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Let us all, through self-help and mutual help, build up a great industrial commonwealth, in which the worker shall not be regarded a beast of burden, in which he shall not be merely a "hand," but a heart, a soul, an intellect.

THOMAS BURT

LANDMARKS IN THE HISTORY OF BRITISH INDUSTRIES

GREAT BRITAIN is approaching a crisis of unexampled gravity. She has, indeed, weathered many a storm which wrecked institutions as firmly established to all appearance as her own. But hitherto the enemy has stood without her gates; and external pressure serves to consolidate a nation's power of resistance. She is now attacked by domestic foes of her own making, whose disruptive energy may paralyse the heart of a civilising empire. Such times demand statesmanship of the highest order, gifted with prescience and the power of adapting means to end. *C'est contre le lendemain que mon esprit lutte*—"My soul striveth with to-morrow," said Prince Metternich to an American tourist, proving that, with all his limitations, he had grasped the bedrock principle of good government. But administrators grope in the dark, unless they take account of the experience of mankind. The roots of the present are thrust

deeply into the past, and the future looms before us as a resultant of forces which have been for centuries in operation. I will point out the more salient landmarks of our industrial history, and follow the long train of causation which bids fair to bring Labour into a death-grip with Capital. We shall see a perennial struggle between monopoly and co-operation—the self-regarding instincts making for anarchy, and the sentiment of solidarity from which peace and order are evolved.

1100-1400 A.D. Secondary, i.e., non-agricultural industries rise in importance; and the artisans who practise them gather in urban communities. They spontaneously form Craft Gilds, in order to withstand the tyranny of feudal overlords, and to exclude the competition of "foreigners," whether citizens of neighbouring towns, or oversea immigrants. The aims of these associations are to secure technical education for the young, a just reward for labour, honest dealings with the consumer, a high standard of excellence in handiwork, and succour for poorer brethren. The Gild's constitution is democratic in that it gives equal opportunity to all. After learning his craft under the best possible conditions, the apprentice rises to the status of journeyman, becoming in due course a master, and then taking part in the government of his Gild. Wages are regulated by custom, and great private wealth is unattainable. But full scope is given to the craftsman's æsthetic and creative instincts. Emulation spurs him to excel his fellows

in producing things of use and beauty. He enjoys the essentials of happiness enunciated by John Bright—"congenial occupation, and a sense of progress." Labour, under such conditions, is a joy, and specimens of its fruit have come down to us, which are the despair of this mechanical age. Brotherhood, under the ægis of religion, is the root-idea of industrial organisation. Incredible as it may seem, Englishmen of this age do not worship wealth, or struggle with each other to obtain it: they have a nobler paradise than buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest market. External commerce is in the hands of German and Italian colonists, whose countries were the cradle of banking and credit, of book-keeping by double entry, and the factory system. There arose the conception of Capital in the sense of a store of private wealth employed in multiplying itself through the agency of human labour.

1400-1600. Englishmen are fired by the spectacle of golden harvests reaped by these intruders; they prove apt pupils in all the arts of money-getting, and transfer to industrial pursuits the combativeness generated by a century of dynastic warfare. Commercialism gains a footing in the national character. It is a blend of powerful self-regarding instincts; brings every emotion into play except love, sympathy and pity. It is the source of foreign exploration, sea-power and empire; but, at home, it exercises a tremendous disruptive influence. Commercialism invades the Craft Associations, which become plutocratic and

exclusive : " Merchant Gilds," i.e., groupings of middlemen, concerned only with the distribution of commodities, are formed as soon as Englishmen begin to take a hand in foreign trade. Their interests clash with those of organised production, and solidarity between workers receives a mortal blow. Commercialism spreads to the Church, which had once been a terror to evil-doers and an ark of refuge for the oppressed. Its ministers carry on a regular traffic in relics and indulgences; they forget that Christ's Kingdom is not of this world; their spiritual prestige suffers a mortal wound.

Hitherto, the country's soil had been the main source of subsistence, defence and honour. Land was originally parcelled out among the King's followers, who owed him allegiance, while they exacted it from subordinate tenants. In theory, and generally in practice, the feudal edifice had been based on the Law of Mutual Help; every privilege carried with it a corresponding duty. But the entire caste of landlords is swept away by dynastic warfare (1455-1485), which leaves the rest of the nation free to develop on commercial lines, and instals a highly centralised monarchy on the ruins of feudalism. With the destruction of the ancient nexus, there creeps in a novel conception of absolute property in the soil, which is treated by landlords as an engine yielding profit to themselves. Thus, the earlier Tudor sovereigns are surrounded by a new aristocracy of keen business men, who owed their rank to royal caprice, and not to their relation with land.

Thanks to her growing commercialism, England has no part whatever in the "Renaissance," or revival of Greek and Roman learning.

1500-1600. That movement produces the Reformation, essentially a revolt of the individual soul against the trammels of religious authority. In England, it serves mainly to strengthen the self-regarding instincts. With all its shortcomings, the mediæval Church never wholly forgot its Master's injunction, "Bear ye one another's burdens"; His fierce denunciations of predatory wealth; His boundless pity for the destitute and oppressed. Men had hitherto performed good works with a view to accumulating religious merit. Reformers lay undue stress on the Pauline doctrine of Justification by Faith alone, thereby removing the most powerful incentive to ethical conduct. So the new nobility scramble for confiscated Church estates, and evict their tenants wholesale in order to form sheep-runs; the gilds are shamelessly pillaged by harpies who gather round the boy-King Edward VI. But a vast immigration takes place of foreign craftsmen, driven from their homes by religious persecution. The Gild system is replaced by cottage industries, often pursued in conjunction with agriculture, or in small workshops, in which masters, journeymen and apprentices labour side by side. But Landlordism and lack of organisation produce a huge selvage of unemployed, who wander on the country roads, or swell the volume of destitution in cities. Queen Elizabeth's advisers attempt to

supply the missing elements by codifying the economic legislation of the Middle Ages, while they render intuitive obedience to the law of supply and demand. The Statute of Artificers (1563) imposes a seven years' apprenticeship on learners of nearly every craft, and empowers Justices of the Peace—most of whom are employers of labour—to fix the rate of wages from time to time at Quarter Sessions. Government thus assumes the duty of regulating conditions of labour in supersession of the moribund Gilds.

The discovery of precious metals in South America and that of the Cape route to India works a revolution in international commerce; sea power must come to an energetic race, whose habitat is girt by the ocean. English mariners start on a race for wealth with those of Portugal and Spain: their freebooting expeditions bring a flood of wealth into this country: it is employed in Asiatic commerce under the Joint Stock system, which commences on a large scale with a Charter granted to the East India Company (1600).

1600-1700. The influx of gold and silver causes a decline in their purchasing power, and King Charles I. finds his ancient feudal revenues insufficient to meet the cost of administration. He endeavours to increase them by unconstitutional taxation, and lights up the flames of revolution. The nation is wholly absorbed in war and politics; and a truce is called to commercialism. A new force comes into play when peace has been restored by Cromwell's iron hand. The Jews, who had been banished from England by Edward

I. (1290), begin to creep back to their happy hunting ground. This gifted race has learnt that money is power, and give all their faculties to accumulating it. They are the acutest of business men, with high solidarity produced by centuries of external pressure. Charles II. encourages them, as ministers to his extravagance; and under William III. they become a power in the land.

1700-1800. Increased facilities for banking and credit are favourable to the mercantile class, whose capital is fed by the profits of foreign trade. They also promote a parasite growth of speculation, which culminates in a national orgy known as the South Sea Bubble (1720). Commercialism seeks an outlet in domestic industries. The predatory middleman, strong by virtue of his capital, begins by saving small producers the trouble of marketing their finished wares; then supplies them with raw materials, and lastly reduces them to the status of wage-earners. Under the wage-system, capitalism purchases the labourer's brain and muscles. But in selling them he is sorely hampered by ignorance, poverty, chaotic communications, and family ties. His employer can wait for a better bargain: a labourer must accept almost any terms, or starve. Under the pressure of competition on both sides, wages are apt to gravitate downwards to the lowest point at which the labourer can live and propagate his kind. He is dependent for a bare subsistence for his wife and children whose lives are darkened by ill-remunerated toil. In some respects, the

wage-system is worse than slavery or serfdom : for capital is not immediately depleted by the ruin of the human agent whom it exploits.

Now landlords enter the lists with grasping business men. They begin to practise high farming, and their enclosures of common land fill the sordid towns with an uprooted peasantry. Richard Arkwright teaches his brother capitalists how to convert this mass of raw material into well-drilled factory hands. Under the pressure of dire necessity an age of invention dawns on England. Her mineral industries are revolutionised by chemical science, her textile production by mechanical devices. Water-power, and afterwards the steam-engine, favour the concentration of capital. The heavy cost of installation places instruments of production beyond the labourer's reach. With his wife and helpless children he becomes a slave to the machine, doomed to spend his life in producing wealth for his taskmaster's behoof. The third quarter of this century witnesses a sudden revolution known as the "Age of Great Industry." It throws the whole mechanism of economic life out of gear, and is contrary to the genius of the English people, who had inherited from their Teutonic forbears a passion for personal freedom, and for the joys of country life.

Before the Age of Great Industry has attained its full development, two great thinkers arise. Approaching human relations from opposite poles, they give currency to metaphysical sophisms which are the direct inspirers of the

existing chaos. J. J. Rousseau's "Discourse on Inequality" (1753) proclaims that "Man is born good, but civilisation has corrupted him." Remove the restraints of law, and you will see the "Natural Man" emerge, a compendium of social virtues. All the ills which afflict society arise from the institution of private property, which produces inequality and, therefore, the evil passions of pride, cupidity, jealousy, and hatred. Rousseau is the parent of the French Revolution; of socialism, anarchism, and syndicalism. Adam Smith's "Enquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations" (1776) starts from premises which have a close analogy with Rousseau's. The founder of Political Economy believed in the existence of a Natural Order, which suffers from the intervention of government; but the "Economic Man," evolved by the imagination of Adam Smith's followers, differs widely from Rousseau's "Natural Man." Egoism is the source of his activity; but in gratifying the self-regarding instinct he automatically promotes the general weal. On such flimsy foundations rests the doctrine of *laissez faire,* which may be translated "hands off"; it holds that government should allow Capital and Labour to adjust their relations in accordance with the law of supply and demand. *Laissez faire* leaps at one bound into acceptance by the possessing classes, and becomes the basis of our economic policy.

Relieved from the checks imposed by law and custom, capitalists give free scope to their selfish instincts. Com-

bativeness becomes internecine competition, which forbids them to have mercy on human agents, regarded as a blind force of nature. They depress wages to a starvation level, and cheapen the cost of manufacture by machinery. Production enters on a chaotic stage (1770-1835), during which Government ignores the patent fact that its primary duty is to protect the weak against the oppression of ruthless greed. Finding law and public opinion hostile or indifferent, the wage-earning class seek to better their plight by combining against Capitalism. Trade Unionism dates from 1753, when certain worsted weavers of the Manchester district formed themselves into 'shops,' each of which sent delegates to a central executive committee. The movement spreads rapidly, and Capitalism is soon confronted by groupings of great cohesive strength. Like all human institutions the Union is apt to stray into paths leading to inefficiency. It bans apprenticeship in order to obviate the competition of child slaves, and piecework through which men exceptionally endowed lower the remuneration of the average worker. But when we consider the enormous difficulties which pioneers in the movement had to surmount, we must pronounce Trade Unionism a magnificent instance of the constructive power latent in our race. The tactics employed by early Unionists show that Class-War had begun with a vengeance. They decree the destruction of machinery, which held labourers in abject servitude, and lessened their pittance by introducing the competition of women and children. Ere

long, however, a more effectual method of coercing Capitalism is discovered. Wage-earners have only to refrain from working, and the prospect of early ruin must force their employer to concede a higher wage or shorten hours of labour. Their weapon is known as the Strike, and when it spreads to allied trades, which have no grievance of their own, it is termed "Sympathetic." Now, there are always three parties to a strike—capitalists, labourers, and consumers; two at least of whom are pre-doomed to suffer injury. It depletes the Union's exchequer, rendering members powerless to resist future encroachment of capitalism. A strike affects connected industries injuriously, favours foreign competition, causing the irretrievable loss of markets. It forces the capitalist to develop automatic machinery, which never revolts against them, and the consumer to use substitutes for a commodity produced by a dislocated trade. Much may be forgiven to men who had been purposely kept in ignorance by the ruling class, and found public opinion deaf to their anguished cry. The fact remains that strikes are a clumsy and barbarous method of enforcing an equitable division of the profits flowing from human labour.

By this time Capitalists are organised as a caste, with class-consciousness and solidarity of interests. They fiercely oppose the new departure, obtain Acts of Parliament punishing machine-breakers with death, start "black books" which preclude dismissed employees from earning

their bread elsewhere; and fight combinations by "locking out" the entire body of workers, whether malcontent or otherwise. Their hands are strengthened by the French Revolution (1789-1794). Maddened by fear lest the contagion of Jacobinism should spread to England, Parliament hurriedly passes the Combination Laws (1792-1799), which treat any sort of common understanding between workers as a criminal conspiracy. Labour comes to heel, and its ill-requited fruit provides the sinews of war in our twenty years' struggle with revolutionary and imperial France.

1800-1912. The return of peace in 1815 proves disastrous to Capital and Labour alike. There is an end to lucrative war-contracts; while continental nations are too exhausted by the fearful contest with Napoleon to purchase English commodities. A general glut supervenes, causing widespread unemployment. Rioting becomes rife, only to be repressed by ferocious legislation and military force. As the memory of the Reign of Terror grows fainter, the democratic idea which the Revolution generated spreads to this country. A movement for repressing flagrant political abuses gains in strength, and that ardent Radical, Joseph Hume, procures the repeal of the Combination Laws (1824-1825), but fails to secure a legal status for Unions. Aided by wage earners, capitalism is able to wrest a measure of political power from the landed aristocracy who had monopolised it (1832); and then slams the door in the face of its humble allies. Class selfishness provokes the Chartist

Movement (1838-1850), which aims at placing Parliamentary representation on a democratic basis. In 1839, the Chartist leaders plan a general strike, in order to force Capitalism to haul down its flag. The masses being at this time wholly uneducated, this idea appeals with force to their simple minds. But they under-rate the solidity of the economic edifice as contrasted with the weakness of its assailants. They fail to see that Labour, having no reserves to fall back upon, must be starved into submission before Capital will yield to pressure; that, even given the power of organising so vast an enterprise, their general strike would land both the contending forces in ruin. Seventy years must elapse ere labour develops sufficient cohesive force to make it a possible weapon in economic warfare.

In 1848, Europe witnesses an aftermath of the French Revolution, and every Continental throne is shaken by a sudden uprush of democracy. The Chartists organise demonstrations on an enormous scale, but, in the absence of a constructive programme, or competent leaders, their movement collapses. It had proved that idealism was not extinct: and the class of mind which Chartism had attracted, comes under the influence of Socialism. During this volcanic year Karl Marx and Louis Engels issue a "Communist Manifesto," which calls on the "proletariat" (wage earners) to rise against their "bourgeois" (Capitalist) oppressors. It proclaims that Class Warfare has always raged between master and slave, feudal lord and serf,

capitalist and labourer; that a cataclysmic revolution is at hand, which shall redress the social injustices of two thousand years. "Proletarians of every land unite; salvation can come only of your own effort."

Marxian battle-cries find no response in a community whose individualism has been accentuated by four hundred years of fierce competition. Gold discoveries in California and Australia give a mighty impetus to foreign trade, while they drain off the cream of our working classes. Factory legislation of increasing stringency tempers the worst excesses of capitalism; and a relative equilibrium is arrived at in the economic sphere. But the growing strength of discordant interests renders it exceedingly unstable. Capitalism draws an accession of force from the Joint Stock Company system, which develops rapidly after 1825, and receives complete legal recognition in 1861. The number of companies with limited liability was 13,300 in 1890. It is now 56,000; and more than half the capital employed in industry is owned by these organisations. Apart from the myriad frauds to which it has given rise, the Joint Stock Company is bound to increase friction between employers and employed. It possesses all the worse defects of a corporation—a shared, and, therefore, diminished sense of responsibility toward human agents, and a morality among shareholders which is always low, because it is that of the average. A company's capital is often egregiously inflated in order to satisfy the promoter's greed: and dividends

must be forthcoming though wage-earners starve. Under this system, capitalism rakes in the savings of countless sleeping partners, who never come into personal contact with labour, and allow salaried agents to exploit it with ferocity.

The principle of federation gives additional power to capitalism. Immense waste of energy and resources is caused by competition, while a common understanding between producers and distributors enables them to work with greater economy, and eventually to secure a monopoly of the product in which they deal. The "Cartel" and "Trust" result from improved communication. They league Capitalists in every land against the consumer and wage-earner; increasing a conflict of interests which were already too acute. Organised labour begins to fight Capitalism with its own weapons. Trade Unions form federations which, in their struggle with Capitalism, are ruled by an inner ring of salaried employees. Though outwardly democratic, the Federation is apt to become oligarchic and to display the crass selfishness which a restricted outlook brings in its train.

1866 witnesses the beginnings of Federation, in a common understanding between Trade Unions. Like the Third Estate at the eve of Revolution in France, English wage-earners begin to realise their vast numerical superiority, as contrasted with the political impotence to which they are condemned. They organise processions, and successfully

assert their right to hold public meetings in Hyde Park. As invariably happens, the possessing classes yield to popular clamour. In 1867, a Conservative Ministry enfranchises 1,300,000 wage-earners. Five years later, the Ballot Act (rejected, in the first instance, by the House of Lords) protects honest voters from their employers' vengeance: and in 1884, a larger measure of parliamentary reform raises the electorate to 4,900,000. The principle of Democracy—"Government of the people by the people for the advantage of all"—is grudgingly conceded by the privileged classes. But the new element in politics is precluded by ignorance from wielding the sceptre of power. Until 1870, elementary education in England had been left to private enterprise, with the result that a very large proportion of wage-earners entered on active life but poorly equipped for its duties. "We must educate our masters!" is the politician's cry. Universal instruction dates from 1870; it gives the masses power to assimilate ideas, but is seldom carried far enough to promote efficiency, or breed enlightened citizens.

The nascent democracy is able to put increasing pressure on Conservatives and Liberals striving for power in Westminster. Successive Acts of Parliament passed between 1869 and 1876, give Trade Unions a legal status, and eventually place them on the same footing as other voluntary associations. Believing themselves to be secure from encroachment, they eschew militant methods. By dint of collective bargaining, their representatives secure better

wages and shorter working hours than obtain in any Continental country. Conciliation Boards, on which masters and men meet to discuss their differences peacefully, prove more fruitful than the obsolescent strike. Certain trades adopt a sliding scale, under which wages vary with market prices, or the cost of raw material; arbitration by a third party comes into vogue as a last resort. For thirty years the normal Trade Union eschews politics, and confines its activity to the professional sphere.

The instinct of combativeness may be suppressed for a while; but it revives when any powerful stimulus is forthcoming. Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations" was the gospel of capitalism: and wage-earners have found in Karl Marx's "Das Kapital" (1867) an arsenal of epoch-making ideas. Its broad lines are merely an expansion of the Communist Manifesto: but the metaphysical theories proclaimed in 1848 are given a historical basis and a veneer of science. In Karl Marx's view, the tyranny of capital arises from its exclusive possession of the "instruments of production," enabling it to extract a maximum of private gain from the labour of wage-earners. A time will come, however, when the vast productive forces generated by Capitalism escape from human control. Commercial crises, throwing the whole economic machinery out of gear, must recur until they culminate in a Catastrophe which will transfer all the instruments of production, land included, to the dominion of the proletariat. When this revolution is con-

summated, Capitalists will be replaced by the State, representing the sum-total of national energies. It will be the sole producer and distributor; will adjust supply and demand; and put an end to the myriad evils of competition. The conception of class-war permeates Marx's teachings, and he deprecates palliatory measures as tending to blunt the proletarian's sword. Like all great movements, "Scientific" Socialism develops an extremist wing. The philosophic anarchists, headed by the Russian Bakunin, draw inspiration from J. J. Rousseau; they follow Marx as far as the Catastrophe, but reject his synthesis. What need is there for government and legislation, when the enlightened man should be a law unto himself? Why exchange one tyranny for another? "Anarchy is Order!" This radical divergence of ideal wrecks the International movement, which Marx fondly hoped would unite the "Have nots" of every land against the "Haves." The Socialism systematised by him has made great progress in Teutonic communities, which are accustomed to the interference of Government in private life, while they bitterly resent its militarism and caste-distinctions. Anarchism proves more to the taste of Latin nations, on whom the memory of the eighteenth century revolution has left a profound impression; and it has much in common with British individualism. Both movements are symptoms of deeply-seated social disease: on the constructive side, their value is very small.

The new leaven is, perhaps unconsciously, absorbed by a knot of illustrious thinkers who perceive that the panoply of class-war conceals the vital principle of Human Brotherhood. Thomas Carlyle is stirred to indignation by the selfishness of the possessing classes, and the "pot-bellied complacency" with which they regard the sufferings of the poor. John Stuart Mill styles the predominance of the noble and rich in English politics "an evil worth any struggle to get rid of." William Morris and Ruskin stand appalled by the abuses of Capitalism; its soul-destroying greed, the hideous environment it creates, the waste of youth, health and beauty offered up in hecatombs on the alter of Mammon. Their outlook is focussed in Ruskin's dictum—"That nation is richest which has the greatest number of noble and happy lives." Such sentiments are an antidote to the poison of materialism distilled by Karl Marx, and the doctrinaire dreams of Bakunin. Idealism spreads to the intellectual classes; Churchmen and Nonconformists find it in harmony with Christ's teachings: and it makes some headway among the younger and better educated generation of wage-earners. In 1879, Professor Blackie told Sir W. W. Hunter that "the conscience of England was composed of Roman greed and Carthaginian toughness." A dozen years later it can feel the stings of social remorse. The change dates from 1889, when a strike among unskilled labourers in the London Docks reveals the existence of a huge selvage left by our industrial machinery: of dense morasses of human misery

caused by precarious employment and insufficient wages. This strike marks an epoch in the attitude of public opinion towards labour questions. It becomes markedly sympathetic, and acquiesces in every breach of the dogma of *laissez faire*. But forces making for reaction are still enormously strong. Capitalism is entrenched in both Houses of Parliament, and has powerful allies in the legal profession. When a Trade Union attempts to promote a strike, the superior courts of law decide that its funds are responsible for any damage resulting to employers. It becomes self-evident that activity can no longer be confined to professional interests; and that the proletariat must use its vast potential strength at the hustings. After several failures, the Independent Labour Party secures a measure of representation in Parliament (1906). But the atmosphere of Westminster proves stifling to the handful of labour members. Some of the ablest attain high office, and forget the sufferings of the class from which they arose: others are subject to the lobbying and intrigues inseparable from a parliamentary régime. They form a wing of the Liberal Party, which repays their support by freeing Trade Unions from all legal checks, to which other groupings are subject (1906).

The comparative impotence of labour in the Legislature increases its rooted distrust of government, and inclines extreme sections of workers towards Syndicalism. This is a development of the Trade Union movement, which had

spread from England to France, and there assumed a strong revolutionary colouring. Syndicalism transfers the principles of Anarchism to the economic sphere; and its programme appeals strongly to undisciplined minds. The Proletariat, organised as an all-powerful class, is to re-cast the whole mechanism of production and distribution by means of a General Strike. Workers will then rally round the Labour Exchanges, which have been established at all industrial centres, to serve as headquarters for local Trade Unions, their activity being directed by a central organisation in Paris, termed the "General Confederation of Labour." The Labour Exchange is much more than an employment bureau, and weapon for fighting capitalism. It is the cellule of society in the future; will discipline natural forces, carry on every economic process by means of co-operation between free groupings of workers, and secure the maximum of human happiness with a minimum of law. Syndicalism, in short, is a theory, which gives working men, animated by the revolutionary spirit, the means of effecting a complete transformation of society. By its conception of class-war, it differs from Trade Unionism of the old-fashioned type, which sought to obtain tolerable conditions from Capitalism by peaceful bargaining. It differs from Parliamentary or Opportunist Socialism in the overwhelming preponderance given to purely proletarian groupings. Lastly, it is distinguished from philosophic anarchism by rejecting abstract ideas and caring only for positive results. This

destructive propaganda is not without influence on the federated Union of Great Britain. It breeds a contempt for legal and customary methods of dealing with industrial disputes. In August, 1911, labourers employed in transport obtained important advantages by threatening to suspend work. Encouraged by their success, the coal miners follow suit; and the resulting dislocation of industry forces a distracted Government to concede the principle of a Minimum Wage. Lastly, we find a federation of employees in the London Docks calling a general strike, which fails only because the malcontents, being unskilled, are not indispensable. In point of fact, Anarchism, more or less consciously absorbed, has made astounding headway in all classes of a community which once prided itself on respecting past currents of national life.

This bird's-eye view of our industrial history proves the existing deadlock between Capital and Labour to be the resultant of forces which have been active for five hundred years. It also leads up to the conclusion that a remedy must be sought elsewhere than in the realm of economics. No student of history will underrate the importance of problems relating primarily to subsistence, and afterwards to the distribution of wealth. But "man doth not live by bread alone": national progress is in a direct ratio with the ethical standard current at any given epoch. Now Ethics or Morality may be defined as the philosophy of social conduct; and its canons are the sum-total of laws, beliefs, customs

and conventions which regulate the dealings of man with man. In addressing the Sociological Society eight years ago Professor Hoffding said that the science it cultivated "leads us on to Ethics by the application of the comparative method, which compels us to characterise some forms of society as higher, others as lower. This is a valuation, hence a certain standard is necessarily presupposed. We call one form of Society higher than another if it, more than that other, makes it possible to attain two ends at once, namely, the rich and free development of the individual's peculiarities and differences, and the realisation of unity in social life. From a sociological point of view, a society is the higher the more different forms and directions it manifests if, at the same time, the society, as such, increases in solidarity and concentration. This has led to a comparison between society and an organism; and the analogy is of great importance."

Viewed by the light of biology, the Nation is a multicellular organism, subject to the laws which govern all forms of life. It is welded together by a tissue of law, custom, tradition, public opinion, and convention; it possesses organs for nutrition, defence and the elimination of waste products. There is a nervous system, which conveys impression of stimuli to a central grouping, or brain, and flashes its commands to the appropriate muscles. There is a collective soul, the seat of consciousness and will-power, the generator of ideas and ideals determining

the nation's career. All these factors are closely interrelated; and the general health depends upon harmonious co-operation between them. The individual is one of the component cells, he has a fleeting life of his own, but "we are all members of one body"; our individual well-being is bound up in its prosperity and glory. Patriotism, public spirit, altruism and moral sense are but synonyms of the powerful sentiment which is evoked by the conviction that all the forces sustaining and developing national life should work in unison.

Ethics has exercised but little influence on moulding the framework of English Society. As geologists would say, it has always been ranged in horizontal strata, and is, therefore, subject to upheavals from below, which may at any moment involve the whole fabric in ruin. Every grouping that attains political power employs it to secure privileges for its members at the expense of subject classes. Will a half-instructed proletariat act otherwise, and do not the recent strikes indicate a degree of collective selfishness which eclipses the worst excesses charged against Capitalism?

A great philosopher has warned us that Nature does nothing by leaps and bounds: that—to use modern parlance—evolution usually proceeds by means of slow organic changes. But the volcano is not less effective than the coral insect in producing them; and freedom sometimes "slowly broadens down from precedent to precedent," sometimes is

achieved by a sudden upheaval of social forces. No one who has followed the course of events during the last decade or so can doubt that a cataclysmic era is at hand. Human energies concerned in the production of wealth have far outstripped the archaic methods of distribution inherited from times when might was right. The democracy are no longer drilled into submission by priests who tell them that the appalling injustice of this life will be redressed in a world beyond the grave. Their overwhelming numerical and political strength will assuredly be used to secure a reasonable share in the fruit of their labour. It behoves the possessing classes to meet a coming storm with timely concession. A torrent which threatens to overwhelm the country-side, may be rendered beneficial by prescient engineering.

But the Millennium so ardently expected by idealists must begin in the individual's heart : and this consummation will come only when every child in the realm shall receive a truly civic education. Each must be taught to think for himself : to appraise men and things by their intrinsic worth : each must be impressed with a deep sense of national unity and human brotherhood. Such a training as this is necessarily a lengthy process, while events move with lightning speed. It is essential that glaring inequalities in the distribution of wealth should be lessened, in view of affording an equal measure of opportunity to every citizen. *Laissez faire* is doomed. It has enabled a mere handful of the population

to appropriate natural resources, which should be treated as a common inheritance, and to use them as a means of self-aggrandisement. The existence of a parasitic class which spends £300,000,000 yearly on luxuries, accounts for the morasses of misery which disgrace the heart of a mighty Empire. We must reconcile ourselves to root-and-branch reform in the law governing the ownership and inheritance of land and capital. The wage-system is doomed. The victims are virtually slaves, while personal freedom is the life-blood of democracy. The inference is that Trade Unions can never be aught but a provisional method of dealing with industrial unrest. They originated during the chaotic period of industry, and became anachronisms when the State had once grasped its proper functions as the trustee of national resources, and the power responsible for the well-being of every citizen. Legislation of the type furnished by the Trade Disputes Act (1906) will provoke reprisals by Capitalism, and eventually light up the flames of civil war. Co-operation is another device evolved by wage-earners in the fierce struggle for existence. It tends to eliminate the parasitic middleman who preys upon production, but retains the worst vices of the wage system. When society is ranged in horizontal strata, every improvement in organisation is appropriated by the class which has gained political power. Our Universities and Public (?) Schools prove the truth of this social law: nor can we doubt that co-operative societies are undergoing a similar

perversion. The virus of class-hatred cannot be eradicated while there remains any divergence of interest between labour and capital.

Co-partnership affords a key to the complex problem before us. It is based on the self-evident fact that the forces whose collision may shake the civilised world are really inter-dependent. Now the cardinal doctrines of co-partnership are that :—

(1) Every worker shall receive, *plus* the standard wage of his trade, a share in the net profits of the enterprise in which he is engaged.

(2) This additional remuneration shall be invested in the concern, raising the worker to the status of shareholder.

(3) As such, he shall be entitled to take part in the management, thereby securing a sense of responsibility and some knowledge of business methods.

Under a capitalistic régime wage-earners cannot possibly regard the enterprise which they are helping to carry on as an organic whole, or take the slightest interest in its well-being. Their one aim is to do as little work, and yet obtain as large a remuneration as possible. Co-partnership will extirpate this basic vice of capitalism. Moreover, Ruskin has told us that "Man is an engine, whose motive power is the soul." The new principle brings psychic forces into play, inciting the worker to attack his task with mystical ardour and apply an artist's loving care to its minutest details. He will cling to the enterprise in weal and

woe alike; his efficiency will be decupled by the knowledge that others are standing shoulder to shoulder with him and working in harmony to reach a common goal.

The conception of co-partnership was generated in France, which has always been the breeding-ground of great ideas; in that country more than one great industrial concern is owned and conducted solely by workers. Selfishness, mis-called "individualism," has sorely hampered its progress in Great Britain. Some industrial concerns have introduced co-partnership from motives of philanthropy; others, again, allot a minute fraction of their share-capital to selected workers in order to wean them from adherence to Trade Unions. But human beings demand justice, not charity: and co-partnership is an outcome of organisation applied to labour. This life-giving principle alone can banish the storm clouds which hover on our horizon. It is a necessary phase in economic evolution which, in Mazzini's words, raises men "from slave to serf, from serf to wage-servant, and from wage-servant to partner."

147, VICTORIA STREET,
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