Betters

himself the most important thing on earth; and the first thing he requires is self-respect, that he may the better respect others.

The distinction which is born of self-respect is often met in the peasant—the man who is nearest to Nature. To create this sense is the first duty of the State. The care of the individual is the safeguard of the community: the assertion of the individual conscience over the conglomerate law of force is the triumph of free mind over the tyranny of matter.

The world is undergoing a sea-change; the old landmarks are being swept away, the barbed wire fences which separated the classes are being relegated to the limbo of the human scrap-heap. As in our time Science has progressed with giant strides—I mean the science appertaining to tangible things, the science of bodies—so I believe are we on the threshold of a spiritual science, the science of a higher sociology. Its premonitory vibrations are felt all over the world. Wherever we put our ears to the ground we hear a tiny tapping at the earth's crust: it is the upspringing of a new social creed; it is the call of a new religion; it is the intellectual enfranchisement of mankind.

Vaguely we all apprehend it, but we are slow to give it articulate utterance. I suppose that