

namely, that strict justice must be fulfilled, and that members of society are responsible for certain reciprocal duties. The old heathen Individualism is dying out, and its selfish and godless principles may unblushingly be advocated only by selfish proprietors and materialist philosophers, and continually do we find new expansions, new energies, put forth by what may be termed Philanthropy, Altruism, Humanitarianism, or in a more practical and robust form, Socialism, for they are all manifestations of the self-same spirit. Socialism is stronger than individual Philanthropy, because it is organised Philanthropy carried on by the most powerful of civil instruments, the State. Take, for instance, the admirable work now being done in London by Dr. Barnardo for the rescue of young waifs and strays, and mark the decisive fact it teaches. After fifteen years' experience the noble Doctor emphatically declares that the root of the evil will never be reached until the whole nation takes part in the work, that is to say, the power of the State must be put in motion to deal summarily with this great social disgrace. Thus it may be seen that to select the most violent utterances of some of the so-called advanced thinkers who represent the more unbalanced minds of the age, and to consider these a fair estimate of the promises of Socialism, is utterly to miss the healthiness and vitality of a grand forward movement which is making itself felt among all sorts and conditions of men.

The true expression of Socialism is not to be sought for in the brilliant offers of those "pagan reformers who only ask for a Revolution and a few months to make earth a paradise," but in the settled conviction and practical acceptance which its principles are winning among intellects of widely different calibre. There can be scant sympathy with the "shrieking socialism" of politicians who delight in calling themselves "thorough-going," and who are not pleased with partial improvements and steady progress under the idea that all palliations tend to postpone the desired consummation. It is far more reasonable to look for an educated advancement guided by cultivated minds, and evolved in regular course. And indeed, this conclusion will be arrived at by any unprejudiced observer who has carefully considered the course of events in England during the last few years.

If we are to believe Lord Bramwell, who is reputed one of the ablest lawyers in Great Britain, and the Property League Defence Association, a very large proportion of the legislative acts of the Imperial Parliament for the past fifteen years is of a distinctly Socialistic character, these acts, they tell us, are tainted with Socialism, they bear the mark of the "Scarlet Woman," and as such ought to be reprobated by all honourable (*sic*) men. Now, it may be edifying to take an example of these objectionable laws which Individualists believe to be a standing reproach to the common sense of Englishmen, and an unjust infringement of the rights of personal liberty. The Factory Bill, for instance, is an act now in force, which appears equally

vicious to certain supposed Christians as to a cultured Agnostic like Mr. Herbert Spencer. This law was enacted to prevent fathers sending their young sons and daughters into the manufactory before they have reached a certain age. This is, indeed, restricting the self-willed action of the parent, but surely no true Christian, no humane person, can consistently with his profession speak against the justice of such a really beneficial piece of legislation. And if the other acts objected to are examined, it will be found that while interfering with the unrestrained liberty of certain individuals, at the same time they protect the liberties of others from unjust aggression, and tend to impart to the components of society that freedom with fairness without which we should be in a perpetual state of intestine warfare. Of course this would not be so distasteful to those who are ever crying out "*laissez-faire*," or as Carlyle puts it, "devil take the hindmost," who would like to see the rule of the brute kingdom in force among mankind, who shelter themselves under a cold-blooded misconception of that grand law of the survival of the fittest, and speak calmly of allowing countless numbers of their weaker brethren to be crushed down and killed off the face of the earth. But Christians dare not entertain these horrible ideas, and faith in their Divine Master and in the quickening power of the Holy Spirit will never suffer them to despair of the meanest of God's human creatures.

In the wholesale condemnation of the late acts of British Parliaments above mentioned there is no distinction made between Conservative and Liberal, and in fact it is difficult to say which party has accepted to a greater extent the fundamental principles of Socialism. Some people are ungracious enough to imagine that the rival factions are endeavouring to outbid one another in a frantic effort to obtain the support of the Democracy. However that may be, it is quite obvious that considerable modifications have taken place in the guiding principles of statesmen. I remember reading a curious article which was written some years ago by Mr. Holyoake, an ardent Liberal, in which he stigmatised Socialism as "the smallpox of To-day." But surely the quondam Liberal creed of self-help and self-reliance has been somewhat changed by the recognition of Co-operation, Trades' Unionism, and Compulsory Education, which, by the way, bids fair soon to become Free Education, and, to quote from an interesting essay of the late Arnold Toynbee on the question, "are Radicals Socialists?" "By the Irish land bill of 1881, the Radicals have finally accepted and recognised the fact, which has far-reaching applications, a fact which is the fundamental principle of Socialism, that between men who are unequal in material wealth there can be no freedom of contract." As for the Conservatives, we have only to regard a rather amusing incident which took place in the House of Lords when Lord Salisbury proposed his Bill for the Housing of the Poor, thereby laying himself open to the charge of entertaining Socialistic tendencies.