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# PROBLEMS OF MEN, MIND, AND MORALS

BY

ERNEST BELFORT BAX

AUTHOR OF

"MARAT: THE PEOPLE'S FRIEND,"

"THE STORY OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION,"

"THE SOCIAL SIDE OF THE REFORMATION IN GERMANY,"  
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## PREFACE

THE series of essays comprised in the present volume includes some pieces not before published, together with others that have already appeared in substance in periodical or journalistic form. These latter, however, have all been either rewritten in the main, or, where this seemed unnecessary, have at least been carefully revised and brought up to date.

In the first chapter, which deals with the problem of Ethical Evolution, I have endeavoured once more to state succinctly and clearly what (apart from my own previous writings) I take to be an entirely new view of the development of the moral consciousness, and one which I hold will not prove unfruitful in results when worked out in detail.

The second chapter treats of the application to history of certain philosophical principles arrived at in a previous work of mine, *The Roots of Reality*. Originally designed as the introduction to a volume on the "Philosophy of History," the project of which I have for the time being

abandoned, it is now presented to the public in an independent form.

The essay forming Chapter III. is an exception to most of the others in the volume in its being strictly educational in character, *i.e.* not only is it non-controversial, but it does not even lay claim to any specially new point of view. It took its origin from the suggestion made to me as to the possibility of giving a reasonably intelligent sketch of the history of philosophy in the compass of a couple of magazine or review articles. Its merit, if any, consists in such success as may have been achieved in the work of condensation.

The remaining chapters of the book treat of various problems of a practical and speculative character, but all of them, I take it, possessing more or less of actual interest. As such they will speak for themselves.

I may remark, however, that a certain overlapping, and here and there repetition, in the chapters specially dealing with Socialism in its several aspects, which are due to the original conditions of their publication, I have allowed to remain—the more so inasmuch as they are, I believe, all concerned with points, or arguments, of special importance. For this reason, if for no other, I ask the reader's indulgence for any breach of the etiquette of literary form that may strike him in connection with them.

E. B. B.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM OF ETHICAL EVOLUTION

THE root of all Ethic is to be found in the feeling or alogical side of our consciousness. The moral *Trieb* is an ultimate and irreducible factor in the psychic system into which it enters. This *Trieb*, this impulse, consists in the determination of the individual mind to motives of action outside the sphere of its own circle of interests *quâ* individual, and, it may be, even incompatible with that circle of interests. But this irreducible potentiality of the "moral sense," regarded *per se*, is, for the thinker whose business it is to analyse the moral consciousness, no more than an abstraction. In order for it to become realised, it must acquire a determinate content, and it is almost needless to add that on the nature of this content the whole problem of Ethic, in the concrete, hinges. The original irreducible *Trieb* indicates indeed that the meaning and implications of individual life are not exhausted in the range of interests of the individual as such, *i.e.* of the individual regarded as an auto-

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matic entity abstracted from the conditions of some larger whole of which he, the individual, forms part and parcel. But again, this alone, though as far as it goes a consideration of first importance, and a distinct recognition of which is essential to all clear thinking on the fundamental ethical problem, does not of itself carry us very far. The nature of that larger whole into the organic system of which the individual enters as subordinate element merely, requires to be determined, if we are to analyse his ethical consciousness, no less than does the ultimate end which this ethical consciousness of the individual presupposes.

Now in all its manifestations and throughout all its phases of development, morality is concerned directly or indirectly with the relation of the individual to society, although in certain phases, to be referred to presently, this relation has become so indirect and attenuated as to be in appearance little more than rudimentary. Briefly stated, the following represent, I think, the chief and most salient phases under which the ethical consciousness has manifested itself:—

1. In the earliest dawn of the moral consciousness, the larger whole in which the individual instinctively feels himself as a subordinate element and which he instinctively regards as his truer and larger self, is the society or kinship group—the horde, the tribe, the clan, the “people”—out of

which he has arisen, and in which his whole being centres. At this stage the individual has not yet become conscious of himself as such; he merely represents, in his person, the kinship society. He is not conscious of himself as a personality in our sense of the word. Hence for him, for the tribesman or clansman of early humanity, all conduct has for its end the welfare and glory of the kinship society. For this he fights, for this he lives, and for this he dies. In this stage, therefore, conscience or the moral consciousness realises itself in an instinctive, although narrow and crude, *social ethic*.

2. As civilisation supervenes on the conditions of early society, more and more undermining its institutions and sapping the old ethical sentiment which corresponded to them, the centre of gravity, so to say, of the moral consciousness, becomes shifted. The larger whole which furnishes the ultimate object and sanction of the individual conscience gradually changes. The issue of this change is, that from being the social body, out of which the individual arose and in which in early society he very literally lived and moved and had his being, it becomes the divine essence or spiritual principle of the universe with which the soul of the individual human being is conceived as standing in a more or less mystic relation. The welfare and glory of this mystic relation becomes for the new

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religio-ethical consciousness the primary consideration—just as the welfare and glory of the kinship society had been previously—the ethical relation of the individual to his fellow-men and to society becoming indirect and subordinate. The view just expressed represents at least the theory and ideal of the phase in question. The differentiation and ultimate separation of ethics from religion belongs to the stage we are considering. The ultimate appeal is now directly from the individual soul to God, as representing the order of the universe, and conceived of as in direct relation to the individual soul, and no longer to tradition and custom as representing the continuity of social and tribal life. In so far, therefore, as the theory of this form of the ethical consciousness obtains, the basis of morality has ceased to be *social* and has become *individualistic* on the one side and *mystical* on the other. Where, however, as is often the case, the religio-mystical side has fallen into the background or is absent, so far as practical relations are concerned, the sanction and goal of conduct are alike frankly individualistic. The individual is now conscious of himself as a self-centred personality. The ethical value of conduct is no longer gauged by a crude and half-unconscious feeling for social utility, but by a more or less conscious theory of personal happiness, either in this life or one after death. The indi-

vidual thus becomes the centre of ethical conduct. Of course all morality, however conceived, is concerned either directly or indirectly with social obligations. Such is the case, therefore, even in the stage of ethical consciousness in question. But here the moral relation of the individual to society becomes indirect, and is conceived of from a totally different point of view from that of the ethics of primitive kinship or tribal society. For this mystical introspective stage of ethical consciousness, the salient antithetic categories are those of Sin and Holiness.

The first of the above two organic phases of the ethical consciousness to which we have referred is realised, in its purity, in that prehistoric human world which is the special domain of the modern science of anthropology. The gradual transition from the tribal or communal ethics of the early world of barbarism to the individual and introspective ethics of the later world of civilisation and history, may be seen in the institutions and intellectual progress of all the historic races and is traceable even in the barbaric civilisations surviving in the present day. The point alluded to is brought out (to cite the most recent and certainly one of the most masterly products of modern English classical scholarship) in Dr Farnell's *Cults of the Greek States*, notably in the case of the Delphian Apollo cultus (*cf.* vol. ii. pp. 210-

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213, also vol. iii. ch. 2, on the Eleusinia<sup>1</sup>). The Orphic movement was also undoubtedly to a large extent one of mystical introspection. But to the historical and anthropological student it is unnecessary for the purpose of this essay to dilate at length on the historical instances of the transition from the ethics of the tribe, the clan, the people, to that of the individual soul and the higher supernatural power to whom it owes allegiance, or to indicate in detail the steps and accompanying changes by which this transition was signalled. It suffices to remind the reader that, at a certain stage in social progress, the old religio-ethical system which in various forms dominated the prehistoric world and the earlier periods of history and civilisation themselves, loses its savour and becomes meaningless and even morally repellent to the new religio-ethical consciousness. The typical historic expression of the transition spoken of would probably be regarded as embodied in the Hebrew race and enshrined in the books of the Old Testament, with the change there indicated from the Jahveh of ritual and burnt-offerings, the symbol of the intertribal unity of the Israelite people, whose care is for the political and social whole—Israel—to the Jahveh who rejoiceth not in burnt-offerings

<sup>1</sup> The criticism might perhaps be made that Dr Farnell hardly brings this crucial point into sufficient proportional relief in his treatment of the evolution of Greek religio-ethical thought, as against other subordinate changes.

and sacrifices but who is the searcher of hearts, the symbol of the new ethical aspirations of the individualised Israelite of the later time.

3. But there appears yet another stage of the ethical consciousness, emphatically modern but as yet inchoate and difficult to define in precise terms. It differs alike from the old tribal or communal ethic of the elder world and from the individual-spiritual ethic which succeeded it. This new phase, one might term a Humanist Ethic, or the Ethic of Human Solidarity. The sanctions of this latter are utilitarian—in the highest and widest sense, indeed—but they *are* utilitarian, and they are so with a full and definite consciousness of the implications of that word. Their ultimate appeal is to social progress, as interpreted in the light of what is, at basis, the old revolutionary principle of liberty, equality, fraternity, in its modern applications. Hence, as I have just said, the new ethic in question is emphatically utilitarian, but its utilitarianism is definite and conscious. In this respect it differs from the early communal ethic of group-society which was also social as regards its object, but was more instinctive than consciously definite, and operated through naïve and animistic conceptions without a recognition of its own implications. In addition to this, its object is no longer confined to a kinship-community, as was the ethic of the early world, but is coextensive,

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*mutatis mutandis*, with the human race and even, in certain respects, with all sentient beings. It differs, needless to say, from the individualist-introspective ethic in that it is social, not individual, in its immediate object, and that it is not through the short cut of mysticism that it seeks the pathway to its end, but in the creation or in the furtherance of the evolution of a free and equal human society. In this object and in the high utility which this object implies it finds its ultimate sanctions. Its minor and everyday manifestations take the form of the prominence of the notions of comradeship, loyalty to principle, integrity (apart from supernatural sanctions); keenness of sympathy, sensitiveness to injustice in all its forms; and finally, of the continual application of the touchstone of social-utility to test the goodness or badness of any given line of action or mode of conduct, this being its only ethical standard.

The foregoing seems to the present writer to represent the three chief phases exhibited by the ethical consciousness in the course of its evolution up to date. Absolute precision, of course, is not to be expected in dealing with these matters. There is much overlapping, and the precise boundary lines between one phase and another are not always clear. There are also subordinate cross-divisions. But, broadly speaking, I think the outline given will be found to correspond,

even more than roughly, with the facts of human evolution in the sphere of ethics. Now the last-mentioned and most recent of the phases of ethical consciousness I take to represent the ethical standpoint of Modern Socialism. At present it is, of course, by no means confined to conscious and avowed Socialists. But none the less does it represent the ethical attitude of the vast majority of Socialists throughout the world, and the only possible standpoint on which a Socialist code of morals can be based.

It is necessary, before going further, to discuss the bearing upon ethics of the theory agitating the thinkers of the Socialist party throughout the Continent known as the "Materialist Doctrine of History." This doctrine has for its originators the late Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. The best short exposition of its general principle is given by Marx himself in the introduction to his work, *Zur Kritik der Politischen Economie*. This is so important for an understanding of the Socialist position generally that I give it in full. It is as follows:—

“ In the social production of the environment of their life, human beings enter into certain necessary relations of production that are independent of their will, and that correspond to a determinate stage of development of their material productive forces. The totality of these relations of produc-

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tion form the economic structure of the society, the real basis upon which a juridical and political superstructure raises itself, and to which determinate forms of social consciousness correspond. The mode of production of the material life of society conditions the socio-political and intellectual life-process generally. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development the material productive forces of society come into contradiction with the existing relations of production, or, to speak in juridical language, with the conditions of property-holding, under which they have hitherto worked. When this is the case, the forms of development proper to the productive forces become suddenly transformed into fetters for these forces. An epoch of social revolution is then entered upon. With the transformation of the economic basis, the whole immense superstructure sooner or later undergoes a complete *bouleversement*. In considering such revolutions as these, one must always distinguish between the material revolution in the economic conditions of production, and the juridical, political, religious, artistic or philosophical, in short, the ideological, form, in which mankind becomes aware of the conflict and under which it is fought out. Just as little as one can judge an

individual by what he thinks of himself can we judge such a period of revolution from its own consciousness alone. On the contrary, we must rather explain this consciousness by the contradictions obtaining in the material life of the time, in the conflict existing between the social forces of production and the social relations of production. A social formation never passes away before all the productive forces immanent within it have had time to develop themselves, and new and higher relations of production never establish themselves before the material conditions of their existence have already been formed within the womb of the old society. Hence mankind only sets itself tasks that it can accomplish, for if we consider the matter carefully we shall find that the problem to be solved never arises except where the material conditions of its solution are already present, or at least where they are already in process of realising themselves. In their broader outlines, oriental, classical, feudal, and modern, modes of production may be designated as progressive epochs in the economic formation of society. The bourgeois relations of production are the last of the antagonistic forms of the social process of production, antagonistic, not in the sense of individual antagonism, but of an antagonism arising out of the social conditions underlying the life of individuals. These are created by the productive forces develop-

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ing themselves within the womb of bourgeois society, which forces create at the same time the material conditions for the resolution of the antagonism thus created. With the present social formation, therefore, the introductory period of the history of human society is closed.”

The above is the classical formulation of what may be termed the orthodox Socialist doctrine of the philosophy of history, as accepted in its main features by the bulk of the Socialist party throughout the world. It is scarcely necessary to say that ethics, as pertaining to the ideological side of human affairs, is, as regards its evolution, explained by the doctrine in question with reference to the economic phases of the various epochs of social progress, and, more directly, as the outcome of the class antagonisms which are the immediate product of these economic forces and relations.

Now of the enormous amount of truth contained in the above doctrine no impartial student of history can be in doubt. The fact of the change which takes place in all the relations of human life, be they intellectual, æsthetic, or moral, concurrent with, or following close upon, any great change in the mode of the production and distribution of the wealth of a given society, is undeniable. Marx was the first thinker to recognise this crucial truth of social progress. It is now taken account of by all historians of importance. The only question

that may be raised is as to the universal applicability of the category of cause and effect to relations between the material-economic basis and the "higher" aspects of human life—a universal applicability, which is apparently assumed by Marx himself, and certainly by many of the present-day exponents of the doctrine in question. That a direct causal connection is legitimately traceable in a large number of cases where it is least suspected not only by the ordinary man but also by many who lay claim to the appellation of thinkers and scholars, is undoubtedly true. Yet without in any way denying or minimising this truth, it is also, I think, arguable that the totality of social progress cannot be interpreted by any theory of economic fact as the *sole* determining cause, in the sphere of intellectual and moral relations. This position has been maintained on more than one occasion by the present writer, both in this country and on the Continent, as against the partisans of the more strictly orthodox Marxian doctrine. The position I have contended for finds throughout human development *ab initio* a double line of causation, that of material, chiefly economic, condition, and that of human intelligence *per se*, or psychological condition. Progress has two roots, not one. Each of these constitutes a causal series of its own, but it is in the reciprocal action (*Wechselwirkung*) of both these elementary series

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on each other that the reality we call human evolution, or social progress, is constituted. This modification of the Marxian doctrine as originally formulated is, I think, necessitated by a more thorough-going analysis of the whole conditions. To enter more fully upon the larger question in all its ramifications would, however, carry us outside the scope of the present essay. Let us consider the bearing of the foregoing considerations on the problem of ethics, properly so-called, in its relation to the general theory of modern Socialism!

Ethics, *i.e.* the principle of moral relation, is, we have said, always concerned, directly or indirectly, with the social relations of men. This is so even under the second phase of the ethical consciousness alluded to in the earlier part of the present chapter. The concern with human relations it is which, in the first place, has come in the course of evolution to mark off the sphere of ethics from that of religion. Even where most under the domination of mystical-religious influences of an introspective character, the ethical consciousness does not cease to concern itself, indirectly at least, with the relations and conduct of men with each other and toward society as a whole. It therefore behoves us to consider the essential element in all morality, *i.e.* in any theory of the duty of the individual toward the society of which he is a member, or, it may be, toward all other sentient

beings outside himself. This theory need not be explicitly present as such to the ordinary mind ; it may be rather instinctive than explicitly conscious. But it is there none the less as the background of conduct.

Now there are certain lines of conduct which are essential in all societies whatever, however rudimentary their organisation may be, while others vary from age to age and from one form of social organisation to another. The first represent the root-principles of ethics, while the second are, as we may term them, the phenomenal applications of those principles as determined by the conditions of the society in question. The problem here is to find out the most general conception, so to say the common denominator, in regard to which all other ethical notions are derivative, together with the principle which that conception presupposes. Can we arrive at such a ground-principle? I think we can, and that, in accordance with the hints of Aristotle and the Greeks, we may track down all ethical notions to being ultimately applications, direct or indirect, of the conception of justice or equity.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Exception is to be made here, it should be said, of notions special to the mystical-introspective phase of the ethical consciousness and concerning, not the relation of the individual to the society outside of him, but that of the individual to the Divine Being who is assumed to be revealed within him. For the essentially individualist morality of the mystical-introspective

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If it be asked from what the concept of justice or equity itself is derived, the answer is: It has its root in the principle of sympathy. But sympathy is, *au fond*, an *alogical* principle. It cannot, any more than any other emotion as such, be reduced to logical terms. It is not translatable into thought except in a symbolical manner. Justice, or equity, on the other hand, is essentially a principle of relation, in other words, a *logical* principle. Basing itself on the primal unreasoned emotional factor of sympathy as its postulate, this being the principle of all association in community whatever, justice formulates equality in some sense as the basis of social relations. (Aristotle speaks of justice as being "a sort of equality." The Golden Rule itself is but a statement of the principle in the form of a categorical imperative.) The principle of equality which is identifiable with that of justice applies in the first instance solely, or mainly, to the kinship group, be it larger or smaller, constituting the early tribal community. From this cause the notion of equality becomes obscured and often lost in the subsequent evolution of society, barbaric and civilised. The primal communal group of which equality was the essential condition gets broken

phase referred to, while recognising and, in a manner, absorbing notions derived from the earlier social ethics of tribal humanity, often entirely changes their significance and incorporates with them, as having an equal or even higher validity, notions peculiar to itself. But to these we shall have occasion to refer later on.

up ; individualism enters ; distinctions of rank, of wealth, arise, largely owing to the introduction of the institution of slavery in the shape of captives, the members of alien communities taken in war, and other causes. Hence, as just said, the notion of Justice, of equitable equality, though always remaining as the groundwork of the ethical consciousness, becomes obscured and distorted in various ways, lapsing for the most part into the position of a " pious opinion," an ideal which it is not even attempted to realise. Or again, it may be conceived as realised under forms altogether foreign to its original conception. With the enlargement and development in complexity of the economic basis of social life, the notion of Justice, as above defined, undergoes strange metamorphoses, in accordance with the conditions based on class distinction. With the modification of the idea of Justice, the keystone of the whole, all ethical conceptions become changed.

Still more important, perhaps, is the fact that what I have termed in the early part of this chapter the " larger whole," to which the individual looks up as at once his completion and the supreme end of his conduct, is no longer a natural society with which his whole existence is interwoven, but the supernatural divinity with whom his personality is supposed to stand in direct relation. Hence the ultimate ideal, the final test of all conduct, from

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being the maintenance and prosperity of a kinship-society, has become the will and glory of a supernatural being. The religious sanction of ethics, in other words, from being social and human, has become personal and theological. It is no longer social custom that decides questions of right and wrong, but sacred oracles, written or otherwise. This is so nominally, at least. But even if in the earlier stages of this phase of the ethical consciousness it is also largely so in reality, it is an obvious fact that during the period of civilisation (as distinguished from that of the tribal society which preceded civilisation) it is the exigencies of the dominant classes of a given society which mainly determine the whole detail of its rules of conduct. It is the morality which is most conducive to the maintenance of the prevailing form of class-society which is covered by the theological sanction and enforced by law and public opinion. That included in this class-morality of the civilised world we should find principles of Justice common to all forms of society, goes without saying. But even these are interpreted or explained away in a sense favourable to the needs of the dominant class-society, whenever they come into conflict with the latter. This is one of the important derivative truths emphasised in the doctrine of history proclaimed by Marx and Engels.

The later aspects of this second phase of the ethical consciousness — Individualism — which is

largely coterminous with the history of civilisation up to its latest development in the "Manchester school" doctrine of nineteenth-century capitalism, exhibits various and some even apparently contradictory aspects. The ethic of primitive society was, as yet, undifferentiated from its religion. Both were alike social and this-worldly, rather than personal and other-worldly. The transition from early social conditions to those of civilisation is everywhere characterised in proportion to the completeness of the change, by the separation of aspects of human life into distinct and often opposing interests. This appears in the material as well as in the intellectual and moral worlds. In the last-named, upon the demarcation of the natural from the supernatural order and of the human from the divine, the subordination of the former to the latter logically followed. To early man the gods were one with nature, and their relations similar to those of human society, or, at least, there was no clear line of cleavage between the two. In the same way every member of the tribal community was at once master and servant, the equal of other members of the tribal whole, having a share in the communal possessions and a voice in the ordering of affairs, but at the same time owing allegiance and duties to the tribe itself. With the full disruption of the tribal idea by civilisation, a form of religion, as already remarked,

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obtains, which claims the individual soul for its own province and human morality for a mere department of that province. At the same time, with the division of society into classes, in the main into a possessing class and a non-possessing class, religion itself becomes a mere servant of dominant class-interest and fashions morality accordingly, though without, of course, entirely suppressing the notion of Equity as its basis, the latter always remaining as a background, however obscured in practice.

In accordance with the foregoing, every social formation, every economic change, implies a modification of ethical no less than of religious conceptions. Thus what was ethically defensible to a feudal baron of the fifteenth century was not so to a nonconformist manufacturer of the nineteenth century. What represented Equity to the latter may be viewed with abhorrence by the Socialist conscience of the twentieth century. The striking illustration of the interdependence of ethical ideas with the whole social and intellectual life is afforded by the results of missionary efforts to impose a bourgeois-Christian standard upon savage races. The savage taken out of tribal conditions, even though they may be of a more or less debased sort, does not really appreciate the introspective and personal morality proper to Christian civilisation, the net result being that having shed, at the

instance of the missionary, his tribal ethics and not assimilating the mixture provided for him by his new father-in-God, he ceases to have any moral principles at all. The converted Kaffir is proverbially to be shunned so far as intimate, personal or business relations are concerned. A corresponding phenomenon may be observed in certain anarchists who, while having broken with the morality of the bourgeois world and being unable to act up to a Socialist ethic, partly owing to the conditions of the existing bourgeois society not admitting it, and partly owing to their not having themselves grasped the real distinctions between the two, considers himself justified in committing deeds oftentimes of the most undoubtedly criminal character. (This remark, I may observe, is made without prejudice to any view we may hold as to the justifiability of a "terrorist policy" under certain circumstances, which is another question.)

One of the characteristics of the ethical theory proper to the period of civilisation is the double character of its individualism. In its original form, as based on mystical religion, it was introspective and mystical in its character. And this character it has continued to retain nominally up to the present day. But with the growth of the world of modern industry and commerce, another individualist morality has grown up beside it, based on the Manchester-school formula, of "every man

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for himself and the devil take the hindmost." The original notion of Justice which the so-called "ethical" or "universal" religions had taken under their ægis in their own way is here almost completely cast to the winds in favour of the principle of frank self-seeking. This principle is only modified by the sheer necessities of even a commercial community, for no society whatever can hold together without a recognition of the ethical principle of Equity in some shape. This Manchester-school conception of individualist ethic, although only formulated first in the early nineteenth century, has been present tacitly, though not avowedly, in different guises throughout the whole period of civilisation. For the mystical-introspective ethic was too indirect in its relation to everyday social life to influence the conduct of the mass of men continuously. Hence the attitude of these so-called "spiritual" religions, of which Christianity is the typical expression, though equally individualistic in its own way, was, more often than not, in practical life a dead letter, and its place taken by this other individualist attitude of mere personal self-seeking.

We have spoken of a new ethical attitude which has begun to show itself, more or less noticeably, within the last generation or thereabouts. It consists in a rehabilitation of social life as the sphere and object of ideal (or "religious," if you will)

sentiment and its resulting ethical principles of conduct. Hence it is, as already said, utilitarian, but in the broadest sense of the word. As such it opposes itself to the narrow individualistic utilitarianism—the business-morality of the Manchester school. At the same time it is equally out of sympathy with the introspective-mystical frame of mind and the ethical attitude which immediately results from it. The self-communings and aspirations toward the supersensible holiness of an Augustine, or of the pietist generally in all ages, have lost their savour, nay, have no meaning for it. Its highest ideal is political and social rather than personal and spiritual. In this, its immediate aim is the realisation here below of that notion of Justice which we have seen is the one immutable centre in ethics, as being common, in some sense, to all phases of the ethical consciousness. This we may term the negative formulation by the *logical* understanding of the intrinsically *alogical* emotion of *sympathy*. But there is also a positive representation in the sphere of the same logical understanding of this basic emotion. It is expressed in the notion of Brotherhood.<sup>1</sup> This forms

<sup>1</sup> It is necessary here to enter a word of caution against the notion that "Brotherhood" (Fraternity) necessarily implies an equally close personal affection for, or intimacy with, everybody, which is manifestly absurd, and, moreover, does not as a rule obtain even among brothers according to the flesh, who do not always embrace each other promiscuously in Box and Cox fashion.

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the more positive ideal which it is also the aim of the new ethic to realise. Finally, both of these principles alike presuppose freedom, *i.e.* non-coercion from without, of the individual as of society, in the development of each.

Hence we have once more the old republical triune-principle of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. This principle which I have endeavoured to show forms the theoretical foundation of all ethical conduct it is which Socialism makes its own in a special sense. It does not do so merely in the sense of accepting it as an ideal to be striven for, well knowing the while that it is impossible of attainment, in short, as a mere "pious opinion." In this sense it has been adopted by the old Republicanism. But Socialism claims for the first time in history to furnish the possibility of its realisation. Hitherto material circumstance, economic condition, in short the constitution of society, have stood in the way of this and condemned it to remain no more than a phrase.

What I have termed the New Ethic, implicitly, where not avowedly and in so many words, bases the test of conduct and the standard of moral aspiration upon social utility. That this is so is illustrated by the fact that well-meaning people The personal equation is even here recognised. Brotherhood ethic means the practical recognition of mutual sympathy in the affairs of life and in the recognition of the same ideal aims. (See also note on p. 157.)

from out the various Christian sects are proclaiming "true Christianity" to consist, not, as was conceived aforetime, in a mystical relation of the individual soul to the Divinity, but in working for the amelioration of the masses and for a higher social state, whatever may be the means by which they think to further this state. The change in the attitude of the religious sects in this connection is very significant. It may be readily tested by opening a modern up-to-date book by a representative man of almost any of the leading Christian bodies, and comparing it with a corresponding book of homiletic reflections of a previous age, even of half a century ago, when the new wine with which it is nowadays attempted to infuse the old bottles becomes strikingly apparent.

This new or third of the salient phases of the ethical consciousness, which is noticeable in a vague and indefinite way amongst serious-minded persons in general, acquires in Socialism its full content and a definite meaning. Its negative side is as important to grasp as its positive—that which differentiates it from the other phases of the ethical consciousness, as the positive tendencies of its new point of view. Moral notions belonging to the earlier phases must inevitably, as survivals, tend to become rudimentary in this new phase, especially when the material conditions which it implies, and for which modern Socialism as a politico-

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economic movement stands, shall have become realised.

This point is important in view of the accusations brought by politically interested persons against Socialism, anent "Atheism" and "Free Love." Absurd as the statements often made by these enemies of Socialism are in themselves, yet the fact that they are sufficiently plausible to be worth making at all is due to their having a certain basis of truth. For example, on the one side, Socialism, it is alleged, involves Atheism. On the other hand, it is pointed out with perfect truth that no declaration of speculative belief or disbelief is demanded of Socialists by any party-programme. But this disclaimer, although technically correct, does not really dispose of the question. The fact remains, not merely that the whole tradition of Socialism and of the popular proletarian movement which is the material basis of Socialism, as it is understood to-day, is anti-theological, but that the whole theoretical foundation on which Socialism is built up is that of modern science, with its sole recognition of fact and law, and the supreme authority of human reason operating on the results of experience, in the affairs of human life. Hence it is necessarily altogether outside the introspective supernaturalism which has played so prominent a part in various periods of civilisation. No less is it outside the naïve supernaturalism of primitive

man. This attitude it shares in common with what is known as the "modern spirit" and modern thought in general. What distinguishes Socialism in this respect is that while the average cultivated *bourgeois* finds it necessary to give a certain outward and formal homage to creeds and cults which no longer represent his real convictions, the Socialist frankly recognises the intellectual change that has reduced these to absurdity. The hypocrisy and lip-homage of the *bourgeois* in this connection, largely the result of the notion that the old creeds are necessary bulwarks of existent society, is naturally repellent to a Socialist who aims at the radical transformation of existent society. The difference in this respect between the Socialist and the average educated *bourgeois* is not so much one of real conviction as of the import of that conviction in practical life. In a word, the Ethic of Socialism has not only no need of a personal Deity, but may well find a personal Deity in the way. Hence naturally it cannot admit religious dogma to be either necessary or desirable for "the masses."

Similarly as regards the question of so-called "Free Love." The theological ethic of introspection, whatever form it took, has always regarded sexual relations, as such, with repulsion and hostility. On the precise grounds and origin of this attitude much may be, and has been, written. But these

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do not concern us here. It suffices for our purpose to note the fact, which is incontestable, and to point out that the reasons for this attitude unquestionably flow from the general speculative position occupied by introspective mysticism. Now principles of conduct originating in a speculative position that has been abandoned naturally lose their force. But there is an additional reason, corresponding to that just mentioned as regards traditional creeds, why existing *bourgeois* society should cling to these principles even apart from the speculative theory which is their only logical support, and that reason is—setting aside inherited sentiment—purely economic in its nature. A distinction has never yet been drawn between the sexual relation *per se* and its social results in the bringing of new members into the community. It is here that the politico-economic significance of the matter comes in. In a society based on private property-holding, it is clear that the production of offspring must be taken cognisance of, or regulated, with a view to the cost of maintenance, etc. The confused state of public opinion as to the true meaning of sexual ethics is appalling. The average man mixes up sentiment derived from the introspective-theological *Weltansicht* with considerations having the reason of their being in the exigencies of modern capitalistic civilisation. Yet to attain a scientific view of the subject, the first necessity

is to clearly distinguish the several strains which go to make up the sentiment of existing public opinion on the subject. If we do this with impartial care we shall probably be driven to the conclusion that the sexual relation *per se*, like any other animal function, does not really come within the province of ethics at all, understanding by ethics the new phase of the ethical consciousness for which the standard of conduct is direct social utility. As tested by this standard, I repeat that the sexual relation *per se* would seem to occupy neutral ground. Of course any action, however neutral in itself, may readily, owing to conditioning circumstances, be brought into the sphere of ethical judgment and thus take on a definitely moral or immoral colour, as the case may be. And so it is here. The most obvious and comprehensive of these conditioning circumstances in the domain of sexual conduct is, of course, the production of offspring. The difference between the logical attitude of the older introspective-theological ethics as regards this question, and the logical attitude of the new social ethics, lies in the fact that for the former the sexual relation was *per se* moral or immoral, while for the latter it only becomes so *per aliud*, *i.e.* owing to conditions external to itself as such.

The change implied in the aim of Social Democracy involves then the shifting of ethical judgment

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in various directions. For example, so far from, as is sometimes alleged, tending to weaken the moral responsibility of the individual, it will tend in many ways to give it backbone. As things are in the present social order, organised, as it is, on a bureaucratic basis, for the *coercion of men* rather than the *administration of things*, we find the bureaucrat or functionary separated into two moral selves. His character as man is entirely severed from his character as functionary. Now a Socialistic society organised primarily for the *administration of things* rather than for the *coercion of men* would have naught of such a severance as this, which is repellent even to the aspirant to such a society. We often hear it said, in exculpation of some act of intrinsic cruelty or injustice, as dictated, it may be, by law, policy, or expediency, such a one "was only doing his duty" (as judge, military commander, or what not). A Socialist would not recognise official "duty" as ever having the priority over human conscience or ethical duty. The judge who deprived a fellow-creature, brought up before him in the course of his functions, of liberty or life because an evil law he was supposed to administer directed him to do so, there is little doubt would be execrated by a healthy Socialist public opinion. The public opinion of the *bourgeois* world, by way of exception, sanctioned this ethical position on one memorable occasion. I refer to the trial and execution of

Fouquier Tinville for the part he had taken in his official capacity as *Procureur* of the Revolutionary Tribunal, in giving effect to Robespierre's law of Prairial during the Terror. In this case, owing to the exceptional circumstances, it suited the book of the dominant classes to act in opposition to the principle of ethical duality usually invoked by them. This they carried to the length of criminally arraigning Fouquier Tinville, refusing to accept his plea that he acted as ordered by his government in accordance with the duty imposed upon him by his office. That they should have done this is extremely significant as a precedent.

The above is only one among many instances of the manner in which the new ethic—the Socialist Ethic of human solidarity—would traverse the judgments and distinctions prevalent in the world of modern Capitalism. The latter has moulded the plastic substance of the individualistic ethic as handed down to it, for its own purposes. There are many other ways in which present-day moral notions must inevitably be modified, as the reader will see for himself. I have merely mentioned the above as indicating one direction, at least, in which increased responsibility would be placed upon the individual conscience.

To sum up in a few words the leading positions of the foregoing argument: The moral impulse, as such, is irreducible to anything beyond itself. It

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is an alogical ultimate, indicating that the meaning of the individual human being is not exhausted within his own personality but reaches out beyond this as an element of some larger synthesis. The nature of any system of ethic is determined by that of this larger whole into which the individual conceives himself as entering, and which he feels to be his truer life, in relation to which he, as an individual, is subordinate.

There are, in the evolution of the moral consciousness, three distinct stages traceable: 1. The ethic of early tribal society, in which the object of the moral relation is the community, of which the kinship-group is the type. At this stage the individual is merged in the social group to which he belongs. 2. Concurrently with the break-up of group-society and the rise of the autonomy of the individual, the moral basis gets shifted. Ethics, instead of implying the relation of the individual to the society without him, tends to become, primarily at least, based on a relationship between the individual, conceived now as a spiritual being or soul, and a spiritual Divinity supposed to reveal himself directly to this individual soul. Ethic now separates itself from religion, while at the same time its ultimate sanction rests in religion. This stage I have termed the individualist-mystical, or the introspective. Its ethical ideal is *personal holiness* as

opposed to the older tribal or civic "virtue." As a consequence, in proportion as the mystical or religious sanction is absent, or fallen into the background, does all ethics in this stage tend to become dissolved into mere atomistic individualism. The latter finds its classical formulation in the doctrine underlying the Manchester-school of economics. This second phase of the ethical consciousness has obtained, in one or other of its forms, up to the present day. A change, however, is even now making itself felt. 3. The change in question consists in a view of ethics as essentially a social matter. In this respect it represents a return to the view of the early world. But it is a return on a higher plane. The present social ethics has for its object not any limited social whole, such as that of early man, but humanity as such.

We have directed attention to the Marxian doctrine, the so-called "materialist theory of history," in its bearing on ethics. The point of view as regards the detail of conduct in each social formation, we have found to be as pointed out by Marx, dictated mainly by the interests of the dominant classes in any given society, though purely ethical conceptions may also react on the economic society itself.

We have traced the fundamental idea at the basis of conscience and of moral conduct to be that of Equality or of Justice. This again we have pointed

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out as the root-principle of the revolutionary trinity—Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. But this idea of Justice itself we have traced back to its origin in that alogical somewhat, or feeling, termed *Sympathy*. This emotion is immediate and absolute, and hence inexpressible *per se* in any logical formula.

As to the new ethical attitude we have referred to as already showing itself in modern thought and feeling, and which we have forecast as indicating the dominant trend in the Ethics of Socialism, we have seen it to be the recognition of social and political life, as the object and as embodying the only sanction of conscience. Under Socialistic conditions, as we believe, this fact will be formally acknowledged, and what I have termed the third phase in the evolution of the ethical consciousness will be definitively affirmed. What the detail of the canons of action will be under the new conditions we cannot, of course, foresee with any completeness. This much, however, we may venture to predict—that some courses of conduct which are to-day regarded as coming within the purview of ethics, will cease to have any moral bearing in the society of the future, while other courses of conduct, now regarded as indifferent or even ethically commendable, will be condemned by the moral law of the time to come.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PROBLEM OF HISTORY AND METHODS FOR ITS SOLUTION

HISTORY means the content of past social reality. We may either treat this content descriptively, endeavouring to reproduce in mental imagery the reality of the past, its life and action, or we may search out the *general laws* of historical change and development, irrespective of concrete time or place; or we may combine the two methods in taking history in the concrete, the history of a given country, or people, or period; or universal history, understanding by this the evolution of progressive humanity from the beginnings of civilisation in Western Asia and Egypt up to the present time, and connect the phantasmagoria of particular events, incidents, and persons with the abstract laws on which all history is based. The present inquiry deals with history in the second and third senses mentioned, the senses usually understood by the phrase, the Philosophy of History.

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Now it behoves us to consider on what the possibility of these two ways of treating history ultimately rests. The laws determining the historical development we find embedded as part of the reality of history. But what strikes the eye at first sight is, not the laws but the phantasmagoria itself, the events, incidents, and personalities—in a word, the phenomena of history. Now the infinite phenomena of history, the play of incidents and personalities, taken in their totality, are irreducible to law, *i.e.* to any formulation based on the causal category. This is shown by the impossibility of foretelling concrete events. The action of any law is constant, *ex hypothesi*, and can be foretold with accuracy. But it is only where a law not merely enters into, but absolutely dominates, a concrete situation, that the issue of that situation can be foreseen with any approach to accuracy, which is certainly not the case with human history. In a word, this phenomenal element in history is the domain of the antithesis of law (*i.e.* of the formulable causal relation)—is the domain of what we call chance. We have then two primary elements in history, the general or universal trend of things in their several departments, economical, political, intellectual, and we have the particular things themselves—persons, incidents, events—constituting the material in and through which the causal relations, or laws of historical change, manifest

themselves. The particular phenomena of history often modify, suspend, or deflect the law as given in its universal formula, and, although the law may, in the long run, rehabilitate itself, it is usually the chance element, the play of individual character, fortuitous incident, etc., which seems to dominate history in any determinate period, limited geographical area, or ethnical section of the human race. Our ultimate antithesis of history then is that between the particular events and persons constituting its raw material and the universal tendencies expressed in what we call its laws, *i.e.* the determination of the causal category governing its movement.

But traversing this fundamental abstract antithesis is a more concrete one. We may discover in the historical process two sides, the unconscious and the conscious, or the material and the psychological, as we may choose to term it. History may either be treated from the point of view of the conscious process as determining the unconscious, or the unconscious process as determining the conscious. We may either view the course of man's conceptions and beliefs, etc., as conditioning the course of the material facts of his life and the development of his environment, or we may regard the material facts of his life as determining his ideas, beliefs, and general mental constitution. History, until quite recently, was invariably written on the

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basis of the former hypothesis. The late Lord Acton, even, had no hesitation in propounding it as though it were a self-evident truth. The tendency is now, on the contrary, to regard the material environment as either wholly, or mainly, conditioning the ideological (as it is sometimes called) side of human life and social development. There is a third view possible as regards this problem, and that is, to conceive the unconscious and the conscious process as reciprocally determining each other. On this view neither is the cause of the other, but each, at once, determines, and is determined by, the other. The latter is, I take it, the true and scientific view. But, even here, it can hardly be denied that the unconscious factor, the material conditions of life, has, up to the present time, had a certain priority over the conscious factor. The modes of the production of wealth, which have shaped social life on its material side, have, hitherto, on the whole, more directly influenced habits of thought and the conscious will of men than ideas and habits of thought have influenced material progress.

The tendency is for the conscious element of human life more and more to acquire that determinative power which formerly accrued to the unconscious. External circumstances have, moreover, hitherto often determined, not merely the relations of men, but also their ideas of those

relations, and have even modified their conceptions of the meaning of reality in general. Yet, admitting thus much, on the one side, not only do we notice, at present, an increasing influence of the conscious will of man in modifying his environment, but in no past phase of the history of civilisation is progress entirely reducible to an unconscious factor: understanding by this a factor outside the psychological element in human life. Side by side with the series of material causation, there is always a parallel series of psychical causation, and either could be viewed in the abstract as relatively independent of the other.

This is especially noticeable in certain sides of intellectual development—the history of speculative opinion, for example, where we can distinctly trace the evolution from one idea to another, apart from all direct external influence. We can follow one system of conception developing into its successor without any direct modification from outside. The order is purely psychological considered *per se*. Similarly, on the other hand, in economical evolution we can often trace a chain of cause and effect due to the force of circumstances, apparently without any essential intervention of the human mind. But viewing the historical movement as a whole, we can see that its reality consists in the mutual determination of its two sides. One-sided causation, as between the un-

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conscious physical surroundings and conditions of social life and the human intelligence and will as such, no more obtains than does the one-sided determination of physical conditions by the intelligently directed will of man. Each is at once limited by, and limits the other. Conscious will cannot effect change without the co-operation of the unconscious forces constituting its environment. The unconscious forces, though they may destroy a given society, it is equally clear, cannot effect evolutionary changes in it without the co-operation of intelligent will as embodied in certain, at least, of its members. It is only a question of which factor is predominant in any given case.

But there are, again, still more concrete antitheses which an analysis of human development presents to us. These we may term dynamic antitheses. History implies the organic movement of human society, with its economical, political, juridical, its intellectual, ethical, emotional, æsthetic sides. Now the question imposes itself what is the most basal antithesis underlying the whole progress of social life and manifesting itself in all these departments? The most salient antithesis of this dynamic kind, the one which dominates all others in the development of social life from the dawn of history (or, which is the same thing, from the dawn of civilisation), seems to the present writer to be that between the individual and the

community into which he enters. There are, of course, as remarked, other antitheses—there is the antithesis of race in its widest sense, there is the great economic antithesis of civilisation issuing in the struggle of classes.

These antitheses seem deep-lying, but however deep-lying they may be in the very constitution of society itself, as exhibited in the evolution of civilised man in his present state, they are not so deep-lying as the antithesis of the Individual considered, on the one hand, as *per se*, and, on the other, as the constituent merely of that larger whole, the Community. The entire course of history shows us the struggle of the individual to emancipate himself from that close and organic union with some social whole, be it clan, tribe, people, or what not, that characterised pre-civilised and pre-historic humanity. In the earlier periods of civilisation and, indeed, till a considerable advance has taken place, the individual is still overshadowed in importance by the community, finally in the form of the patriarchal family at one end, and the city-state at the other.

Last of all the general, industrial, and economic development, together with its accompanying intellectual development, severs the individual from his social group and from the community, as such, and converts him into an independent self-subsistent entity. At the other extreme, the State, becoming

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ever more impersonal and mechanical and extending itself over ever-increasing areas of population, assumes the function of the government of men, at the same time gradually undermining and destroying the administrative functions and powers of the social groups, kinship, and otherwise, of the earlier world. This relation of the individual to the community, determined, as it is, by the general current of social evolution, we contend then to be the most salient and the most deep-lying relation in historical development. Let us now consider, for a moment, the two other pairs of antitheses also, that of higher and lower race and of possessing and non-possessing class, the latter of which, at least, is of supreme importance. Let us take, first of all, the antithetic relation of higher race to lower race.

There are some historical thinkers who would base the movement of history, or, otherwise expressed, the progress of civilisation, upon the antagonism of colour or race. Thus it has been argued that the condition of the rise of civilisation out of barbarism is the duality of an intellectually and physically superior dominant race and an inferior dominated race, and the gradual fusion of the two. But whatever part difference of colour or of race may have played in history, I think a very little reflection will show it is impossible to regard the racial or colour relation as in any way an ultimate one. For one thing, such an assump-

tion begs the question as to the real origin of racial difference. It might be argued that such difference is itself traceable to deeper-lying economic or climatic causes, and hence was in no wise an original element in social change. The second of the antitheses, that between economic interests within the social organism resulting in the class struggle of the more developed phases of civilisation is, without doubt, more far-reaching and more fundamental than the last mentioned, and on it, in conjunction with the technical development of industrial processes, is based the doctrine of the economic interpretation of history of Marx and Engels. But while conceding the immense range of explanation which the opposition of economic interests is capable of affording us in matters historical, there are, unquestionably, regions in human affairs of which it cannot exhaust the explanation, even in its most extended sense. On the other hand, the clash of economic interests can, in most cases, be very obviously treated as a special manifestation of the antagonism between individual and community, resulting from the efforts of the former to emancipate itself from its organic union with the latter. One thing is clear, and that is, that history viewed as a synthetic development of society has, as its mainspring, the rise of oppositions issuing from irreconcilable contradictions, in their turn manifesting themselves as antagonisms within

the social synthesis itself. That this is so, I say, is clear, whatever view we may take as to the special contradiction, the special antithesis, which we are to regard as the turning-point of the whole process of history:

In pre-historic society the principle of contradiction, and hence of antagonism, lay outside the society itself. The primitive kinship-group and its offshoots had no principle of internal opposition in so far, at least, as it was free and independent; it had no contradiction of interest within itself. It was opposed as a social whole to similar social wholes, to similar kinship societies, outside itself. Hence the origin of war. This *external* opposition, or contradiction, was, at this stage, the only opposition of interest that it knew. With the rise and progress of civilisation, opposition, contradiction, and hence antagonism arose within the social organism itself. And it is this principle of internal contradiction and antagonism that constitutes the lever of historical movement and progress.

We have now to consider what we mean by Reality as applied to history, namely, in what sense we are to regard history as real, considered as a concrete series of events, in a concrete system of social life. Now, how shall the content of the past be represented? What constitutes a true *presentment* of history as opposed to a true *understanding* of history? To obtain a true *presentment* of any

period of history we should, of course, have to identify the content of our consciousness with the content of a consciousness of a past age. This is what the historical imagination endeavours to attain. But such reconstruction as the historical imagination by means of research and archæological lore can effect, must obviously remain, in its total result, an artificial product, since its correspondence with fact cannot be controlled by a reference to the living reality. And, again, the living reality itself is different, according to the facet from which it is regarded. Each individual lives in his own world, albeit that world at once conditions and is conditioned by the conception which enters into it of the general world of the time. And this constitutes another difficulty of reproducing any image of a past age, whether in the form of descriptive historical narrative or of pure romance. We merely call attention to this point here (although it is susceptible of not unfruitful elaboration), since it does not directly concern the subject-matter of the present essay. We are here concerned with historical truth from the standpoint of the *understanding* of history, not with the attempted reproduction in imagination of the content of the past in our present-day minds, which is the province of the historiographer and of the historical romancist. The reproduction of the past in this latter sense, we may observe, is a

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matter of feeling and, to a large extent, immediate intuition.<sup>1</sup> The aim of all historical narrative and historical romance should be, through the medium of picture-writing, to do this in its own way.

But what we are here concerned with, we repeat, is not the reproduction of the past in terms of feeling, but its interpretation in terms of thought. We are concerned with the endeavour to pluck out the heart of history's meaning and present it in the formulæ of abstract reflection. Attempting in this way to reconstruct history, we take as our guide that antithesis, that particular pair of opposites, discoverable in the realisation of historical progress, which seems the most fundamental, understanding by this that opposition to which others are to the greatest extent reducible. Now this opposition or antithesis, which embraces within itself more than any other single opposition traceable in the evolution of society, would seem to be, as already pointed out, the opposition between the Individual and the Community. This relation of the Individual to the Community, as a relation, seems as nearly as possible the central one in the historical movement.

<sup>1</sup> One of the most remarkable instances of this reproduction of the atmosphere of a past age in the art of the present is to be found in Wagner's *Meistersinger*. We feel, in some inexplicable way, that the music brings us in contact with the consciousness of the late mediæval German city. We feel that it touches in us some nerve in our consciousness that reawakens an echo of the consciousness of that remote time.

The freeing of the individual from the bonds uniting him with his community, in early pre-historic society so closely knit as to constitute him a mere element, so to say, a cell in the tissue of that society itself, became, under various guises and in various subsidiary forms, the battle-ground of human progress during the historical period. The aim of the individual was to constitute himself a self-contained, independent entity, his relations to society to be reduced, as far as possible, to such as were necessary for protection against other individuals. This tendency has persistently maintained itself as a crucial one throughout the whole historical period. It is before all things traceable in the economic development of society, but scarcely less so in its intellectual development. Political and social conflicts have usually turned upon this question as their *raison d'être*, whatever form they may have more immediately taken on. Alike in the production and distribution of material wealth, in the political ordering of society, in social custom, in philosophical speculation, and in theological belief, we find this crucial antithesis asserting itself.

It would be a mistake, however, to regard this relation of Individual and Community, deep-lying though it may be in the structure of historical movement and historical reality, as what the Germans would call a *Schablone*, i.e. as a magic formula with which to conjure all other relations,

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or a procrustean bed into which the facts have to be fitted. Pedantry of this kind always vitiates the conclusions of historical investigation. The object of the Philosophy of History is to find formulæ for the laws, or causal processes, underlying the reality of history. But these causal relations do not exhaust, or even suffice to explain, the whole of historical reality. They are, at best, universal forms persisting throughout history. The whole particular element, constituting the life of history, the phantasmagoria of actual things, events, and persons, cannot be absorbed by them without remainder over. The alogical element maintains itself stubbornly over against the logical. But even regarding the theoretical element *per se*, it may fairly be doubted whether it is possible to find a formula that shall cover all causal relations that disclose themselves on analysis. What is claimed for the relation of Individual and Community is, that it is the most persistent, the most salient relation in history, not that history cannot be regarded from other points of view which traverse more or less the lines of this relation, and hence which cannot always be satisfactorily expressed in its terms, taken by themselves.

It may be well now to summarise the results of the preliminary investigation we have been engaged upon. The reality of history, we have found, consists of two elements: (1) the element of causal

relation giving us the universal laws, the general trend of historic evolution ; and (2) the infinite mass of facts, incidents, and personalities constituting the particular element at the basis of these laws, the material which the causal form presupposes. Hence it is that any theory of history must necessarily be in a sense a dead abstraction. No theory of history, no formula defining the laws dominating the sequence of historical phenomena, can adequately explain the life of a society considered as a living whole. The meaning of history, as presented in any theory of history, is hence never more than approximative.

But beyond the above primary distinction of factors in the content of historical reality, we have seen that within social life itself, viewed concretely, we can distinguish two aspects: (1) the material aspect of material surroundings, modes of the production and distribution of wealth, ways of life, etc. ; and (2) the ideal side as represented by the reaction of the human mind and will upon its environment. The causal efficacy may accrue to either of these sides, or to both, in conjunction. In any given situation or in any given period, either may be predominant. There are certain periods in which the material, especially the economic development, determines the whole social content of that period. It suffices, in the main, to explain even the intellectual, emotional, and

moral characteristics of those periods. There are, again, other periods when the course of social life and the current of progress seem determined by an ideal, a belief. In truth, however, there is always an interaction between these two sides. Each, undoubtedly, has its own line of causation up to a certain point, though in the long run, in the total result, their co-operation is manifest. But traversing these fundamental antitheses we have sought for an antithesis, operative throughout the entire historical period, which should afford us some sort of clue to the special forms progressively assumed by the life of human society during the course of history, and should hence indicate to us a necessary, a universal form, in which human society develops. Some have found this cardinal historical relation in the racial antithesis, that of higher and lower race. In the conflicts and the fusions of such races they believe themselves to have discovered the key to the development from pre-historic barbarism to historic civilisation, and therewith the impulse and the direction of all subsequent changes. Others, again, with much greater reason on their side, would find the clue to those specific forms, material, intellectual, and moral, which society has assumed at different epochs, in the economical side of social life, *i.e.* in the material conditions of the epoch in question. According to this view, there-

fore, the causes of every form of social life are discoverable in technical development, but also and chiefly in the antagonism and the resulting conflict of classes, which, arising within the economic sphere, leaves its impress throughout the entire range of social life, even in departments seemingly most remote from economic interests.

The inadequacy of the first of the theories mentioned is, I think, fairly obvious, more particularly since, as already remarked, it is open to the criticism that racial and colour differences themselves are not necessarily inherent from the beginning, but may themselves be traceable to differences of environment lying far back in pre-historic time. As regards the second theory, every advance in anthropological and historical research tends to show, more and more, the enormous measure of truth contained in it. The chief criticism to which it is susceptible, as hitherto formulated, turns upon its one-sidedness. Its advocates, too often, handle it as a *Schablone*, a magic key to unlock every secret and solve every problem in the development of human life and thought. They, as a rule, entirely ignore the independent action of the mental life, no less than the reaction of the mental life on the development and modification of its environment. According to the so-called "materialist doctrine of history," the whole content of the mental life is determined

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solely by economic conditions and by the class struggles arising out of them. This is a point, however, which requires to be discussed at greater length than is here possible, and to which we, therefore, merely refer in passing. The above, then, however unequal in point of merit, are, I think, the two leading standpoints as regards this problem.

For our part we would trace even the last-named antithesis, that of classes having their origin in economic relations of private property-holding, down to a deeper antithesis still, namely, the antithesis of Individual and Community as such. This antithesis, which evolves in the fulness of time into the opposition of Individualism and Socialism, would seem the fountain-head whence spring those very class conflicts themselves which have rent society from within throughout the whole historical period. The most salient intellectual tendencies in history may, in the main, also be interpreted in terms of the foregoing antithesis.

Besides the general laws of historical evolution deducible from the antagonism latent within these leading antitheses we have mentioned, there are numerous empirical laws which it is difficult to reduce to any comprehensive principle in the present state of historical thought. These laws, or apparent laws, are discoverable by a mere method of induction from the facts of history. As yet, however, the collation, the sifting, of the facts and

the assignment of the true values of the respective relations they present to us—in other words, the systematic study of the past—has not advanced far enough to allow us to view these empirical laws in their just proportions, or in their bearing on those wider principles already discussed. For the reduction of history to the simplest formula, or formulæ, to which in the nature of things it is capable of being reduced, a much greater amount of spade work has to be accomplished than has yet been done. When greater advances are made in this respect, we may hope, with reason, to acquire an insight that will enable us to view these empirical generalisations as special applications of the larger principles in question. We have, of course, in all cases to deal with the special difficulty attendant on all theorising in the domain of history, namely, the want of precision that all attempts to reduce historical reality to a definite formula have to contend with. The alogical element in the manifold phenomena of history is more difficult to bring under the definiteness of a thought-formula with success than in the case of any other department of the real world. The extreme concreteness of human society as compared with these other more abstract departments of science, as has been indicated by Comte and other thinkers, though from a different point of view, has rendered human society the last department of reality amenable to scientific treatment.

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After all, considered not merely from the point of view of the totality or, if you will, of the infinity of things, but even from that of the existence of man on the earth, the span of the filled content of time that we call history is little more than infinitesimal. Yet, infinitesimal though it be as compared with other real contents of time and space, yet it none the less contains infinity, infinite multiplicity within itself. This point of the "infinitely little" in history is, seldom, properly realised, even by scholars and thinkers, and not at all by the world at large. History, to the mind of the world at large, even including the average educated man, is little more than a loose congeries of symbols. Every epoch, every connection of events appears to his mind merely in an abstract symbolical form. And this is not merely confined to the ordinary man. We all of us, in looking back upon history, have present to our minds ideas which are in truth mere symbols. The difference between the scholar or thinker and ordinary man, in this respect, is that the former recognises the fact that his ideas of history are mere symbols, whereas the latter does not. These symbols often express the reality of history about as much as a roughly sketched map does a landscape. The limitless multiplicity of detail, an insight into which alone brings us nearer to the life and reality of the past, is unsuspected by the intelligence of

the average citizen. Even to the scholar and thinker, the insight spoken of belongs, in any positive degree, seldom to more than a limited portion of history—limited, that is, as regards time, or space, or both. For the rest, *he* also has to be content with the usual symbolic conceptions.

What the detail, the “infinitely little,” in history really means may be realised by a consideration of the constitution of the small fraction of contemporary life which comes under the direct consciousness of any given person. Every country, every district, every city or village, every street, every family, every social circle has its sequence of events partly its own and partly not its own, as touching and modifying the larger life at certain points. It is too often forgotten or, at least, is not explicitly apprehended, that every moment of the historical past embraces such complexity of detail as this. We speak of Augustus, of Charlemagne, of Napoleon as marking epochs, but do we adequately apprehend that every obscure town, say in Asia Minor, in the reign of Augustus, every manor of the time of Charlemagne, every countryside of the time of Napoleon, had each its own life and contemporary history, with its persons and events, trivial daily rounds, etc., just as we have to-day in a suburb of twentieth-century London? Does, I ask, any average educated man realise this? Yet it is this, the particular, the infinitely little, in

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history, which in the historical concepts of the average man is not merely, as is natural, subordinated to the essential features of the historical movement, but is completely absent. In the mind of the ordinary man the landmarks of history obtain in the form of blurred and colourless images, symbolic concepts of leading events and leading figures, and that is all. That every period has a life of its own, with all the infinite minutiae of which all life mainly consists, though the fact would, of course, be admitted formally by everyone if challenged in so many words, is truly apprehended, at most, by a few historical thinkers. This difficulty in the imaginative reproduction of history is, in itself, a fruitful cause of misconception, arising from the failure to take into account in their relative proportion the forces that give their direction to the main currents of history.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PROBLEM OF THE EVOLUTION OF SPECULATIVE THOUGHT

#### I

IN the earliest phases of man's social and mental life we find no trace of conscious reflection on the conditions of his existence. His view of the world is a vague fluid mass of assumptions arising without conscious will or intention on his part out of a welter of crude analogies, moulded in the forms in which his mind operated, and accumulating from untold generations. This was the era of mythology, folk-lore, of primitive thought and imagination. It had as its counterpart in the material sphere the world of a common tribal and clan life, to which the individual human being was subordinated, and apart from which he had no significance. As this material side of primitive society yielded to civilisation, by which the old social bonds became loosened and the independence of the individual began to emerge, the intellectual outlook also became gradually modified. The great

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factor in this modification was the awakening of conscious reflection upon himself, his beliefs and surroundings, on the part of the individual.

The awakening self-consciousness of the individual took various forms, moral and intellectual, and it passed through many phases, consisting largely in a modification and systematisation of myth and traditional modes of thought, before the conscious attempt to explain the universe on rational principles, as we now term them—in other words, before the dawn of philosophy properly so-called.

But it was not given to every race of ancient times to inaugurate philosophic inquiry in its true sense. We can trace detached fragments of philosophic thought at an early stage in more than one of the Oriental civilisations of antiquity, while in ancient India something like a definite line of philosophic development is discoverable. But for universal history—that is, for history considered as a continuous evolution of man from early beginnings up to the present time—there is only one classical line of philosophic development, and that is the one inaugurated by Ancient Greece in the sixth century B.C., with which the modern thought of the Western world is directly affiliated.

Before proceeding further it is necessary to define more clearly what constitutes philosophy as such. Philosophy is something more than a mere attempt

at an explanation of things in general. The early mythologies and theogonies were also, for that matter, attempts to explain the nature of things; but what distinguishes philosophy from all earlier ways of looking at man and the world is the fact that it is the product of conscious reflection, that it works through reason and its processes of logic, and not by mere imagination or by the acceptance of traditional authority. That it was a product of conscious reflection, and that its methods were those of observation and logical reasoning, as opposed to naïve imagination and tradition, clearly differentiates philosophic thought from the thought that preceded it.

When Thales asked the question, what constituted the ultimate physical substance of the Universe, that to which all others are reducible, and thought that the true answer to that question was that water was that substance, he started a new era in human thought of inestimable importance for the intellectual future of mankind. This problem of the primary and ultimate physical substance of the Universe which occupied the Ionic School, of which Thales was the reputed founder, and to which his successors gave solutions differing from his own, crude and futile though it may seem to us, gave the impulse, directly or indirectly, to all subsequent thought. New problems and their attempted solutions—problems of the nature of

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being and becoming, of the one and the many, and (in a crude form) of reality and appearance, besides those directly concerned with the origin, the structure, and the working of the material Universe—rose successively, and exercised the subtlety of the rapidly-expanding Greek intellect until the rise, in the fourth century, of the Sophist Schools.

The comparatively sudden development of the Greek world—economically, politically, and intellectually—induced a movement of scepticism in things speculative, and in self-seeking individualism in things practical, in which the lecturers called Sophist, who formulated these tendencies and who taught their wisdom for money, found a ready market for their wares. The significance of this movement was that it implied a shifting of the philosophic problem. Hitherto, for nearly two centuries past, the inquiry had been into the nature of things considered as existing *per se*; first of all, as to the ultimate physical nature of the Universe, and then as to the meaning and implications of its abstract conditions, these conditions themselves being regarded as independent realities. An illustration of the latter may be found in the hypostatization of Number ascribed to Pythagoras, the Numbers being conceived as real existences.

The inconsistencies, the impossibility of proof, and the apparent insolubility of certain questions, resulting in a general scepticism, led the way to

a new statement of the philosophic problem. Different thinkers had arrived at different conclusions. What to one man seemed true, to another seemed false; what the custom of one city approved as good, the custom of another city condemned as bad. The impetus taken by trade and travel at this time enlarged the horizon of everyone. Hence the Sophist movement, which was summed up in the well-known formula of the Sophist Protagoras: "Man is the measure of all things."

Rhetorical arts, plausible speculation, and smart tricks of controversy became the fashionable studies in the leading Greek cities, and not the least so in Athens. In the latter city there was, however, one disciple of the new movement who did not rest satisfied with the results taught him by his Sophist instructor. This was Sokrates. With the general decay of traditional standards of thought and life Sokrates was not content to rest; above all, he was not content with the doctrine which reduced virtue to a mere private or individual opinion. On the other hand, he was by no means disposed to be false to the current intellectual movement of his time. He felt there was no going back upon the prevalent Sophism. His aim was, by means of the very principle which had undermined old sanctions and assumptions, to acquire a new objective standard, as we should say in the

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present day, in the first instance of conduct (virtue), with which he was chiefly concerned, but indirectly of intellectual theory also. The famous saying that Sokrates "brought down philosophy from heaven to earth" meant that he definitely shifted the problem from an inquiry concerning the principles of existence to one concerning the principles of knowledge. Man was the measure of all things, it was true, yet not man considered as an individual, but the reason or the logical faculty in man, the instrument of "dialectic." Hence it was Sokrates' aim, by means of question and answer, to discover a definition of "virtue" and the "good" that would be recognised as valid by all men.

If he was not successful in this, he was eminently so in producing a stimulus in the minds of his contemporaries, a stimulus that inaugurated a new era in human thought. It was the dialectical Sokrates that produced the thought of Plato, and through Plato furnished Aristotle with the intellectual training which enabled him to build up his encyclopædic system. The thought common to all men, the insight or truth that Sokrates strove to evolve by means of his dialectic, for practical purposes, became with Plato the world of general concepts, of which the world, as perceived by us, is merely the imperfect copy or appearance. The "good" of Sokrates became for Plato the supreme idea, that which embraced all other ideas, and to

which they led up as their end and completion. Plato's division of all things into the world of intellect and the world of sense would, of course, have been quite unrecognised by Sokrates himself; but it may unquestionably be traced to Sokrates' insistence on clearness of definition and on the capacity for universal application of all valid mental concepts.

With Plato the old problems of philosophy again came to the front, but treated on the method which Sokrates had employed for the attainment of ethical truth. Plato's pupil, Aristotle, could not accept Plato's sharp separation of the world of sense from the world of ideas. For Aristotle the universals of logic were already contained in the particular objects of sense. There were not two worlds over against each other, but one world containing two elements: an element of sense—the particular sense-impression—and an element of thought—the universal concept or idea.

For all this, Aristotle, no less than Plato, insisted on the ideal element in the real world as constituting its true "inwardness." The alpha and omega of the real world, that which gave to it its meaning and its final purpose, was the universalising intellect. But none the less, to the realisation of the ideal purpose of the world the sense-element was necessary. To the Platonic idea of *universalia ante rem*, universal ideas prior to the

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things of sense, Aristotle opposed his *universalia in rebus*, universal ideas as an inseparable element in the world of things from which it is the function of the reflective reason to disentangle them through the logical process. The "creative intellect" of Aristotle realised itself in, and through, the world of appearance. The world was an eternal evolution from matter to form, from potential to actual reality. The unformed matter of one stage became the formed reality of the next which was its essence. The antithesis of matter and form—of sense-material and its ideal determination—is, in the world perceived by us, relative. To employ a crude illustration, the matter of the brass *in-formed* by the idea of the sculptor, becomes the reality, the essence, statue. But Aristotle distinguishes, as the ultimate elements of the real world, a primal matter and the primal intellectual activity. The ideas, however, or the general concepts, formed by this Creative Activity have not, as with Plato, any independent reality in themselves. They are realised only in indissoluble union with the sense-impression. In the real world that we perceive and know, there is no such thing as formless matter or matterless form. Reality implies the indissoluble union—synthesis—of both elements. In the perceived object the creative idea is realised as essence or substance (*οὐσία*). The above is the root-principle of the Aristotelian philosophy, and

it is to Plato and Aristotle that the main stream of subsequent thought may be traced.

In the period following the Macedonian conquest, when the whole basin of the Eastern Mediterranean came under Greek influence—the so-called Hellenistic period—under the auspices of the dynasties founded by the generals of Alexander the Great, the practical or ethical side of philosophy again came to the fore, and philosophic schools acquired prominence whose professed aim was to teach the true guiding principles of life and conduct. The ostensible objects of these schools, it may be surmised, would have been more congenial to the temperament of Sokrates, with whom they claimed a direct or indirect connection, than the speculative systems of Plato and Aristotle. These schools were the Stoic, the Epicurean, and the Sceptic, which have their protagonists in those founded a century or so earlier by direct disciples of Sokrates and termed the Cynic, the Cyrenaic, and the Megaric respectively.

The old independent life of the free cities had for the most part disappeared, and the movement of introspection, of self-brooding, already apparent in Sokrates, became the dominant spirit of the age. It was no longer the social life and ideals of the tribe or the city that appealed to men, it was the ideal life of the individual and his happiness that was their primary object of interest. At the same

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time originality in speculative thought died out. Old positions were crudely restated, where they were not taught in their original form. The Lyceum at Athens remained the seat of Aristotelian teaching and the Academy of Platonic. In the latter case the carrying out of the dialectical methods of Plato's dialogues had resulted in a general sceptical attitude. Rome entered the political arena and began absorbing the Hellenistic States of Eastern Europe. Philosophy in the shape of the four recognised Schools, the Aristotelian, the Platonic, the Stoic, and the Epicurean, not to mention the Neoscepticism of the school of Pyrrho, got carried to Rome and struck root there. The "philosopher" now became largely a professional moralist and sermoniser, corresponding to the clergyman of modern times. It became the fashion for great families to keep a philosopher, as it was a few generations ago of aristocratic houses to keep a chaplain. The Pagan priesthood and ritual, it should be observed, were concerned exclusively with ceremonial observances and not with preaching or moral exhortation.

The next important development of Philosophy proper, however, did not take distinct literary shape till the third century of the Christian era. This was the movement which gradually absorbed all other philosophies, and ultimately the various theories and cults generally of Pagan antiquity,

into itself, and which became known as the "new Platonism" (Neoplatonism). Its first systematic literary exponent was Plotinus, a native of Egypt, hailing directly from Alexandria, who settled in Rome. He is the author of numerous works dealing with the great problem of the one and the many, of the universe of thought and the manifold of sense. Unlike the early Platonists, but fully in accord with the religio-mystical movement of which his writings may be regarded as the fullest and most definite philosophical expression, Plotinus assumed a faculty of intuition, rather than intellect or logical reasoning, as the ultimate and highest source of knowledge. In accordance with this view the ultimate principle was not, as with Greek philosophy at its zenith, *νοῦς* (intellect or reason), but that out of which reason arises, the infinite unity which is its ultimate source and background. This principle Plotinus calls variously the One, the Being, the First Father, etc. The world of thought, of logical universals, is an emanation from this primal alogical principle. Our real world, which, as Aristotle had shown, was a mixture of thought and sense, of universal and particular, is again an emanation from the second or logical principle, the "intelligible world," as it was called. The creative principle of the world of ordinary reality is the *world-soul*, to which Plotinus ascribes a dual character, on the one hand as reaching up

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toward the "intelligible world," the world of logical forms, and on the other tending downward to the purely negative matter of sense.<sup>1</sup> In the above we have the celebrated Alexandrian Trinity with its three hypostases, as they are termed. The human soul, it is almost needless to observe, represented a flash or efflorescence of the *world-soul*. After Plotinus the Neoplatonic movement tended to become more and more mere mysticism with a Pagan religious character, absorbing finally the whole of contemporary Paganism into one eclectic system, under whose auspices the final intellectual struggle with Christianity on the part of the ancient world was fought out.

The last philosophic figure of antiquity with which we need concern ourselves is Boethius, who flourished at Rome early in the sixth century. He is interesting as the very last representative of ancient philosophy in the Western world, and important for history as having laid the foundation of the Aristotelianism which dominated the schools of the Middle Ages. His works, although they seemed to have produced no effect at the time, became the text-books of early mediæval learning.

The first figure in mediæval Philosophy was Johannes Scotus Eregina (John the Scot of Ire-

<sup>1</sup> By this is, of course, not meant *matter* in the sense of physical substance, which latter is already partly *informed* by the universalising reason, but *matter* in the special philosophical or Aristotelian sense as the formless substratum of real existence.

land), who flourished in the ninth century, and who wrote a metaphysical treatise of strong Platonic or Neoplatonic tendencies. But the true philosophy of the mediæval schools, thence termed Scholasticism, took shape later. Such writings of Aristotle as were known and the works of Boethius formed the text - books. From the eleventh century onwards philosophy as Scholasticism formed the main branch of mediæval learning. The great problem was still the relation of the universal of thought to the particular of sense. Did ideas, did logical forms, have an existence independently of the real world, as Plato had asserted, or did they only subsist as an element in a world of objects, or, lastly, were they mere figments obtaining solely in our minds? These were the questions occupying the schools of the Middle Ages, especially of the earlier Middle Ages, but their thought was throughout dominated by the antithesis of Philosophy and Theology, profane and sacred learning. The aim of Philosophy for the Schoolmen was the provision of a rational basis for the dogmatic structure of the Church. The elaborate systems of Thomas Aquinas and of Duns Scotus were primarily concerned with this problem, though they brought within their range the whole body of the learning of their age. The doctrine known as Nominalism, originally the old Aristotelian doctrine of the universal as element in the

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object, became developed by William of Occam into a thorough-going theory of existence as solely attributable to the particulars of sense as perceived. This doctrine grew and acquired popularity as the philosophical side of the general tendency of the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance towards individualism, political, economic, and social, grew. It had its full fruition, however, at a later time.

Modern Philosophy, as distinguished from that of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, is usually dated from the French Descartes, on the one hand, and the English Bacon on the other. These sharp divisions are, of course, more or less arbitrary. But there is a very good reason for regarding Descartes as the starting-point of modern thought. For, not unlike Sokrates in the ancient world, he radically shifted the standpoint of Philosophy. It had already become, during the Renaissance period, freed from its slavery to dogma on the one side and to the formulæ of Aristotle on the other, but only partially from its reliance on ancient models generally. Descartes, in his well-known formula *Cogito ergo sum*, which is as much as to say *I exist thinking*, brought back Philosophy to the bed-rock. At the same time the establishment of psychology as the central problem of Philosophy became fixed. Henceforth the problems of Philosophy began to be treated psychologically. This was notably the

case with the English school, who applied the new method of Bacon to inquiries concerning the operations of the mind. Thomas Hobbes, of Malmesbury, was the first to start in a systematic form these investigations, which continue through Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and the Scotch psychologists. To this line of philosophic thought we shall revert directly.

As for Descartes, notwithstanding that he had started with pure self-consciousness, the criterion of truth which he thought he had derived from it, that a "clear and distinct idea" was the test of truth, led him to postulate mind and matter as separate substances, of which the attribute of one was Thought and of the other Extension. He thus lost his philosophical foothold, so to say, in discussions concerning the mutual relationship of the two substances, matter and mind, the attributes of which, extension on one side and thought on the other, seemed to have nothing mutually in common. That self-consciousness, considered not as an individual, but as an ultimate fact, was the key to the difficulty, never occurred to Descartes or his followers. The difficulty, raised in the form it was by Descartes, was solved in the only way possible on the given conditions of the controversy by the Dutch-Jewish thinker Spinoza, who proclaimed "God" or the Absolute as the infinite and only substance, of which Thought and Extension were

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the attributes. Matter and mind were reduced to a position of mere modes of these two attributes, whose only principle of unity was to be found in the "One Substance."

In contradistinction to Spinoza, Leibnitz (born at Leipsic, 1646) solved the problem of the relation of Descartes' two substances, mind and matter, with their two attributes, Thought and Extension, by the assumption of an infinity of souls, each individual soul being a self-contained unity or universe within itself existing for itself alone. This is the celebrated monadology of Leibnitz. The God of Leibnitz was the supreme monad from which all other monads or souls proceeded like sparks from the fire.

The criterion of truth for Spinoza and Leibnitz, as for Descartes, was the "clearness and distinctness" of ideas, but the type of the clearness which proclaimed the truth of a conception was to be found in mathematics. Hence we find in Spinoza, the most powerful original thinker of the seventeenth century, the exposition of his system carried out on the model of a treatise on geometry. Spinoza, as we have seen, postulated Thought and Extension as the attributes, not of mind and matter, but of his One Substance, or pantheistic God. In the course of the working out of his system, however, it is the attribute of Thought with its universalising that comes to dominate the

whole, and we thus arrive at what is substantially a new form of the old Platonic Idealism.

The battle of the British school during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries turned largely on the psychological question of the existence of "innate ideas." Does the individual receive all his experience from without, or is it partly derived from ideas originally obtaining in his mind? This was another way of approaching the old question of universals, but it had lost the comprehensive metaphysical character that it possessed with the ancients, and which to some extent clung to it throughout the Middle Ages, and had become reduced to the proportions of a purely psychological issue.

The British school solved the problem in the sense of the later "Nominalist" schoolmen. Abstract ideas, universals, were names for figments of the mind resulting directly or indirectly from the experience of real things derived through the senses. The theory of innate ideas assumed by Descartes and his followers and the Continental thinkers generally, to the effect that innate ideas existed in the human mind, was inadmissible. Out of this psychological problem the question of the reality of the material world as perceived through the senses emerged in a different form and with an explicitness it had never acquired before. The notion of substance as a substratum of the

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qualities of matter as also of those of mind (the two substances of Descartes, in fact) was the only innate idea corresponding to a reality beyond itself that was admitted by Locke.

It was this substance of Locke, the substratum of material qualities, which the celebrated Bishop Berkeley set himself to demolish. The idea of substance, he said, is, like other abstract concepts, merely a figment of the mind, having no independent existence corresponding to it any more than any other universal concept. The general term "matter" (*i.e.* physical substance) meant no more than a sum of perceived qualities, *i.e.* a bundle of affections of our senses perceived by the mind. The conclusion was obvious, that matter exists only as an idea in the mind, a mental concept.

David Hume took up the parable of Locke and Berkeley, showing, however, that Berkeley's criticism of the notion of *substance* as the substratum of qualities did not go far enough, for that Berkeley, while he had legitimately demolished the validity of the notion of material substance as the substratum of the qualities perceived through the outer senses, had left untouched the notion of mind or soul as the mental substance in which our thoughts and feelings inhere. There is no more reason, said Hume, for accepting this concept, this figment of the mind, *viz.*, substance, as an independent existence in the

latter case than there is in the former. Psychological substance has no more rational validity than physical substance. We can affirm the existence of nothing, he contends, save a succession of impressions and ideas ; all else is an unprovable assumption having no rational justification. The psychological philosophy of the British school becomes at this point, therefore, dissolved in scepticism.

## II

We have now reached the turning-point in the history of modern philosophy. Five years after Hume's death appeared the great treatise (1781) of the Königsberg professor, Immanuel Kant. This treatise, the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, was the product of the lifelong thought of its celebrated author, one of the greatest intellects of all time. The problem attacked by Kant was the old problem, the problem of the universal of thought and the particular of sense ; or, to give it its wider signification, of the allogical and the logical in knowledge or experience. But he attacked it from a new standpoint, from the standpoint won by the thought of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Descartes had definitely broken away from the philosophical traditions of the Greeks and of the schoolmen, and had, with his *cogito ergo sum*, brought philosophy to the bed-rock of self-consciousness, though without

grasping the implications of his own thought. As a consequence he fell back upon "clear and distinct ideas" as a test of truth, and placed in the forefront of his system certain dead abstractions, substance and accident, mind and matter, etc., as its principles. The British school, as we have seen, had reduced the philosophical problem to one of psychology. The individual mind considered as an independent existence over against an equally independent material world were the principles from which it started. The crisis arrived when Berkeley on the one side and Hume on the other destroyed the assumption of an independent material substance and an independent mental substance respectively.

In Kant the two lines of thought, that of Great Britain and that of the Continent, met together. The careful study of both lines of thinkers enabled the genius of Kant to restate the philosophic problem and to place its solution firmly on a new basis. Kant once for all brought philosophy back to self-consciousness as the ultimate principle and ground of its problem. He once again brought it back from being to knowing. And he not merely stated the problem in greater definiteness and completeness than had ever been done before, but he discussed it in all its bearings with a view of arriving at a solution. To this new way of looking at the philosophical problem he gave the name of

“theory of knowledge,” and the method he employed in its solution he called “criticism.” The test of truth for him was not, as with Descartes, the loose and ineffectual one of “clear and distinct ideas” in the mind, but the necessity of thought as involved in the self-consistency of consciousness-in-general. He thus, at a stroke, raised philosophic discussion to a higher level. Neither the substances and attributes of the Continental metaphysicians, nor the psychological analysis of the British thinkers, proved satisfactory to Kant as a starting-point. The primary problem was the analysis of the conditions of knowledge itself as such—in other words, philosophy implied for Kant primarily an inquiry into the meaning of reality.

Kant was, of course, not the first to catch a glimpse of the true problem of philosophy. Plato, and still more Aristotle, in the ancient world, had great and, in the latter case, sustained flashes of insight in this connection, and the same may be said in the modern world of Spinoza. But the great merit of Kant, and what constitutes him an epoch-making figure in philosophy, is the fact that he was the first thinker to clearly grasp the principle, and never to lose sight of it throughout his investigations. It is not that Kant himself was altogether free, on the one hand, from the abstractions of the Continental schools, or, on the other, from the too psychological point of view of

the British school. He assumed "things-in-themselves" as the basis of the object world (of external reality), while the perceiving Subject often appears to coincide for him with the individual mind, the "empirical ego," as it is sometimes termed. But, in spite of his backslidings, Kant, in the main, holds fast the position that all that is, that reality, in the fullest sense of the word, implies consciousness, possible or actual.

The influence of Kant and his great work showed itself after a few years of polemical discussion in the works of Kant's successors, foremost amongst whom were Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Schopenhauer, etc. Fichte would have none of Kant's things-in-themselves. He recognised clearly what Kant also recognised, although he sometimes faltered, at least in his exposition, namely, that there is nothing outside Consciousness, which is another way of saying there is nothing outside the *Ego* which all consciousness implies. Here, again, Fichte emphasised a point on which Kant had expressed himself dubiously. Fichte was careful to point out the now familiar distinction between the Ego as subject of all consciousness, the "*Moi premier et eternal*," as M. Jaurès has it, and the Ego as object of *this* consciousness, the individual object-self or personal mind with which it is identified in ordinary thought.

Fichte thus fixes and defines the philosophical

ground taken up by Kant. He shows that the time-honoured problem of the One and the Many, of the Universal of thought and the Particular of sense, can be only properly understood, much less solved, from this new point of view, that of the method of the "transcendental philosophy," as it was called. Fichte's one-time coadjutor and one-time successor in the great philosophical movement with which we are dealing, Schelling, introduced a modification into the Fichteian system. The unconditioned principle at the root of all Consciousness or Experience he found neither in the experiencing Subject (Ego) nor in the experienced Object (perceived world) as such, but in the element of identity between them, that in which each side of this transcendental equation participated. This principle of Indifference, as Schelling termed it, *i.e.* the common element in the Ego experiencing and that which it experiences, was for Schelling the Absolute, *viz.*, the ultimate principle of all reality. Schelling sometimes identifies, or hints at the identification of, this principle with Will or Energy.

Schelling's contemporary (but in the order of thought his successor), Hegel, propounded the thesis that, not the subject of Consciousness, as with Fichte, nor an indefinite element of Identity, implicit alike in subject and object, as with Schelling, but Thought itself, the Concept, or, as

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Hegel prefers to term it, following Plato, the Idea, is the Absolute to which all things may be reduced. Like Plato's supreme idea of the "Good," Hegel's "Idea" at once embraced within itself all reality under the forms of the logical concept, and is the supreme end and purpose of all reality. In Hegel's system the assumption postulated by Plato at Athens in the fourth century B.C. first received its final and complete development. For Hegel the forms of thought taken in their totality are absolute. The absolute Subject, the "I" of Fichte and the "Absolute Identity" of Schelling themselves are thus mere modes of the process of the self-thinking of thought. Thought, or the categories of logic, are, for Hegel, all in all. Hence his system has been termed Panlogism, or, more correctly, from the point of view of euphony, Pallogism.

The antithesis, in the great German philosophic movement dating from Kant to Hegel, is typically represented by the metaphysic of Schopenhauer. For Schopenhauer the logical, the thought-element in reality, was subordinate and derivative. The true Absolute, of which Reality was the expression, and the thought-element, in Reality a mere form of this expression, was that which we term, in its highest phenomenal manifestation, *i.e.* in ourselves, Will. It is this Will, the "will-to-live," which expands itself and recognises itself in the real world with its infinity of particulars. The

logical forms by which the understanding apprehends these particulars of sense are merely the products of the primal Will for the purpose of its own recognition of itself. As is well known, Schopenhauer's pessimism assumed that the complete recognition by itself of the Will would lead to the renunciation of life altogether as futile, worthless, and evil.

We have seen now how the old problem formulated by the ancient Greeks of the One and the Many, the abiding thought-form of the Intellect, and the infinite flux of the particulars of Sense, remained still a problem for the thinkers of the great German philosophical movement of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and received diverse solutions at their hands. The point of view from which the problem is treated is, however, not the same. For Plato, Aristotle, the Neoplatonists, and the ancients generally, hypothesised these elements or aspects of reality, that is, they treated them as, in themselves, independent realities. Plato's ideas were reals in themselves. Aristotle, also, although aware of the fallacy in Plato's doctrine, and in spite of marvellous insights at times, did not consistently maintain his grasp of the wider point of view reached in modern times by the German classical philosophy. This wider point of view consists in regarding the whole problem of metaphysic as having its root in

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Consciousness. All that is, it was recognised by Kant and his successors, is but in and for consciousness, of which self-consciousness is the apex. There are no substances and attributes existing *in vacuo*, but only as modifications of consciousness, possible or actual. This point of view the ancients never succeeded in reaching, with the exception, perhaps, of Aristotle, and even he, as stated, failed to retain it, and slid back into what may be termed the old abstract-metaphysical attitude proper to his time. Since Kant, it is impossible for any serious thinker to philosophise on the lines of the older metaphysics, whatever material he may draw from them. The new standpoint has to be reckoned with by everyone who aspires to be a metaphysician.

Leaving out, for the sake of brevity, all that is intermediate, we will now turn to the consideration of the position of philosophy as regards this its main problem, in the present day, more especially in this country. This still turns mainly on the relation of the Alogical to the Logical, of the flux of sense-particulars (the matter of sense) to the abiding concepts which give it meaning (the pure forms of thought). Therewith is connected the problem of the relation of the indeterminate, the Potential, to the determinate, the Actual, both alike being elements of the real world in time.

The problem is to find a formula of explanation

satisfactory to reflective thought, employing the self-consistency of Consciousness as a test, which shall explain the meaning of Reality, or, which is the same thing, of Experience. We, as individual minds, are born into a common experience, "consciousness-in-general," as Kant termed it. The task of philosophy as metaphysic is to re-read this Experience, to analyse it, and to restate it in the terms of reflective thought.

There are two main currents in the metaphysic of the present day: (1) there is the old Hegelian Pallogism for which Thought is the ultimate principle of Reality, all Reality being in the last resort the interweaving of thought-forms—concepts or categories. The sense-element in the Real is but Thought in its lowest and barest expression, from which we can trace it upwards till we arrive at Thought in its fullest, conceived as the Absolute and immanent Reason of the world-order. The modern work in which this point of view receives its best literary expression, is Lord Haldane's *Pathway of Reality*. The old Hegelian principle is subjected here to an admirable recasting in modern English literary form.

(2) This *pan*-logical standpoint, or Intellectualism, as it is now the fashion to call it, in its various manifestations, is confronted by its opposite, the *alogical* standpoint. While we can confidently recommend Lord Haldane's book as the best all-

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round English exposition in modern terms of the Hegelian Logism, it is difficult to fix upon any one statement of Alogism, understanding by this the doctrine of those who regard the alogical principle of the world, Will-energy, the eternal flux of the content of time, the particulars of sense, in a word, the *alogical* in Reality, as the ultimate rather than the logical—it is difficult, I say, to name any single book or presentation of this point of view—as representative, notwithstanding that it may be regarded as the growing theory in modern philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

There is a movement very popular in Oxford of recent years, which calls itself Pragmatism, that would identify reality and truth with the serviceable, with that which most adequately subserves a given dominant purpose. This, it will be seen, is little more than a present-day adaptation of the doctrine of Schopenhauer, in which Reality or Experience, with its logical forms, is simply the expression of the means by which the infinite Will-to-live manifests itself. In the newer form of the doctrine the consistency of the older statement of it seems wanting. It is, indeed, somewhat difficult to arrive at any positive or constructive doctrine from a perusal of the works

<sup>1</sup> Since the above was written M. Bergson's *L'Evolution Créatrice* may fairly be deemed to have conquered for itself this position.

of the late Professor James, of Harvard, or of Mr Schiller, of Oxford, who may be regarded as the two leading exponents of "Pragmatism." Whether their followers will make headway, or remain the small academic sect they are at present, remains to be seen.

Another recent exponent of the Alogical as the ultimate principle of real existence is M. Henri Bergson, who, in his work, *L'Evolution Créatrice*, seeks to show that the logical forms in which Reality clothes itself for the perceiving consciousness, and still more for the reflective consciousness, are secondary makeshifts, hiding rather than revealing the true nature of the Real. The inner meaning of Conscious Reality, of Life and evolution, cannot be expressed in any logical formula. It is beyond logic, the thought-categories under which reality is fixed for us are but its mask. For Bergson, therefore, the logical, the conceptual side of things, is something unessential to their real nature, which is to be looked for in the infinite and indivisible flux of sensible particulars in time rather than in the universal concepts which seem to give them their meaning and without which they would appear to have no reality in any comprehensible sense.

Bergson's doctrine has attracted considerable attention in this country lately, and we have taken him as a typical illustration of a direction of

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modern philosophic development ; but his doctrine, like others that occupy the same general standpoint, seems open to the objection that it ignores the thought-element that obtains in the barest sense-perception that can enter into Consciousness at all, as object, *i.e.* as reality. The moment we fix a given perception as this object, we can distinguish in it the thought-category, otherwise, we could not distinguish it as object at all. It would seem surely as impossible to construct Reality out of a mere alogical flux of time-content as it is to construct it out of a mere bundle of logical forms (as the orthodox Hegelian would do). This has been pointed out by the present writer, in *The Roots of Reality*, in which justice is sought to be done to both of these antagonistic positions. The point of view taken is that in the possibility of Consciousness as such, both the Logical and the Alogical alike have their roots and constitute the two elements in all Reality—but that taken *per se* either falls short of Reality, inasmuch as it is an abstract element merely, and not real, *i.e.* is not an independent whole, which only obtains in the inseparable unity of these two elements. The alogical and the logical are indicated as the lowest or most abstract terms into which Reality, *i.e.* consciousness as a systematic whole, can be analysed. To these two factors every content of consciousness may be reduced. Every *real* has a universal (logical) and a particular

(alogical) side. The one cannot be deduced from the other or merged into the other. The thinker who would deduce the logical from the alogical side of given Reality is on this view equally at fault with the thinker who would regard the alogical, as is the case with Hegel, as no more than a low stage of the logical. That out of which both alike emerge, if I may use a metaphor, is the principle of Consciousness. In the unity of Consciousness alone have they subsistence and significance. For this view the world is not *mere* Reason (logic), neither is it *mere* spontaneous Flux.

In the foregoing very brief sketch it has been impossible to do much more than trace in the barest outline the historic evolution of one of the *main* problems of philosophic thought. I have been unable to follow even this out into some of its leading bearings — *e.g.* as exhibited in that antithesis of Will and Intellect which has played such an important part in the speculative thought of the last two or three generations. In the present essay I have had to content myself with indicating the historic development of the antithesis of the One and the Many, the Universal and the Particular, in its more immediate form as problem. Again, the desire for conciseness has induced me for the most part to omit calling attention to parallels. Otherwise, I might have shown the close

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analogy in many respects traceable between the present Oxford movement of "Pragmatism" and the mid-nineteenth century philosophy of Ludwig Feuerbach, or the century-end thought of Friedrich Nietzsche, and many similar correspondences.

It may be remarked in conclusion, that the task of modern philosophy is not merely to discover entirely new problems or even entirely new solutions of old problems—Aristotle in the ancient world, for that matter, left few problems and few possible solutions entirely untouched—but rather to open out new aspects of old problems, and new formulations of solutions of those problems which in a cruder form may be by no means unfamiliar to the student of the history of philosophic thought.

The original thinker shows himself mainly in the adaptation to the modern outlook and the recasting, in the light of modern knowledge, of problems, and attempted solutions of those problems, which in other guises have presented themselves in, it may be, various periods of history.

The aim of philosophy is to formulate the conditions and the meaning of Reality in the terms of reflective thought, in a systematic guise that must prove satisfactory to the mind when adequately grasped. As yet, only a very few of the foremost thinkers of the world's history have succeeded in even approaching this ideal. Completely actualised it has never been as yet. The

history of philosophy shows us the varying fortunes of the quest for the foregoing ideal in the evolution of reflective thought. But given the accomplishment of this task of philosophy, given the formulation of a completely satisfactory system of explanation of Reality, would speculative thought necessarily become stationary and cease to have a development? By no means. Such a system could, at best, only be completely satisfactory to the age in which it was formulated. Sooner or later, and sooner rather than later, though the main positions might remain unshaken, the form in which they were expressed would cease to appeal to the new age—new facets of the old truths would have to be recognised and emphasised—while their applications and the details of their working-out in the original statement would necessarily become belated by the progress of knowledge, and hence require indefinite modification as time went on. Hence the problems of life and destiny—first and foremost the central one as to the meaning of our Experience, the significance of what we term Reality—even though the general lines of their solution were acknowledged once for all, must inevitably continue to occupy their place in the progressive intellectual life of mankind.

## CHAPTER IV

### DEFINITIONS OF SOCIALISM

THE term Socialism is usually supposed to date from Robert Owen. It is doubtful, however, whether Owen's claim to having invented the word is altogether sustainable. Pierre Leroux, Louis Reybaud, and others have similar claims to have been its originators. The truth would seem to be that it came into being about the same time in more than one quarter. It soon began to be applied indifferently to the theories of the three great Utopian systems which arose during the early part of the nineteenth century, namely, those of Owen, Fourier, and Saint Simon. Now these three systems had this in common, they proposed to revolutionise human life in its various aspects, primarily its economic basis, the mode under which production and distribution of its wealth takes place. This economic reconstruction was regarded as a lever for revolutionary changes in other departments of human life, notably in marriage and the family relation, and in the mental and moral attitude of man

towards society and the universe. As will be seen, the word arose at a time when the new capitalist class, based upon the machine industry, was rising to power. It thus connoted on its negative side the antithesis to the individualism --“each for himself and the devil take the hindmost” — which was the expression of the new capitalist view of social life.

It should be remarked that the systems to which the term Socialism was originally applied, one and all included revolutionary changes in the relations of the sexes and in religious belief, in addition to economic reconstruction, as part and parcel of their programme. In 1848, with the national workshops scheme of Louis Blanc, the term Socialism first came within the sphere of practical politics. The principle of co-operative production at the basis of all the Utopian systems to which the name of Socialism had been hitherto applied, was now about to enter the arena, as it seemed, of actual social and political life. (Of course, as every man knows, who cares to know at the present day, Louis Blanc's scheme, defective as it was, never had a chance on this occasion. But this has nothing to do with our present subject.)

From the revolution of 1848 may possibly be dated the tendency to narrow down the definition of Socialism to an exclusively economic issue. In 1847, less than a year before the outbreak of the

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great revolutionary movement, Marx and Engels drew up a document which may be regarded as the literary inauguration of the Modern Socialist Movement, to wit, the celebrated Communist Manifesto. Under the name of Communism—the word Socialism having by that time become somewhat *usé*, owing to its association not only with the three great Utopian systems of the beginning of the century, but with inferior imitations, and crude theories emanating from them—the two protagonists of the modern movement drew up a statement of the scientific and historical conditions of which the co-operative commonwealth, which constituted the essential ideal of what had hitherto gone under the name of Socialism, would be the issue. The term “Communism” adopted throughout the manifesto soon fell into disuse and became supplanted by the phrase Social Democracy, and by the old word Socialism, which seems destined to triumph finally over all competitors. In the Communist Manifesto, as is well known, the point of view of historic evolution of the class-struggle under the paramountcy of the economic side of human affairs, was expounded for the first time in a succinct and definite form. That democracy was the essential condition of Communism (Socialism) was emphatically insisted upon, and that the transformation of the Civilisation of to-day into the Socialism of to-morrow must be brought about

through a political revolution involving a change in the possessors of power, was made clear. Henceforward the Socialist movement in the modern sense began slowly to shape itself.

We come now to the main question of this chapter: namely, as to the definitions of Socialism in its modern acceptation. A thoroughly superficial definition is one quoted by Mr G. K. Chesterton in an article in the *Daily News* a year or two back. "Socialism," said Mr Chesterton, means "the assumption by the State of all the means of production, distribution, and exchange." Mr Chesterton's aim was to discredit Socialism by showing that it did not necessarily involve democracy, relative economic equality, or anything else it is usually supposed to imply. This, of course, was no difficult task, starting from the above inadequate definition, and easily allowed Mr Chesterton to assume with an affected *naïveté* that "the State" referred to might be a "despotic State, an aristocratic State, or a Papal State." This is, of course, merely a *reductio ad absurdum* of the definition itself. And yet how many persons who consider they know something about the subject would not be disposed to accept, or at least to acquiesce in, the above definition without comment!

The idea that all Socialism means is the concentration of the means of production, etc.,

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in the hands of any corporate entity that may be called a State, irrespective of what that State may be, is often regarded in the present day as showing a well-informed and up-to-date condition of mind on the subject. This notion that the one and only salient point about Socialism is the concentration of productive wealth in the hands of a power *supposed* to represent the community, has been fostered in recent years by many adherents of Socialism as a counterblast to the ascription to Socialism of certain definite tendencies of a political, social, or religious character. In opposition to the latter it has been sought to narrow the definition down to the economic issue exclusively, and even to this issue in its crudest and most abstract form. It is manifest at a glance that the mere concentration of production, etc., in the hands of a despot or an aristocratic oligarchy would not be Socialism in any sense under which the word has hitherto been understood.

The idea of democracy has always formed an essential element in the conception of Socialism as such. Where this has been absent and the word Socialism has been retained in popular usage, it has invariably been qualified as Christian Socialism, State Socialism, "Socialism of the Chair," etc., to distinguish what is meant from Socialism proper. For the latter, the democratic basis and

end is every whit as essential as the economic concentration itself. Of course, anyone may define a word as he pleases, but no one has any right to claim general recognition for, or to argue from, any definition that runs seriously counter to the meaning attached to a term by the majority of mankind, and which it has connoted from its earliest historical use. Hence, to take the case in point, we are bound to regard Mr Chesterton's definition of Socialism, as given above, as inadmissible, and any argumentation based upon it as invalid. Every man in the present day knows perfectly well that despotic, aristocratic, or papal conditions exclude the notion of Socialism at the very outset. But the significance of Mr Chesterton's fallacious definition is not confined to the definition itself. When stated by him, together with the consequences he draws from it, the absurdity will be at once apparent to the majority of readers. The real source and origin of the fallacy, however, will be found, I think, to lie in the tendency before spoken of, to narrow down the definition of Socialism too exclusively and too formally to the central economic issue. This tendency is, more or less, recent in origin. All the Utopian systems of the first half of the nineteenth century, whilst placing the economic re-organisation of society in the forefront, included far-reaching ethical, intellectual, and social changes other than economic, as coming

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under the definition of Socialism as they understood it.

In the Communist Manifesto of Marx and Engels, the standpoint of the Marxian historical materialism is insisted upon in the sense that the other changes in the "superstructure" of society, as they termed it, the direction of which was foreshadowed in the main by the early Utopian thinkers, must inevitably follow on the economic revolution effected in the Socialism or "Communism" they set forth. It is well known that the modern movement of revolutionary Socialism has been, in all its phases, more or less openly hostile to, and invariably critical of, the various institutions obtaining in the bourgeois world of to-day, whether as regards religious beliefs and churches, present forms of marriage and the family, or the current ideas of duty, patriotism, etc. At the same time, while the general trend alike of the popular movement, as well as of its literary and intellectual exponents, has been in this direction, there has, nevertheless, been a general hesitancy to identify the movement too closely with matters other than politico-economic.

Yet, as I have more than once pointed out, it is unwarrantable to limit the term Socialism to a purely economic formula. It is, in fact, impossible to do so without violating principles universally recognised by modern Socialists as part of their ideal. The definition of Mr Chesterton above referred to

is a sufficient illustration of this. By omitting all reference to the basis of democracy and the end of economic equality, relative or absolute, it is easy to infer a result the very opposite to that which is really intended by those who use the word. Democracy, for example, has primarily reference to politics rather than economics, and yet it is as essential to the modern conception of Socialism as that of economic concentration in the hands of an executive power. The whole question, indeed, hinges upon what the administrative power is that has the effective control over the public wealth. Its concentration in the hands of a despot or an oligarchy, with control amounting *de facto* to possession, is no more Socialism than the Standard Oil Trust is Socialism. (The foregoing remark does not, of course, apply to such temporary concentration or control in the hands of an exceptional Dictatorship designed to tide over a period of revolutionary crisis.) Moreover, the economic equality, which is the avowed aim of Socialism, would be unthinkable were the productive wealth of society given over to the control of despots and oligarchists. In other words, the political question is inseparably bound up with the economical.

The same might be said of other issues—questions of the family, of the principles of ethics, etc. It is impossible to draw a ring-fence round one department of human affairs, be it never so

fundamental, and treat it as isolated from all others. But the attempt to define Socialism by a purely economic formula is not merely logically invalid and unsupported by the attitude, if not by the formal words, of the vast number of those who call themselves Socialists. It is also historically unjustifiable. The word, from its earliest use by Owen, Leroux, Reybaud, etc., in the thirties and forties of the last century, has always stood for a revolution, along certain well-defined lines, in human life generally. The attempt to limit it to a technical economic formula, the *reductio ad absurdum* of which we find in Mr Chesterton's version, is, as I have said, quite late.

This attempt received one of its earliest expressions in English literature in Mr Kirkup's article on Socialism in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (ninth edition). Mr Kirkup here labours to impress upon his readers a definition somewhat similar to Mr Chesterton's as against current notions which assumed that Socialism had a word to say on law, morals, marriage, family, education, etc. His example has since been followed by a large number of exponents, hostile and friendly. It is difficult to say how, in view of the history of the word, the exponents in question justified this restriction of its meaning. The "materialist doctrine of history" of Marx certainly emphasises the economic basis of the social life of

man as in a sense the cause of all other manifestations of that life, even those seemingly most remote, but in practice even the strictest adherents of the doctrine in question assume the results of the economic change as taking place along definite lines, alike as regards man's "view of the world," as regards the family relation, and as regards political issues, and do not hesitate to say so as occasion arises. It is well known that they are in favour of freer marriage relations, of the recognition by society of the conclusions of science as opposed to theological conceptions, and of democratic republicanism as against all forms of monarchical or oligarchic rule.

In these demands they undoubtedly carry on the tradition of historical Socialism, and the Marxian party, using the word in its larger meaning in the present day, is practically conterminous with the International Socialist movement. Yet, this notwithstanding, it cannot be denied that the Marxian thesis as regards the philosophy of history, according to which economic forms and relations are the causes in the long run of all the phenomena of man's social and intellectual life, when interpreted in its narrow and literal signification, does give colour to the view that the definition of Socialism may be reduced to that of a purely economic change. But that this is so more in appearance than in reality is obvious, if

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we admit, as most Marxians do admit, that these other changes are involved in the economic change itself, for as such they cannot fail to be regarded as forming part and parcel of the changed conditions of the new society, which is only another way of saying that they must form an essential element in the complete ideal of Socialism.

How then stands it in the matter of short definitions of Socialism? Are such possible, and, if possible, are they of any value as bases to be argued from? Plainly, I think they are not. A world-historic movement like Socialism is too big a thing to be fitted into the four corners of a one-sentence formula. All such movements have a central principle, but round this principle group themselves a variety of implications, many of them, it is true, indirect and not always deducible from it at first sight, but which none the less belong to it, and though formally and technically they may be detached from it, yet always reassert themselves in the long run. Every movement has, so to say, its *aura*. Where you isolate the central principle from its implications, logical, historical, or both, you have lost touch with the concreteness of the ideal, and have nothing but an abstract formula before you. Now an abstract formula may be a very useful thing for working purposes, but for those who take a wider view it is only interesting in connection with the larger whole of which it is the

framework. A skeleton is all very well, but its chief interest lies in the indication it affords of the nature of the concrete animal of which it is the skeleton.

As a rule, the vaguer the definition of Socialism, the less open to objection it is. Thus Socialism has been described as "a whole range of tendencies towards the reshaping of the social order at the dictation of certain feelings and certain lines of thought, which develops as it proceeds." This is admissible, so far as it goes, and possibly Socialism could not be better defined in the same number of words, but the criticism cannot be gainsaid that it is too vague for positive instruction. If, however, we are content to renounce neat definitions for brief expositions, we can arrive at something very much more positive and definite, while at the same time acceptable to the vast majority of the International Socialist party. I do not propose to give one here, as I have already done so more than once in the course of my literary career. Hegel said that while previous thinkers had sought to define the Absolute in a phrase, he found that he could only do so in the exposition of a science. If it is not quite so bad as this with Socialism, it is certain that not even the semblance of justice or accuracy as regards definition can be attained in any form of words numerically less than that of an average leading article in a daily newspaper.

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One thing is more often than not lost sight of in the attempt to define Socialism, and that is the distinction between what the present writer has termed "Socialism in the making," and "Socialism as a realised ideal of society." In the first period of Socialism there must undoubtedly be many anachronisms, large fragments of the old order of Society in the shape of institutions, customs, and ideas, surviving. That such will be the case no reasonable person, I take it, doubts at the present day. No one nowadays believes in a new heaven and a new earth arising in a perfect form overnight. But this does not hinder the fact that Socialism as a realised ideal, as no mere skeleton, but a thing of flesh and blood, is not exhausted, even in the most complete definition of its economic side. Shaw and others used to be fond of emphasising the fact of the impossibility of forecasting the life of the socialised world. This is perfectly just as against the attempt to describe the details of such life as was done by the old Utopists in one way, and by modern popular romancists in another.

But admitting this does not mean denying the possibility of indicating the tendencies which will be dominant in the world of the future and the main lines along which the institutions of that world will work, and this not merely in economic matters, but throughout the whole range of social

affairs. For example, we may venture to assert that the aim and tendency of a Socialist society must be towards complete economic equality throughout the whole of that society. We know that in proportion as this aim is realised, the aim of Socialism is realised. Again, the vast majority of Socialists will agree that the greatest possible extension of liberty, individual and social, is a fundamental principle of Socialism, and that the tendency of the society of the future would be to abolish all direct coercion of the individual. Hence, for example, that, *pace* Mr Ramsay Macdonald, a society that sought to coerce its members either by law or public opinion into (say) an observance of lifelong monogamy or lifelong celibacy would not be possible under Socialism. Then again, as regards speculative opinion, here also as in modes of private life, Socialism implies, if nothing else, the most absolute toleration. No form of coercion, such as the impregnation of the immature minds of children with dogma by the directing power of the community, would be consistent with Socialism. Hence the demand for secular education. The one thing of which Socialism is intolerant is intolerance, and there its intolerance is absolute.

I have given the above merely as instances of questions constituting essential principles of Socialism, quite apart from its material foundation, to

wit, the concentration of the productive wealth of the community in the hands of the community itself. If I be challenged as to my right to assert these things to be involved in the definition of Socialism, I answer the test of such definition can only be historical and actual usage. In this and in other cases we have to consider the connotation the word has generally borne hitherto, and what it connotes to the majority of those who are most interested in its definition at the present day. As tested by this standard, any definition of Socialism isolating its economic side and erecting the latter into a complete definition in itself, breaks down. The fact that sundry *littérateurs* and politicians have within the present generation done their level best to crush it into such an economic formula does not alter the question. And this remark applies not only to obviously absurd definitions such as that of Mr Chesterton (which omits a universally recognised essential), but even to the very best and broadest formula of the economic basis *per se*. No! the word covers more than a mere economic transformation, as does the movement, and the test of what it does cover can only, I again insist, be the historical and actual implications included under it, tacitly if not avowedly, by the bulk of those who are best qualified to define its use, namely, Socialists themselves.

## CHAPTER V

### THE PROBLEM OF THE HEARTH, THE THRONE, AND THE ALTAR

THERE is an unmistakable tendency at the present time on the part of many of the champions of Socialism in current political life, especially in the rough and tumble of electioneering, to endeavour to limit the definition of the term Socialism to the politico-economic issue in the narrower sense, in other words, apart from its bearing on other departments of human life. The opponents of Socialism among the reactionary political parties, on the other hand, are just as eager to bring into relief the extra-economic implications of Socialism as the former are to suppress them or to keep them in the background. From a vote-catching point of view it is felt by Socialist wire-pullers of electioneering to be disadvantageous to have doctrines obnoxious to large sections of the middle classes obtruded upon a free and independent electorate.

Now there are three main questions of social

and political import which are, *per se*, outside the sphere of economic relations, yet upon which Socialism, as most persons conceive, is called upon to give a pronouncement, and respecting which, as most logically-minded Socialists contend, the general tenor, at least, of that pronouncement can hardly be considered as doubtful. These three subjects are what I have designated in the title of this chapter by the well-known phrase, "The Throne, the Hearth, and the Altar." By the first of these designations, "Throne," I understand a given national state-system into which one has been born, in contra-distinction to other corresponding and competing national state-systems into which it so happens one has not been born. The figure-head of such state-system, in most existing countries, is the monarch, or sovereign, as indicated by the word "Throne"; but the form of government is really immaterial in this connection, though Socialism as such presupposes Republicanism as its only true political form. The term "Throne," in short, is for present purposes taken to mean the sentiment of patriotism expressed in the phrase, "my country, right or wrong!" The term "Hearth" is taken in the sense of indicating the domestic relation of which, as at present constituted, the institution of legalised and life-long monogamic marriage is the corner-stone. The expression "Altar," it is scarcely necessary to say,

covers religious belief and worship in the widest acceptance of those terms.

Now let us first of all consider the general implications of Socialism, *i.e.* of the Socialistic idea, before dealing with these three subjects separately. The primary demand of modern scientific Socialism is, as we all know, an economic one, to wit, the common ownership, control, and management of the land and the means of production. This is the material basis of human life as re-constituted by Socialism. But, without here entering, at length, into the knotty points involved in the controversy respecting what is termed the "materialistic theory of history" of Marx and its interpretation, it will hardly be denied by any modern student of history that a deep and far-reaching revolution cannot take place in the production and distribution of wealth, or, in other words, in the *material conditions* of society, without at the same time powerfully affecting its thought and its mode of life generally. So much I think will be conceded. Then, again, the term Socialism, which dates from the early decades of the nineteenth century, as embodied in the great Utopian systems (as they are termed) of Owen, Saint Simon, and Fourier respectively,—the term Socialism, I say, always implied the reconstruction of human life generally—a reconstruction, conceived no less as involving the

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intellectual and moral, than the material, side of life. That the Socialistic idea in its modern form in the same way, *mutatis mutandis*, also involves this, and, indeed, that these other aspects of life are, in the long run, no less its concern than the material basis which is its primary objective, is shown by the vain attempts of time-serving politicians to narrow it down to the pure and simple politico-economic formula. Notwithstanding the protestations of these time-serving politicians, neither friend nor foe seems disposed to accept their assertions unreservedly in this respect. It is well enough known what are the views, at least in their general tendency, of the majority of Socialists as regards the questions to which we are referring.

It will be denied by few that Socialists are not patriots in the ordinary sense of the term. It is recognised that to the bulk of Socialists Socialism implies a change in the present relations between the sexes in the direction of greater freedom or, I should rather say, perhaps, of the absence of the coercion, legal or otherwise, at present exercised by society over the individual in these matters. Again, as regards religion, there can be no doubt whatever that the enormous majority of Socialists do not accept, in any sense whatever, the dogmas of any traditional creed. It is an acknowledged fact that most Socialists are atheists or agnostics,

or secularists, if the term be preferred. I am referring, of course, to Socialists, *sans phrase*, not to hybrids who may choose to label themselves Christian Socialists, whatever that may mean. While these foregoing statements, I think, are not to be gainsaid, it is useless blinking the fact that the Socialist for whom vote-catching is the one thing needful is always desirous of keeping these points of view in the background. Some, while admitting them to be in the last resort inseparable from Socialism, would have them treated as an esoteric or secret doctrine not to be obtruded on those not yet converted to the central economic principle. Some there are, however, who would maintain that there is no necessary connection at all between them and Socialism. Such are those who would confine the word Socialism within the four corners of a purely economic definition. In a word, they challenge the views of the majority of Socialists on these subjects, as not being necessarily deducible from the central principle of Socialism. This brings us back to the consideration of what constitutes the essence of the Socialistic principle.

It would be, of course, absurd to allege that the adoption of any, or all, of the palliatives on the programme of the Socialist party in most countries involved the acceptance of any special views respecting patriotism or anti-patriotism, marriage or free-love, theology or secularism, etc. But then,

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on the other hand, most, if not all, of these immediate palliatives of the present system of society (housing proposals, feeding school children, extension of old age pensions, etc., etc.) could be, and undoubtedly are, accepted by many Radicals, who would, nevertheless, not consider themselves Socialists at all. It may be readily admitted that for the purposes of any given election these ulterior things are quite irrelevant, and, from this point of view, there would be no reason why the most devout Nonconformist or Churchman might not vote for a Socialist candidate. But, I submit, the matter is very different when we are dealing, not with current Socialistic proposals, but with Socialism as a coherent ideal of human life and society and of the Socialist party considered as an organisation whose final goal is the realisation of this ideal. Here one has to consider the matter in *all* its bearings.

Socialism, it is said, is an economic doctrine. True, but it is an economic doctrine inseparably bound up with an ideal concerning human life and development. And if we analyse this ideal we find it to involve, in the last resort, the old triad, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, translated into the conditions of modern progress. The modern Socialist recognises that only through the economic change he postulates, from individual to collective ownership of the means of production,

distribution, and exchange, can Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity be realised. The old attempts to realise them have conspicuously failed. The liberty aimed at by Socialism is freedom of development for the individual as for Society. This liberty the Socialist sees to be impossible under a régime of private property-holding in the means of production. All the existing trammels on freedom, alike for the individual and for Society, the Socialist finds traceable, in the last resort, to the system of private ownership in these means of production.

The institution of private property, which, in earlier stages of Society, played its part as a guarantee of freedom and progress, has, in these latter days, become a stumbling block and a hindrance—in a word, the enemy of progress. But although this economic side of life is at the centre, so to say, of things human, and although nothing human can escape its influence, yet there are, nevertheless, departments which do not lie directly and immediately under its domination. The modifications in these departments necessarily affected by the economic change, real though they be, are indirect and require time to work themselves out. The departments referred to are the intellectual and ethical sides of human life. Now, for our present purpose, these departments fall mainly under the three headings of, as I have here

termed them, "Throne, Hearth, and Altar"—in a word, the present ideals of patriotism, of marriage, and of religion, together with the transformation or modification of these ideals involved by Socialism.

Let us, first of all, take the patriotic idea as at present understood. This means that a duty exists for every man to regard his country, that is, the particular state-system into which he has been born, together with the soil and its inhabitants, with a devotion over and above that in which he regards other countries and their inhabitants, or humanity at large, and, as a consequence, to be prepared to sacrifice everything, including life itself, for this said country. Now, the Socialist criticism of this sentiment of patriotism I take to be as follows:—The existing state-systems with which the sentiment of patriotism, as understood to-day, is concerned, are really recent creations. In antiquity, patriotism had sole reference to a very circumscribed community, namely, the city which had itself grown out of the tribal community. Abydos, Thebes, Babylon, Jerusalem, Sparta, Athens, Rome, were cities boasting a city-patriotism, which was reflected in the ancestral cults which constituted their religion. There was, at this stage, no centralised power embracing huge populations in vast extents of territory. The so-called empires of the ancient world were, as a rule,

no more than loose confederacies, the bond holding them together being usually forced on the tribes and cities included in them, by right of conquest and superior might, and imposed, not for the sake of the internal organisation of Society, which was under local and tribal jurisdiction, but solely for the sake of enforced military service and of tribute. Such confederacies were the so-called empires of Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, Persia. Round these amorphous heterogeneously composed aggregates no serious and lasting sentiment of patriotism either did, or could, gather. This sentiment, as already said, obtained exclusively, as regards the civic and tribal units comprised within them.

Turning to the Middle Ages, we find, as far as this matter is concerned, substantially a similar condition of things. The unit of political social life in the Middle Ages was the manor and (especially in the later period of the Middle Ages) the industrially organised township. Italy, Germany, France, and even England (although the remark applies less here than in the other cases), were little more than assemblages of manors and townships. And it was to these, rather than to what we now term the nation, that the sentiment of patriotism attached. The modern nation-state grew up on the ruins of mediæval feudalism concurrently with the rise of the new conditions of industry which subsequently developed into the

modern system of capitalism. National patriotism thus, as conceived to-day, first attained its zenith under the ægis of the modern capitalist system. Now, in these latter days, Socialists find this sentiment of national patriotism, itself a product of the capitalistic period, is being exploited wholly and solely in the interests of capitalistic schemes of aggrandisement, expansion, acquirement of new markets, of cheap native labour, of the mineral wealth of undeveloped countries, etc., etc.

From this short historical excursus it will be readily imagined that an antipathy should exist between Patriotism and Socialism. This is the more evident when we consider that the expansive exploits of modern capitalism under the ægis of the various national flags, for the most part carried on with the blood and sinew of the proletariat, not only subserve no other *immediate* purpose than that of making rich men richer, but do actually further what is for the Socialist a very sinister *ulterior* purpose, namely, that of prolonging the life of the capitalist system, which must either continuously enlarge the sphere of its operations, or perish, as a system, by becoming transformed into Socialism. Add to this the further fact that the economic tendency is towards the knitting together in an indissoluble union of the whole world, but more especially of the nations in the van of progress, *i.e.* those under the domination

of the capitalist system—Europe, America, the European colonies, and now, Japan. Modern commerce, industry, means of communication, science and art, all of them are essentially international. As the local centre of old, the manor or township, from being self-sufficing in its wants became dependent on the province and then on the nation, so now each nation is ceasing more and more to be self-sufficing—is becoming more and more merely a semi-dependent section of the whole civilised world.

But although this affords the economic clue to the Internationalism of the modern Socialist party, there is, also, as before pointed out, an ethical expression of this Internationalism. This ethical expression consists in the instinct, if you will, that Internationalism is an essential element in the realisation of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. But here comes the rub—Is Socialism not merely International, but also anti-national? Is the antipathy between Socialism and Patriotism so thoroughgoing as to make of the logical Socialist an anti-patriot? This is the question for some time past agitating the International Socialist Party. On the one side, it is alleged that, though the tendency of Socialism is towards the elimination, not merely of national jealousies, but also of national barriers generally, yet the Socialist, as a practical man, has to make up his account with things as they are.

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Now national state - systems exist and colonial empires based upon them. Nay, more than this, the nation, being the modern political unit, having its community of law, tradition, custom, language, etc., etc., the Socialist party itself is organised on the basis of nationality, and, therefore, the maintenance of the integrity of the nation against aggression is, as things are at present, as much incumbent on Socialists as on anyone else.

On the other hand, it is urged that while conceding the point last mentioned, to wit, the right of any existing nation to independence within its own frontiers as against any other nation, yet that this point is, to the proletariat and to the Socialist, a somewhat "academic" one. The existing national state-systems, it is pointed out, represent class-interest and class-domination; hence, while not denying the right of one of these state-systems to defend itself against another, viewing the matter from the standpoint of present society, it is nevertheless contended that even such defence, justifiable though it may be from the foregoing standpoint, is no affair of the class-conscious proletariat or of the Socialist. With this is involved, of course, the burning question of anti-militarism now agitating the International Socialist Party, and the discussion of which played such an important part in the proceedings at Stuttgart in 1907, where August Bebel took one

side and Gustave Hervé the other. Hervé is the most prominent exponent of the position that the logical outcome of the Internationalism of modern Socialist movement involves the adoption of an anti-national and anti-patriotic attitude. For Hervé and his party, so powerful in France, patriotism, in any shape or form, is incompatible with the fundamental ethical postulate of Socialism. On the other hand, Bebel and others, who take a different view as regards the question of patriotism and military service, draw a sharp distinction between offensive and defensive war, a war of aggression and a war of defence against invasion. There is a wide-spreading feeling, however, in the party that this distinction is in the present day dangerous in tendency and largely illusory. I allude to sections of the party who by no means adopt the extreme views of Hervé in this matter. Karl Kautzy, for example, in a recent number of the *Neue Zeit*, while justly urging that the crucial point is, not whether a war is offensive or defensive from a national point of view, but whether it would subserve the interests of the proletariat or democracy generally, remarks that "in the existing political situation a war in which a proletarian or democratic interest would be concerned is hardly conceivable. The only danger of war to-day," he says, "threatens from the side of Colonial expansion, and to this the proletariat is, in principle, opposed." In other words,

modern military patriotism is hardly likely to be called into requisition, save either for the deprivation of some weaker or backward people of its independence, or as regards a thieves' quarrel as to the respective share of two or more capitalist states in the plunder of this people.

The above is crucially illustrated, among recent events, by the adventure of France in Morocco—not to speak of our own Boer War and other Colonial complications. But if the foregoing be true—and that it is so in the main there can be, I think, no doubt—it follows surely that the fundamental contention of Hervé is, to the logically minded Socialist, justified. The question then reduces itself to one of means. And how far the general *military strike* in the event of a declaration of war as proposed by Hervé in the case of France is a possible, or, at least, the most suitable, weapon, remains, of course, an open question, and one which does not specially concern us here. My main point is, that, looking at the matter all round, even if we went so far as to justify participation by Socialists in a war of national defence, where the independence of a given nationality was seriously threatened by an external Power—even then, as Kautzy says, this contingency is practically impossible to arise in the present state of world-politics as between any of the great world-powers—in short, it is hardly conceivable that one great Power

should be able to crush or enslave another great Power in the present day. This we have seen crucially illustrated as far back as the Franco-German War of 1870. The most it could do would be to steal some of that great Power's over-sea possessions, a proceeding which, in the general way, need not seriously perturb the Socialists. What we have to remember is, that, so far as it is genuine, the International character of Socialism is no mere phrase. The Socialist feels that he belongs first and foremost to the International Socialist Party, and, as such, that his Socialist comrades of other lands stand nearer to him than his non-Socialist countrymen. He is a Socialist first and an Englishman, Frenchman, German, afterwards. As a consequence it seems to me futile to deny that Socialism is, alike as regards its economic basis, its historical evolution, and its fundamental ethical postulates, inconsistent with patriotism, according to any definition of that word current at the present time.

Having dealt necessarily in a cursory manner with what I conceive to be the relation of Socialism to the Throne, understanding by this the idea of country or nationality, we will now proceed shortly to discuss its relation to the Hearth, *i.e.* the question of the Family. One of the great outcries against Socialism on the part of the reactionary Press is that it would destroy the

Family, break up the Home, introduce free-love, etc. One opponent of Socialism, in the ardour of his indignation, recently expressed his horror at the fact that Socialism would destroy the institution of marriage, as it existed throughout Christendom to-day, "to replace it by something even worse!" Socialists, I am sure, will all hope and trust that such a terrible result may be spared us. However this may be, there is one thing that strikes me somewhat painfully in the agitation raised by reactionaries anent this question, and that is, the cowardice of many professing Socialists in their attitude towards it. I do not wish to particularise, but to see the way in which well-known Socialists, in replying to challenges on this question, are literally tumbling over each other in their efforts to abase themselves before the shrine of Mrs Grundy, not hesitating to contradict themselves, and to eat their own words the while, is, to me, personally, not a pleasant spectacle, not to use a stronger expression.

And what is meant by all this maundering talk about the idyllic perfection for all time of the enforced marriage relation as it exists at present, irrespective of diversities of temperament and character?—what is meant by all these protestations of an undying devotion to asceticism as the ideal of life in this connection?—what, I say, is the occasion of all this grovelling?

I am afraid we must answer, it is the cant of *bourgeois* respectability, in itself, on the one side, but more especially as associated with the inordinate desire for immediate success at the polls on the other. Now I venture to think that all the asseverations of unshakable and undying adhesion to the current conventional views on the question of sexual relations are, from the point of view of logically thought-out Socialistic doctrine, hardly less untenable than are the wild and one-sided assertions of the reactionary Press to the effect that Socialism advocates promiscuity in the relations of the sexes. I take it that Socialism has its own point of view in this as in other matters, and that this point of view is radically distinct from, or even in some respects opposed to, that of the *bourgeois* morality and its sanctions in this matter.

Let us look this question squarely in the face. Say the opponents of Socialism, "You Socialists would abolish Marriage and destroy the Family!" Now the first question which suggests itself here is what form of Marriage and what form of the Family? He who makes the assertion, as a rule, pretty obviously thinks that the only possible form of the Family is the existing compulsory life-long monogamy, as by law established, together with the children resulting therefrom, if there are any. But I need scarcely remind the educated reader that this form of Marriage and the Family, as

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established amongst us, is itself the result of a long evolution, for the various stages of which the works of Maclennan, Morgan, Bachofen, Engels, Gerard-Teulon, Hobhouse, Havelock Ellis, and others may be consulted. Suffice it here to say that this evolution, beginning in the far distant past of early man (perhaps with promiscuity), has passed through a variety of phases, various forms of group-marriage (by which is to be understood the men of one group having marital rights over the women of another group, and *vice versâ*); polygamy in its various forms, culminating in the so-called patriarchal family, through diverse stages of transitory marital relation, till we come to the, at least nominal, life-long monogamy as established by law throughout Christendom in the present day—which last constitutes for the modern *bourgeois*, not merely the final term of an evolutionary series (beyond which further evolution is impossible and undesirable), but an institution obtaining by a kind of Divine Right for all peoples and all times.

That the form of marriage and the family relation in any given society is determined by the modes that society produces and distributes its wealth is a commonplace to students of anthropology and the early history of institutions, and will, I think, be denied by no scientific Socialist in the present day. This, however, by the way. Now, unfortunately for the opponent of Socialism who

professes to regard the present form of the marriage relation as the final limit of perfectibility, (as has been often enough pointed out) the existing family relations have already been destroyed by the very conditions of their existence under the great machine industry of Capitalism for the bulk of the proletariat. They were eminently suited for the small handicraft industry of former times, in which all the family assisted one another. But with each member of the family competing with each other member in the factory, the old family relation has been undermined. This at one end of the social scale. At the other, amongst the higher strata of the ruling classes in Europe at the present time, the institution of the morganatic or left-handed marriage (not to speak of various forms of non-legitimate sexual relationship) is in direct contravention of the monogamic principle. Such are the facts, and they have often been stated.

In short, the old monogamic family relation is already undermined in more than one direction. (I do not know whether there are any who seriously contemplate the possibility of its rehabilitation on the old basis either with Socialism or without Socialism. If there be such, I would only point out to them that experience has not hitherto been favourable to attempts to put back the hands of the clock.) The historical Theory of Socialism proclaims the more or less indissoluble connection

of all forms of human life with the economic form. It tells us that the forms assumed by the marital and family relations throughout history are, like other social forms, at least largely, if not entirely, dependent upon the material, the economic conditions of the life of a society, and change with these conditions. So much for the evolutionary side of the question.

We come now to the important practical point whether an unconditional acceptance of the present basis of the marital relation, with all its implications, in a word, of the current sexual morality, is consistent with the fundamental ethical postulates of Socialism. We have already signalled the direct aim of Socialism as the realisation of the principles of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. Now with Equality and Fraternity this particular question has perhaps only an indirect connection. But with Liberty it has a very direct connection indeed. Let us consider for a moment what Liberty means for Socialism. Socialism, in spite of the abusive assertions of its enemies, has for its end, I say, the realisation of human liberty. It is true the liberty it seeks to realise is a real liberty and not a sham liberty, a concrete liberty and not a merely formal and abstract liberty. Hence in the attempt to achieve the real thing it is often necessary to destroy the sham. In championing true liberty, Socialism is prepared to demonstrate

the false liberty (*e.g.* the sham free contract between capitalist and workman demanded by the Manchester school) to be incompatible with liberty, in fact, the negation of liberty (such liberty being, in fact, the source and foundation of modern wage-slavery). Socialism can further show that real human liberty, for each and all, can only be secured by the economic conditions of human life being in the possession and under the regulation of the whole community. Any apparent sacrifice of liberty which this may entail on the part of some, Socialism can prove is the sacrifice of a merely empty and formal liberty in favour of a real liberty for each and all alike.

The allegations of the enemies of Socialism to the effect that Socialism implies the violent ruin of the heart and the destruction of all existing domestic relations (combined with the forcible introduction of something they are pleased to call "free-love"), is, of course, a false and grotesque travesty respecting which an intelligent reader need not concern himself. Socialism, I repeat, stands for liberty. It means the emancipation of mankind from all forms of slavery. In its political and economic emancipation is included the emancipation from all other forms of slavery. Socialism, it has been said by Engels, implies the substitution of the administration of things for the direct coercion of persons. Now I do not see

that we can draw the line here at the domestic relation. Socialism, I contend, while in no way hostile in principle to the strictest life-long monogamy, is also not necessarily hostile to forms of the sexual or family relation deviating from the present theoretical standard in this matter. What I do say is incompatible with Socialism, is the coercion of men and women in their private life. I do say that the principle of toleration here, as elsewhere, in private or self-regarding matters, is absolute with Socialism.

Those who think otherwise on this question simply wish to maintain a system of tyranny over their neighbour. Mr Ramsay Macdonald, in his preface to the translation of Enrico Ferri's book, *Socialism and Science*,—in which Professor Ferri criticises the present institution of marriage,—while admitting the impossibility of determining the precise form the family relation is likely to take under Socialism, nevertheless seeks to conciliate the orthodox view generally by assuming the possibility of a Socialist administration “frowning” upon any other form of the marital relation than the conventional one. Now if by “frowning” Mr Macdonald means to imply, as I suppose he does, some form of legal or moral coercion, then, I maintain, such an administration would be, in spirit, as reactionary and as anti-Socialistic as the Russian autocracy itself. Any society which refuses elementary personal liberty, no matter on what point, to its members,

is, I maintain, doomed to perish sooner rather than later.

I do not hesitate to say that any attempt, whether by direct coercion in form of law or by indirect coercion in the form of public opinion, to compel two persons to remain together who wish to separate or, having separated, to seek to deprive them of the exercise of their personal liberty in the formation of new ties, is an act of tyrannical oppression, radically incompatible with Socialist principle. I contend that toleration in this matter is of the essence of Socialism. The contrary simply amounts to coercion exercised in favour of a particular opinion. For the persons who desire this pretend to think, and they may be right, that life-long monogamy is the ideal sexual relation. They ignore the somewhat numerous cases in which to the unsophisticated person its ideal nature may seem somewhat to be lacking. They ignore difference of character. But, whether rightly or wrongly, having come to the conclusion that it is ideal for all temperaments, they are not content to rest the acceptance of this ideal on its intrinsic excellence, but they seek to convert it into a procrustean bed upon which to stretch unwilling persons, *i.e.* persons who, upon practical or other grounds, think differently. This is certainly un-Socialistic. For, I repeat, I cannot but maintain that while Socialism in no wise dogmatizes on the

subject of the marriage relation, it does imply complete toleration in theory and practice.

The regulative function of society in this matter should properly begin, not with cohabitation between man and woman, which is a personal matter considered in itself, but with the appearance on the scene of offspring. We must learn to separate the two things. They are often in practice dissociated. It is well known that about a third of the marriages contracted in this country are childless. Now while society in its corporate capacity has no right, as I contend, either by law or public opinion, to interfere with the sexual liberty of the individual *per se*, it has an undoubted right to have a word to say on the question of children—nay, it has a duty to perform in seeing that its future citizens are well brought up and properly cared for. This, however, is a wide and important question. My point lies in emphasising the distinction between mere cohabitation, which should be a matter of private agreement, and the question of offspring. It is with the latter alone that a society based upon rational principles has the right to concern itself, in the sense of practical interference with individual liberty. The former is a matter of opinion and private taste. To put my position in a few words. Marriage under Socialism is a pure and free agreement of cohabitation between two persons, with which, as such, the State or community has no

more direct concern than with any other private agreement. Not even the most liberal divorce laws would amount to the same as this, since all systems of divorce presuppose the right of interference by the State in a private and personal arrangement. So much on the question of the relation of Socialism to the Hearth. We now pass on to its relation to the Altar, understanding thereby its attitude towards Christianity and, for that matter, any other traditional dogmatic creed.

Modern, or scientific, Socialism, claims to be a doctrine based on the economic analysis of modern capitalist production and on the facts of historic evolution. It has for its ideal the realisation of, as nearly as the nature of things permit, a perfect society here below and not a heaven for the individual soul up above. Now, a theory which bases itself on reasoned conclusions, on science and law, and is concerned with the relation of the individual to his fellow-men and to society, can hardly be altogether compatible with another theory claiming to be a divine revelation and concerning itself mainly, if not exclusively, with the relation of the individual soul to an alleged Supreme Author of the Universe.

That there is a certain opposition between the two theories, alike in logic and in fact, seems to many of us self-evident. The man who bases his view of things on the uniformity of nature

and the law of evolution, and whose aims and hopes are centred on the mundane affairs of human society here below, if he be possessed of a logical instinct, can hardly with sincerity accept a theory for which mundane affairs are of necessity of very secondary importance, since the one thing needful is that each individual soul should look to the squaring-up of its accounts with the Divinity who is its Maker. As a matter of fact, we observe that it is almost invariably the case that a man who interests himself very seriously in the affairs of his own soul is not very keen as to the mundane issues of social progress ; while, conversely, a man who is keen on political and social issues does not find much time for the private affairs of his own soul. I have often observed with that curious hybrid, the Christian Socialist, that, beginning as such, he almost invariably either becomes an out-and-out Socialist, when his Christianity disappears, or becomes attenuated to little more than a name, or he becomes an earnest Christian, when his Socialism vanishes or evaporates into a few phrases.

What we see at the present day as regards this question of religion or, more properly, of theology, among the masses of this country, is, that they are completely indifferent in the matter. There is a general feeling, implicit or explicit, among them that religion, in the sense of theology,

is something not so much formally discarded, as outgrown and left behind. It is under these conditions that the religion of Socialism, the true religion of humanity, makes appeal to them. The class-conscious Socialist workman feels, as Lassalle put it, that he is raising the ideal of his class to be the ideal of his age, that he is working through his classhood for humanity. I do not think, then, that Socialism can be said to be other than very definitely non-Christian and non-Theistic.

But if this be true, I cannot agree that it is possible for Socialism to maintain an attitude of sheer indifference, as some would have it, to current religions, entrenching itself within the water-tight compartments of its central economic formula. The current creeds may be hard stricken, but they are not as yet dead. They still have an influence with not inconsiderable sections of the population, and that influence is, from a Socialistic point of view, almost invariably for mischief. Hence I cannot regard the war against clericalism and dogma, under certain circumstances at least, as not a necessary side of Socialist propaganda. Still less from the point of view of consistency and straightforwardness can I reconcile myself to the assertion so often repeated for electioneering purposes, that Socialism is not opposed to any theological creed. Of course there are two things to be distinguished here. Socialism is, correctly

speaking, a scientific doctrine and ethical ideal of social life ; but Socialism is also, though incorrectly, identified with programmes of certain immediate reforms to be carried out if possible in the next Parliament. As I have before said, a man may very well approve of and vote for measures, a legal eight hours' day, the feeding of children in public schools, a progressive income tax, old age pensions, etc., etc., while remaining a conscientious Churchman or Nonconformist. But, then, these things, though advocated by Socialists as stepping-stones and palliatives, are not Socialism and have no pretensions to being so. They are merely Socialistic legislation. For those who accept Socialism itself as a doctrine and an ideal it is scarcely possible, I think, to conscientiously describe themselves as Christians or even Theists, at least in any sense of those words legitimated by either popular or historical usage. They connote implicitly, if not explicitly, a different order of ideas from that to which the understanding Socialist has subscribed.

What, then, shall we say of the cry now being dinned into our ears by reactionary politicians on the platform and in the Press anent Socialism being identified with Atheism ? Do these persons pretend to believe that Socialists aim at a drastic inquisition into private beliefs and sentiments, or even at a rigorous suppression of all forms of public worship ? To hear them and read them one would

think they did ; but they are too clever for this. What they really profess to be indignant at, when closely viewed, is seen to be the threatened abolition by Socialism of the tyrannical action of dogma, cultus, and tradition, upon the thoughts and actions of men. It is this complete freeing of the human mind from the bondage of authority in these matters, the complete secularisation of human life in this sense, that they dread.

The scare and prejudice sought to be got up by reactionary journals on the subject of Socialism and Atheism is, as we all know, started with the more immediate object of detaching the votes of certain persons, Nonconformist and others, from the Socialist candidate at elections. Now, the psychological condition of these electors who would otherwise vote for the Socialist, but who are deterred from doing so by the cry of Atheism, is impossible to explain on any other hypothesis than either the dread of intellectual freedom aforesaid, or abject idiocy on the part of the said elector. The Nonconformist voter, if he thought that the return of Socialists to Parliament would tend towards the forceable suppression of the Christian faith, might be perfectly justified in refusing to vote for them. But he knows perfectly well that all that the Socialist proposes in this matter is to place the Christian religion on the level of other religions, of science, and of non-Christian

theories generally. Admitting, then, that an intimate connection between Atheism and Socialism were established from a theoretical point of view, what is there in this to prevent a Non-conformist or other Christian from recording his vote for a candidate with whose immediate practical programme, which is, after all, the main point at issue, he agrees? (I can understand, perhaps, his hesitating to definitely avow himself a Socialist, or to formally join a Socialist organisation. But if he really has faith in the merits of his creed to conquer by its own intrinsic qualities in the absence of direct persecution or oppression, he has nothing to fear.) However this may be, the practical attitude of Socialism in this matter is perfectly plain. Whether Socialism be identifiable with Atheism or not, Socialism is undoubtedly identified with Free Thought in the truest sense of the word. Whatever Christians may be, Socialists are confident in the triumph of the truth through free discussion. Their programme must therefore embrace the complete freeing of human life from the fetters of traditional dogma. And what does this mean other than the complete secularisation of the political and social life of the community?

As I have already indicated, I think, then, that there is a theoretical opposition between Socialism and Christianity. It will scarcely be denied that most Socialists are non-Christians, where not

militant anti-Christians. Space will not allow of anything approaching a full treatment of this interesting question of the relations of Socialism, considered as an economic doctrine and theory of life, with a definite speculative theory or a philosophic view of the universe. Enough has been said, I think, however, to show that here also it is impossible, except for election purposes, to sincerely treat Socialism as absolutely disconnected even with these purely speculative interests.

We have now considered, successively, the to-day much vexed question of the relations of Socialism in its narrower sense as a politico-economic doctrine with Socialism in its broader sense, as including the issues of patriotism and internationalism, of marriage and the family, and of religion, as currently understood. The instinct alike of friend and foe, of Socialists themselves, and of the opponents of Socialism, has, with a certain rough accuracy, diagnosed the tendencies of Socialism in its relation to these questions. Even Socialists whose whole attention since joining the movement has been occupied with the central economic issue feel instinctively, if I may say so, out of harmony with the orthodox current views of these other matters. The Socialist who takes a wider view, the Socialist thinker, sees the grounds of this instinctively felt incompatibility to exist in the nature of things.

Now a few words in conclusion as to the morality,

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and advisability for electoral purposes, of masking the true state of the case. I say the true state of the case advisedly, for, although I know that some sort of technical show of argument may, by holding to the letter and disregarding the spirit, be made out for confining the term Socialism to its purely economic definition, yet on a broad view of things (and in practice the broad view is bound to have to be taken account of in the long run) all such artificial argumentation breaks down. All repudiations and all asseverations to the contrary, Socialism remains, among friend and foe alike, associated with the views repudiated.

Now, I ask, is it not better even for the Socialist candidate, in the long run, to grasp the nettle rather than to shirk touching it, and while, of course, exposing with a scathing hand the lying and calumnious distortions of the enemy, to acknowledge that in the last resort Socialism as a theory of social life is not compatible with the current *bourgeois* ideas on these subjects in defence of which the reactionist professes such zeal? After all, votes, important though they be, are not the only thing in social progress. Better, I say, to lose a few votes for the moment, for it will only be for the moment, rather than compromise with principle and set an example of prevarication. Personally, I must say I have too much faith in the future of Socialism to regard such

arts as these as necessary or desirable. Socialism is destined to conquer and, in its conquest, it will assuredly supersede the Throne, the Hearth, and the Altar in the forms in which they have existed in history and survive at the present time. It will assuredly make an end of the narrow views on these subjects still largely obtaining, as of the institutions themselves as at present existing; and in their place will arise other social forms and other conceptions more consistent with the realisation of that Freedom, Justice, and Brotherhood which is, after all, the ethical standard that Socialism unfolds before the eyes of men, and by virtue of which it makes appeal to their hearts.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE PROBLEM OF SOCIALIST FUNDAMENTALS

THE common theory that Socialism means no more than a proposition in economics has been already criticised in the two preceding chapters of the present volume. I would not merely deny that its definition is exhausted in the well-known economic formula concerning the possession and exploitation of the means of production, redistribution, and exchange by and for the whole community, but I would go further and affirm that this very principle itself, constituting the central demand of Socialism, is based on certain ethical postulates, from which it derives its only possible ultimate sanction. These ethical postulates are no other than the Revolutionary Trinity—Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. The aim and sanction of the economic formula is, I contend, the effective realisation of these principles as essential to the purposes of human life, individual and social. If this be so, it follows that they, together with the principle of justice which is involved in them, constitute the

pillars alike of Socialist theory and polity, without which Socialism ceases to be Socialism.

It behoves us to examine more closely the consequences that ensue from a recognition of the aforesaid ethical postulates as essential to Socialism, devoting special attention to the first of them—to wit, Liberty. Now, Liberty may be socio-economic, or it may be political, or it may be personal.

(1) Socio-economic Liberty may be defined as the right of Society in its corporate capacity to freely regulate all matters directly concerning the commonweal without obstruction from other interests, vested or otherwise. It involves the right of a democratic state to organise production, redistribution, and exchange, to regulate the right of property-holding in the best interests of the community, etc. But it does not include the right of acting oppressively to individuals as such ; for example, to single out individuals of a class for the operation of measures which do not apply to the class as a whole, for this would involve the violation of another ethical postulate, that of Equality. The individualism of the Manchester school refuses to recognise this form of Liberty at all, on the ground that it conflicts with our third form of Liberty, namely, personal Liberty. But of this more directly.

(2) Political Liberty may be defined as the right of every individual to have a voice in the manage-

ment and criticism of the affairs of the community directly or indirectly, either by voting, or by speaking and writing, or by both. Freedom of discussion and of demonstration at suitable times and places is one of the first conditions of political Liberty, which is, in the last resort, the main safeguard of the other forms of Liberty.

(3) Personal Liberty may be defined as the right to freedom of thought and action on the part of the individual, without let or hindrance, moral or material, on the part of Society, in all "self-regarding matters," to use Mill's expression, *i.e.* in all matters that only directly affect himself and do not directly touch the community as a whole, or other individuals, save, of course, by their own personal free will and consent. It is necessary to emphasise that, in order to take a matter outside the sphere of self-regarding action, it must be shown that the matter in question *must* directly affect the community. It is not enough to show that the act in question would affect the community indirectly, still less that it only conceivably might affect it. This is essential, since otherwise it is not difficult, with the aid of a little sophistry, to show that every course of thought, expression, or action may possibly affect the community, at least *indirectly*, and thus a door will be left open for the unlimited oppression of the individual in his private life and

the total destruction of personal freedom of conduct and opinion.

Having thus defined the three chief forms of Liberty, which means, after all, the primary condition of self-development alike for Society and the Individual, and hence is the condition of evolutionary process, let us see how these three forms work out in their practical application. Socio-economic Liberty, the right of the community to freedom of action as to its economic conditions, is obstructed at every turn in our existing social organisation by the property interests of individuals and classes. This is abundantly clear whenever any attempt at Socialistic legislation, however mild in character, is made within the framework of the existing State. It is then seen that every proposal through which the bulk of the community should be enabled to come by its own, in however slight a measure, encounters an impregnable stone wall of class interests. Hence the economic subjection of the proletariat and hence the impossibility of socio-economic Liberty so long as the capitalistic State exists, which means, so long as the land and the means of production remain private property.

Turning to the question of political Liberty, this implies the greatest possible influence of all the members of a given society in the regulation and management of that society. This is what is known as Democracy. But, as Friedrich Engels has

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pointed out, even Democracy, like every other form of government, represents the possible or actual coercion of human beings within its pale. Socialism, on the contrary, has for its end the substitution of the *administration of things* for the *government of persons*. Such being the case, Democracy itself can only be regarded as a transitional phase tending to the true liberty of the ultimate and ideal society of Socialism. From this it follows that the weapons of Democracy are not ends in themselves, but merely means to an ulterior end. There is nothing intrinsically *sacro-sanct* in these means. For example, take the palladium of Democracy, the determination of all questions by a count of heads majority of the population! Now, as I have elsewhere pointed out, this method, whether it take the form of direct decision (initiative and referendum), or of the election of representatives, is simply the one that experience has discovered to be the least objectionable and the most effective on the whole in the interests of the Commonwealth. This does not say that it is perfect or that under given conditions other means intrinsically more objectionable might not be more effective.

There is certainly no magic in the verdict of a majority, and public opinion, as it is called, is often a manufactured product of class interests, and, at the best, only too frequently of a prejudice, tradi-

tional or acquired, or of a one-sided sentimentalism. We may often be inclined to think that an honest, far-seeing, and disinterested "master of thirty legions" might with advantage at times put his heel on the neck of public opinion. But the intrinsic improbability of the occurrence, and still more of the recurrence of a combination of wisdom and honesty in your "master of thirty legions," is quite enough to give pause to anyone who is inclined to take this view, and to convince him that Democracy, with all its drawbacks, represents the least of evils in this connection. As such every Socialist must accept in general the conditions of Democracy, including universal manhood suffrage and the decision of the majority.<sup>1</sup>

As regards the third form of Liberty, personal Liberty, there is much confusion of thought, even

<sup>1</sup> I have elsewhere given my reasons for not regarding woman suffrage, whether it be right or wrong in itself, as many do, in the light of a necessary corollary to the principles of Democracy. The term Democracy, in accordance with sociological fact, has always meant the manhood of the community. Its extensions have always referred to the overthrow of class or of race barriers, never to the obliteration of organic biological distinctions. Now, in woman suffrage you have a new factor introduced not sociological in its nature, as with class or with race, but biological. This consideration, as I contend, quite apart from its desirability or the reverse, cuts away the logical ground for its being accepted merely as being the necessary logical consequence of an acceptance of the principle of Democracy as such. In other words, it is not necessarily implied in the definition of Democracy, notwithstanding that its advisability may be arguable on other grounds.

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among persons calling themselves Socialists, as to the attitude of Socialism concerning it. Because the organ of a Socialist community—whether we call it State or not—would in the real interests of Liberty be compelled to organise the process of production, etc., and in doing so to regulate the conditions of labour for the individual, there is an idea in some people's minds that the great characteristic would be the coercion of the individual all round. Nothing could be more absurd. The whole Socialist movement, either explicitly or implicitly, points the contrary way, points, that is, to a minimum coercion of the individual in all relations of life, while in all purely personal actions, that is, actions not directly concerning the corporate life of the community or the corresponding liberty of other individuals, the liberty it accords him is complete. It is only necessary to glance at the writings of the recognised representatives of Socialist thought or to the resolutions of Socialist congresses to be assured that personal freedom in the most complete sense compatible with social existence at all belongs to the essence of Socialism.

Let us take the well-known pronouncement that "religion is a private matter." This pronouncement, though often abused by being strained out of its real meaning, is in itself simply the affirmation of the most complete toleration of the indi-

vidual in matters of opinion. It bars the way to the imposition, by the moral or material pressure of Society, of any form of dogma or article of speculative belief on the individual conscience. Socialism proclaims absolute freedom in matters of opinion. Now, opinions on speculative matters vary from the agnosticism of scientific thought to the theosophy of mystical imagination. But this individual freedom of opinion has of course its obverse side. The Socialist Commonwealth would have to guard the principle of personal freedom of opinion, and hence would have to be severely intolerant of any particular religious sect whose dogmas involved the attempt to impose its creed by any form of coercion, direct or indirect, on Society at large or on unwilling individuals. Socialist Society, in its collective capacity, can only recognise ascertained scientific fact together with the inferences necessarily ensuing from such fact. This is the meaning of the uniform demand for secular education by all Socialists as a first condition of educational progress.

A logical consequence of this principle of absolute toleration in matters of personal opinion follows on the much discussed question of sexual relations. Here again views as to the best form of sexual and family relations vary. In a word, they are, like religion in the present day, largely a matter of opinion, and as such ought to rank equally with

religion as “a private matter” alike in theory and practice. I am not forgetful that there is a point where the question of marriage or cohabitation ceases to be a matter of the carrying out of mere individual opinion or taste, and that is in so far as the question of children enters into it. Here, of course, we strike a very important social relation, and here undoubtedly the corporate power of Society has a direct right of intervention. But let us not mix up two things—the right and duty of the corporate power of Society to see to the proper maintenance, regulation, and upbringing of children, and its right to coerce individuals either by moral or material pressure in their private relationships. The law and morality alike of our present Society confounds the two things in an illogical and well-nigh inextricable tangle—it ties them up in a truly irrational knot. The practical problem of Social Democracy in this regard is to effectively disentangle this knot in carefully distinguishing between the legal and moral question—the duty towards offspring and that of the sexual relation *per se*, which in its changes and permanencies is purely a matter of individual taste and preference. It can never be too much insisted upon that the question of personal liberty in matters not directly affecting Society in its corporate capacity, matters of individual opinion and taste, needs strictly maintaining as an integral principle

of Socialism. It must be recognised beyond gain-saying that Society in its corporate capacity as regards coercion, moral or material, has, in such matters, no *locus standi*.

It is cheap and convenient to pander to vulgar prejudice by offering up the principle of personal freedom as a whole burnt-offering to the bourgeois Philistine, as has been done on one occasion by Mr Ramsay Macdonald when he sought to soothe the feelings of the aforesaid Philistine with the reflection that the Socialist Society of the future might possibly institute a Draconian system of life-long monogamy for fear lest the "stability" of the social fabric should suffer from the admission of any measure of personal liberty in sexual matters, such being "too subversive." Perhaps in Mr Macdonald's view his future Society might regard other forms of human freedom as dangerous to its "stability," or as "too subversive," and reintroduce slavery, serfdom, etc., or, on the grounds that humane methods of criminal law and administration also threaten this precious "stability," might proceed to re-establish the rack and other concomitants of the criminal court of a bygone era! We venture to assert that few Socialists outside Mr Ramsay Macdonald would admit the excuse of a practice being "too subversive" as an adequate ground for surrendering the basal Socialist principle of personal liberty. Those who have once grasped the true

inwardness of Socialism would undoubtedly be of opinion that a Society that could not stand this strain was unworthy to exist at all, and that the sooner it perished the better. In fact, the future Society of Mr Ramsay Macdonald that would not scruple to dragoon its members in the way he suggests I am convinced, as I have before said, would be hardly less detestable to the majority of thinking Socialists than the Russian autocracy itself. However, we do not deny that Mr Macdonald's suggestion might possibly serve the purpose of attracting a few non-Socialist votes from the amiable and self-righteous middle-class Philistine who enjoys seeing his fellow humans bullied.

We need not linger long over the two other ethical postulates included in the old Revolutionary Trinity, since they are largely involved in the first one we have just been considering, namely, "Liberty." Equality, understanding by the term social and economic Equality, is a condition of the universality of real Liberty, and Equality in any other sense is a chimera. Differences of temperament, of ability, and of character generally, must exist, but these are not incompatible with the most complete political and economic Equality. This Equality, based as it is on equal economic advantage and equal economic opportunity, is the Equality demanded by Socialism. This Equality, it need scarcely be said, in no way implies any dead level

of mediocrity, such as haunts the imaginations of so many critics of Socialism. On the contrary, as I have elsewhere shown, it is the system of Capitalism which produces, and must necessarily produce, the dead level spoken of, a state of things which would be completely changed by Socialism. If to real Equality, Liberty in the three forms we have above discussed is necessary, it is no less true that to the full fruition of all forms of Liberty, Equality in the sense we have just indicated is equally essential. You cannot fully realise the one without the other.

The same remark applies to our third Revolutionary postulate, namely, that of Fraternity.<sup>1</sup> Without Liberty and Equality in the senses given, real Fraternity is impossible. Social and Economic Equality is the groundwork and material basis of that social spirit of Fraternity which will knit together Socialist society in a manner inconceivable to us of the Individualist Bourgeois Society of to-day. We already see adumbrations of this

<sup>1</sup> The notion that Fraternity necessarily means mutual embracing of everyone with everyone else is, of course, absurd. Even the Fraternity of an actual blood relationship does not necessarily imply this. Likes and dislikes between individuals must always exist even in the closest communities. What it does mean is "one for all and all for one," the spirit of common interest, of mutual standing in with one another as a body, quite irrespective of individual likes or dislikes. A man may be prepared to sacrifice himself for a brother's just claims as a member of the social whole, be it family or society, quite apart from his special regard for that particular brother.

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spirit of Fraternity in the existing organised working class in the matter of strikes. It is indeed very strongly exemplified in what is known as the "sympathetic strike." Beginning with the members of the International Social Democratic party, it will form the ethical *milieu* under which the final transition from the mere Political Society (*civitas*) of to-day to the true Social Society (*societas*), in which—once more to quote Friedrich Engels—the *government of persons* shall have finally given place to the *administration of things*, will be ultimately accomplished and Socialism completely and definitely realised.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE PROBLEM OF MISUNDERSTOOD SOCIALISM

#### A REPLY TO DR BEATTIE CROZIER

MODERN Socialism, in the strict sense of the word, dates as a theory from the Communist manifesto, written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in 1847, and is the outcome of the principles laid down in that document and developed in scientific form and in the detail of a full and close analysis in the subsequent works of its authors, but, above all, in the *magnum opus* of Marx, *Das Kapital*, the first volume of which, laying down the basis of the Marxian economy, was published in 1867. The above statement as to the fatherhood of Marx, with respect to modern Socialism, so far as main principles are concerned, I maintain is true without any reserve whatever. I am fully aware that there are not wanting English "Socialists" who are very anxious to disclaim all connection with the great founder of modern Socialism, and who are apt, when it is said of anyone of them, "thou too art of his disciples," to begin, I will not say

precisely to "curse and to swear," but certainly to protest very vehemently "I know not the man!"

Of such as these a recent critic of Socialism in the *Spectator* was thinking, I suppose, when he alleged that time was when a criticism of the economic principles of Socialism was virtually synonymous with the criticism of Marx's *Kapital*, but now that this basis is repudiated by so many it was difficult for the critic to know the precise nature of the doctrine he was dealing with. The critic may reassure himself in respect of what constitutes the theoretical basis of present-day Socialism. If he will analyse the speeches and writings of those true British Socialists who boast that they have never read Marx, he will find that all those ideas which differentiate them as Socialists from the ordinary Radical Democrat come, directly or indirectly, out of Marx. In fact, generally speaking, we may define the Socialism of certain members of Parliament and popular writers, for whom Marx is a "back number," as a species of bastard Marxism. The logical consequences and real bearing of the main Marxian theses are ignored, while a determined effort is made to reconcile them with all manner of *bourgeois* prejudices. As practical men, members of Parliament and popular writers, having seats and circulations to be considered—seats sometimes in constituencies in which a Nonconformist element in the electorate may readily turn the scale, and

circulations in respectable suburbs which are not to be despised—they hold that the wind must be tempered to the prejudices of these shorn lambs. Provincial Nonconformists sometimes have their own opinions on the subject of German Jews and of doctrines derived from them, while subscribers to local libraries are apt to be strict disciplinarians as to the views held by authors whose books are to be read in their family circle. *Hinc illæ lacrimæ.*

If he will forgive me for saying so, Dr Crozier's whole criticism of Marx is throughout based on what logicians term an *ignoratio elenchi*. He sets up a terrible bogey purely of his own construction and device which he would have us take to represent Marx, and which he straightway proceeds to hew in pieces with manifold objurgation, in approved style. We expected in his last production, which claims to be a direct challenge to Marx himself, that Dr Crozier would deal systematically with the main positions of the treatise on Capital, rather than continue to harp upon the one or two deductions of his own which he fastens on to Marx in the course of the articles dealing with his English opponents. In this we have certainly been disappointed. Dr Crozier, I suppose, might urge as an excuse for repeating himself, that neither Mr Blatchford nor Mr Snowden, proud in their ignorance of Marx's works, were in a position, or were concerned, to deal with the subject from the

Marxian point of view. This being so, it only remains for the present writer to point out in detail the misapprehensions under which Dr Crozier is labouring on the subject of Marx's teaching, and to endeavour to indicate the fallacy underlying his chief counter-proposition.

Marx shows that value, as the fundamental economic element running through all produced and exchangeable articles of use, is the human labour which has gone to their production. This is, of course, a doctrine Marx has taken over from the old classical British economy. In consequence of the part it plays in Marx's system, this simple and obvious truth, recognised by Adam Smith, Ricardo, and all the older theorists, has come to be viewed with abhorrence by the modern *bourgeois* economist, who is never tired of decrying it as out of date. Now, this principle of value being embodied labour, Marx applies as the touchstone in his analysis of the modern Capitalist system of production. He points out that the value of wealth produced under the conditions of the great machine-industry of modern times, with all the complexity of its processes, is *au fond* nothing but the "congealed human labour" expressed in it. The complexity of the economic forms may often hide this fact from view, but, as Marx contends, it remains a fact nevertheless. But now steps in our critic. "No," says Dr Beattie Crozier, "it

is not labour, it is not the workman who produces the wealth around us with its value; it is the powers of nature embodied in the machines; these are the real originators of all our wealth." How the machines could produce wealth by themselves without the application of human labour to them, or how the machines themselves could come into existence save as the product of human labour as applied to the iron, wood, stone, in a word, to the raw materials of nature, Dr Crozier does not tell us. But, after all, it is not so much the machines themselves that interest our learned critic as the inventors of the machines, and thereby hangs a tale.

Dr Beattie Crozier bases his criticism on Marx on the theory that the latter was chiefly concerned in his analysis with the question of "strict economic justice" in the division of the surplus product, over and above what was necessary to the maintenance of the labourer, a division, as Dr Crozier informs us, "whereby each man gets the fruits of his labour, neither more nor less." Hence we are told "it became necessary as a preliminary for him to inquire as to precisely what men or body of men it was to whom this surplus was due, and without whose special exertions it could not have come into being at all." Here, therefore, according to Dr Crozier, we have the kernel of the Marxian system. Marx, of course, insists that the whole of wealth production, the

whole of economic value (and surplus value), is the creation of labour, or, to put the matter concretely, of the workman operating on the products of nature. But herein, says Dr Crozier, Marx was a subtle deceiver. The real creator, if not of all value, at least of the surplus value, the surplus product, over and above the labourer's means of subsistence, now appropriated by the Capitalist, is neither the labourer nor the Capitalist, but the *inventor*.

Now, before going any further, it may interest Dr Crozier to learn that his statement of Marx's position would be accepted by no Marxian and would be certainly unrecognisable by Marx himself. The author of *Das Kapital* was led to his Socialist conclusions as the logical outcome of his analysis of Capitalist production, and was certainly actuated by no intention either beforehand or afterwards, of discovering "strict economic justice" in the division of the surplus whereby each man gets the fruits of his labour, "neither more nor less." I defy Dr Crozier to produce any passage in Marx which would justify the caricature of Marx's position contained in the words above quoted. It is a gloss put upon Marx by Dr Crozier. The idea of "strict economic justice," in Dr Crozier's sense, certainly never entered Marx's mind, while as to "each man" getting "the fruits of his labour, neither more nor less," it requires but a very little consideration of the conditions of

modern industry to enable anyone to see such a scheme to be preposterously chimerical. In the complicated processes of modern production, the impossibility of assigning the precise amount of labour put by any given workman into the finished product is obvious. If Dr Beattie Crozier was really under the delusion that Marx was capable of propounding such nonsense as this, there may have been some excuse for his thinking him a Utopian Schemer whom he could "dispose of as a serious economist," and for his talk about getting "Marx and his followers under hatches." In fact, Dr Crozier's latest utterances look as though he were anxious to confirm Hyndman's opinion as quoted by him, as to his understanding of Marx. Take for example the statement that *Das Kapital* is a book not distinguished for its profundity, but that "on the contrary, as we shall see, it is a most simple and childlike piece of work." Now, none of Marx's previous detractors of any mark in political economy, that I am aware of, have denied either depth or acumen to *Das Kapital*, or have claimed to make their readers see that it is "a most simple and childlike piece of work." What we do see, of course, in Dr Crozier's case, is that, for some reason or other, he has completely missed all the bearings alike of Marx's method and conclusions. If Dr Crozier asks me to make good the above contention by extracts from Marx's writings, I must respectfully

decline to take up the position of proving a negative. On the contrary, I must, in my turn, call upon Dr Crozier to justify his interpretation of Marx by the *ipsissima verba* of Marx himself.

What, then, it may be asked, was the real gist and intention of the labours of Karl Marx? The answer is, Marx took not things as they might be, or things as they ought to be, but things as they were—the Capitalist system, in which we live and move and have our being—as the subject of his investigation and analysis. He did not start with, or call to his aid, any abstract “economic man.” What he sought to inquire was the meaning of, and implications involved in, the present conditions of production and distribution which we term the Capitalist system. The course of his analysis brings out at once its historical bearings, its roots in the past of the evolution of human society and the tendencies latent within it as regard the future of that evolution.<sup>1</sup> This tendency, he finds, points inevitably to the Communist ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, as the next salient stage in the economic development of society.

But for Marx the economic side of human

<sup>1</sup> It may be as well to point out here that the purely bogus opposition, so popular with a certain order of politicians to-day, between evolution and revolution, does not exist for Marx or his followers. They recognise that every revolution forms a part, usually the consummation, of an evolution, and that every evolutionary process contains within itself revolutionary *momenta*.

affairs is that side which determines all the rest. A fundamental economic change involves sooner or later a corresponding change in all the other departments of human life — political, religious, juridical, ethical, artistic. It may be that Marx himself, and I certainly think that such is the case with some of his followers, has unduly exaggerated the direct causal efficacy, great as it undoubtedly is, of the economic factor in some aspects of human evolution. With this question I have dealt elsewhere, but whether the above holds good or not, the point is more academic than practical. For the truth, established by Marx—a truth all but unrecognised before his time—of the stupendous import of economic development on human development generally, whether, as with some Marxians, we treat the economic development as the sole cause of the rest, or whether we regard the economic factor and the intellectual factor as co-efficients in a common result (*i.e.*, as reciprocally determining and determined by each other), is in any case undeniable. Now of criticism of Marx's method or of any scientific treatment of the results of his analysis, I can find no trace in Dr Crozier's animadversions. Instead of this he sets up an Aunt Sally of his own, consisting of fragments of Utopian dogma, which he proceeds to demolish.

The great *pièce de résistance* of Dr Crozier, and also, I believe, of Mr Mallock, in the attack on

Marx, namely, the trotting out of the "inventor," can surely not be meant to be taken quite seriously? In the first place, the ideas of the inventor do not as such enter into the sphere of economics. Marx found in the great industry, as established, the three factors — the Workman, the Capitalist, and the Machine. He did not find Dr Crozier's pet, the inventor, "fooling round" (as the Americans would say), and, therefore, not being there he was not in a position to get him "huddled away," as alleged by the learned doctor. Marx explains that in the process of Capitalist production the workman is necessarily docked of a portion of the product of his labour, a portion which may be determined with fair accuracy, in the long run, in the different phases of Capitalist production, although it would be impossible to assess the amount of surplus value of which any given individual workman had been deprived. In estimating the rate of the exploitation of labour by capital we start from *economic value* as defined by Marx and the older economists, namely, embodied average labour, simple or compound, as measured on a time basis. Hence the value of the Machine for Marx's purpose is neither the use-value nor the exchange-value, but the economic-value as defined by Marx in the sense I have just given. Such is my answer to Dr Crozier's challenge as regards this point.

Let us now come back to Marx, not as the

analyst of Capitalist production, in other words, not in his capacity as scientific exponent of economic truths, but to Marx, the human agitator for the rights of the working classes, to Marx in his capacity as man with ethical impulses and socio-political aspirations. As I have already pointed out, sheer scientific analysis of the conditions of Capitalist production had led Marx to the conclusion that the present system of society must inevitably become transformed into Socialism. This, however, *per se*, is a purely theoretical deduction. It has, in itself, no immediate ethical or other practical bearing. But Marx was more than a mere theorist, he was also a Social Revolutionist with human sympathies. He desired the realisation of that future human society which scientific analysis showed him was already gestating within the womb of modern Capitalist society, and he desired its realisation as speedily as possible. His economic and historical studies had shown him the Proletariat as the heir of the ages in his connection, and as the class in and through which the great change should be effected. They taught him further that the entry upon the scene of the Proletariat, as the dominant class, must mean the crucial step towards the abolition of a society based on classes altogether. Now here undoubtedly, on the practical side of Marx's activity, the ethical moment, the idea of justice towards a class which

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since entering the arena of history has been oppressed and disinherited, did assuredly play a strong *rôle*.

That the producers of wealth have always been those who have been the least enjoyers of wealth is an undoubted fact. This fact, under the conditions of modern Capitalist production, is daily and hourly staring the whole world in the face. But that portion of the world for which writers like Dr Crozier and Mr Mallock have taken to themselves a special brief, the portion which has the good fortune to belong to the propertied classes, is very unwilling to recognise in its true bearings this same fact. Hence its advocates are compelled to have resort to subterfuges. Across the great patent fact of injustice inflicted on the working classes by the present system of society it is accordingly sought to draw a red-herring in the shape of an imaginary counter-victim, to wit, the Inventor. Now this poor fellow, it is contended, ought to have the whole increment of wealth produced by the machine-industry over earlier methods of production to his own cheek. It is not the working-man who slaves at laborious toil his eight, nine, or ten hours a day who is unjustly treated by the present system! Oh dear, no! It is a man who, probably by the mere easy and agreeable exercise of natural gifts with which he has chanced to be endowed by "nature," in the shape of ancestors, who themselves

have had to thank untold generations of men for the faculties they possessed and for the whole social environment which has made them what they were—he it is, forsooth, whose lot ought to be bewailed, and not that of the workman who, by his toil, gives effect to inventions which but for him would be dead devices! Dr Crozier himself admits, indeed, the Socialist contention that “hundreds of thousands of minor workers have been engaged in building up the successive steps to every great scientific discovery and invention, before the single discoverer with whose name the great invention is identified has planted his flagstaff on the summit.” And how is Dr Crozier going to find these out, be they few or many? No invention is isolated. It is inextricably bound up with innumerable other inventions and with the general scientific knowledge of its time. All this does not, of course, alter the fact that, as things are in present society, the actual inventor of any industrial process has a greater claim in its results than the mere man of money, the Capitalist, who exploits his invention. But this is as far as I, or probably any other Socialist, would be prepared to go. The *idea* of the machine as elaborated by its inventor would be as useless to him (the inventor) as the machine itself would be to the Capitalist, without the labour of the workman. Socialists can see no justice, economic or other, in the man who has had the

good fortune, without any exertion of his own, to find himself in the possession of great natural gifts, being allowed in addition to absorb, as an individual, a disproportionate share of the world's wealth.

Dr Crozier affects to sneer at anything so immaterial as "honour" being a sufficient stimulus or reward to any man for exercising natural faculties which it would be probably a deprivation to him not to exercise. And yet he can hardly deny, one would think, that of all the great inventions of the last century there is hardly one in which ambition and honour did not play a far larger part with the inventor than any hope of mere material gain. It would be interesting, by the way, to know precisely how Dr Crozier proposes to indemnify his precious "inventor" after all is done. I suppose a perpetual patent, transmissible to "heirs and assigns," etc., is what he has in view. If so, would he make such a patent law retro-active? Would hypothetical claims to patent rights in the plough-share or the loom be admissible for examination? Or, again, does Dr Crozier's large heart open out equally to the artist, the composer, and the author? Would he grant a perpetual literary copyright, for example, likewise with retro-active effect? In that case we may expect some interesting points to arise when the population of Whitechapel lays siege to the High Court with its claims on the copyright of

the Old Testament. No, no, Dr Crozier, in vain is the snare laid in sight of the bird? Your plea for the "inventor" is too thin. We can all see through this pathetic figure. We can all appreciate the fact that his theatrical entrance upon the scene of controversy is an ingeniously conceived device designed to confuse the issue by offering an object of counter-interest to that accusing figure—the working-man. However, Dr Crozier is welcome to canvass for all the crocodile tears the *bourgeoisie* may have at its disposal, to be expended on the man who considers he has a right to place an indefinite charge for all time upon that labour without which his invention would be as useless to himself or to society as the fish that remain at the bottom of the sea are to the fisherman. The Socialist will certainly never discover any justice, economic or otherwise, in his demand, still less feel his heart moved to any sympathy with such a fellow, or his "heirs and assigns."

Now let us consider the indications afforded us by Dr Crozier of the extraordinary "scheme" he seems to think Marx of all people in the world, and with him all revolutionary Socialists, have up their sleeve. In the first place, it may surprise him to hear that modern Socialism, and least of all Marx himself, does not offer any "scheme" at all. Some individual Socialists may elaborate "schemes," but these, whether right or wrong, good or bad,

represent only their own personal opinions. Socialism as a doctrine, as recognised by the Socialist party as a whole, proclaims *tendencies*, the *main lines* upon which political and economic action must take to be effective in bringing us nearer the goal, namely, the complete communisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, which is the fundamental economic aim of Socialism. But as regards the immediate practice on which the detail of action or policy rests at any given time or at any particular phase of social progress, the guiding maxim of Socialism is pre-eminently *solvitur ambulando*—always, of course, within the limits of the economical, political, and ethical bases of the party-programme. But I am unaware of even any individual Socialist of any note who has ever put forward a scheme involving the absurdities attributed to the unfortunate Marx and his followers by my respected opponent in the present controversy.

As usual with the critics of Socialism, Dr Crozier confuses between current Capitalist conditions and Socialist conditions. He tacitly assumes the whole framework of existing society and the existing state, and interpolates into it a measure supposed to represent the carrying-out of some principle of Socialist society. The incompatibility being obvious, it only remains for him to exclaim, “Behold the absurdity, behold the monstrosity, of this proposal!” He can-

not see that just as a statement of the main features of modern Capitalist society, rehearsed by some prophetic seer to a feudal baron of the twelfth century, would have involved preposterous absurdities to the mind of the latter simply because he crudely judged them by the conditions and standard of the society in which he lived; so he, Dr Beattie Crozier, finds a difficulty in placing himself at the point of view of the principles enunciated by the scientific-Socialist seer of to-day, simply because he is equally incapable with our hypothetical feudal baron of divesting himself of the prepossessions derived from the social conditions of the age in which he lives.

Let us take Dr Crozier's assumption, which troubles him, like so many other would-be refuters of Socialism, to wit, the assumption anent "payment" of labour, to the effect that a rigid beggarly pittance is to be the lot of all, including even that gentle and oppressed creature "the inventor." Now here again we have a confusion between Socialism as a realised ideal of Society and Socialism in the making, between Socialism still militant and Socialism triumphant. For a completed Socialist society this question of payment does not arise; for such a society it is an anachronism. A Socialist society, as such, with its production for the use of all its members and not for the profit of the few, implies the requirements of life being equally

within the reach of each and all. In such a society, therefore, the bogey anent the amount paid in wages will disappear since the wage-system itself will have disappeared, the whole wealth of the Socialised world being created for the needs of the inhabitants of that world. Some may require more of the "good things of life," others less, just as some men now require three full meals a day, while the present writer is content with what amounts to about one and a half. Again, some may require more in one direction, less in another; one may require things which minister to his intellectual needs, but be indifferent to the quantity and the quality of those things pertaining to his animal requirements; with another it may be just the reverse; a third may be a man of the *juste milieu* all round.

But whatever the requirements of the Socialised world may be, a communistic production, distribution, and exchange, with the power man has acquired, is acquiring, and must further acquire, over the powers of nature, will afford abundant means of satisfying each and all. Then *for the first time in history* the mass of mankind will have at least the opportunity of leading that higher life of which we hear so much. Socialists hold that they have grounds for believing that this economic change will be followed by a corresponding intellectual change, and that the "three

parts animal," of which Dr Crozier speaks, will tend to disappear as the sphere of the human extends itself. Hitherto economic conditions have effectually hindered this transformation of the animal into the human.

But what Dr Crozier probably has in his mind when he is troubled as to scales of payment is not the completed Communistic Society above referred to, but the earlier stages of the transformation of Civilisation into Socialism. Here necessarily a modified form of the wage-system, and hence of payments, must continue to survive. It might be alleged, of course, that it were incorrect to term such a transitional state of Society Socialism at all. In this I am unable to agree. I hold that as soon as the conscious aim of the directive and administrative forces of Society is towards Socialism, then Socialism may be deemed to have begun. In this I adhere to the statement in *Socialism, its Growth and Outcome* (p. 285), which reads:—"It is clear that the first real victory of the Social Revolution will be the establishment, not indeed of a complete system of communism in a day, which is absurd, but of a *revolutionary administration whose definite and conscious aim* will be to prepare and further, in all available ways, human life for such a system—in other words, *of an administration whose every act will be of set purpose with a view to Socialism.*" This definition clearly shuts out mere *Socialistic*

*legislation*, such as may obtain to-day within the framework, economic and political, of present Capitalist society, from the right to be described as Socialism, as is often done by "practical politicians." Well, it is to this earliest phase of Socialism proper that, I take it, Dr Crozier is referring when he expresses himself with so much concern as to his heart's love, the "inventor," having to subsist on the wages of the unskilled labourer. But who, I would ask, informed Dr Crozier of any such hard and fast line as he supposes having been drawn and decreed by Socialism? Certainly not Karl Marx, for nowhere in his writings does he discuss points of constructive detail such as these.

So long as the work of Socialisation is incomplete and the system of wage-payments for work done continues, such payment would doubtless be determined, to some extent at least, by the conditions of a still-surviving "market." And even apart from this it would probably be regulated in some proportion to the needs of the special class of worker. That there would be a strong tendency to "levelling up" on the one side and to "levelling down" on the other is undoubtedly true. But if it could be shown that a certain class of work, owing to its being more exhausting or for any other reason, required a different standard of living from other classes of work, this fact would doubtless be an element in the determination of the rate

of payment for such work. To each "according to his needs" is a doctrine of the old Utopian Socialism which will never intrinsically lose its application. The dummy Marxian "street-corner stalwart" of Dr Crozier's imagination may, notwithstanding, possess his soul in peace as regards the danger of any differences of actual remuneration at this stage bringing back "all the old inequalities of fortune and all the old exploitations again."

In proportion as the Socialisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange progressed, the possibility of the Capitalisation of individual savings, and hence of their becoming the nucleus of a new exploitation of labour for private profit, would diminish in an increasing ratio day by day. Any positive material advantage that one man had over another at this stage could for practical purposes only take the form of consumable wealth, which would be a matter of little consequence one way or the other.

I cannot enter at length into Dr Crozier's psychology of human nature or his dogmatic assumptions as to the yearning of mankind, *bien entendu* of all mankind, I suppose, that was, or is, or is to come, for Inequality! I would only remind him that early humanity lived for ages under conditions of primitive communism without experiencing, so far as we can see, any of that yearning for that inequality which seems to be a

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“ground principle” in the “human nature” postulated by Dr Crozier’s psychology. The ideal indicated by the latter is that of human life as based universally upon the gambling principle, though the intensive application of the principle may be subjected to some sort of quantitative regulation. Now, I am no sympathiser with the Nonconformist conscience or with its ascetic theory of morals, and in consequence I have not the smallest objection to gambling as a pastime, any more than to any other pastime not involving cruelty, and pursued with reasonable moderation. I have no sympathy with the hypocrisy which persecutes gamblers for amusement and suppresses games of chance, while tolerating and approving the gigantic system of gambling involved in modern business life. But it is precisely this principle of gambling which the present organisation of Society involves *as an essential element* that Dr Crozier would apparently consecrate as being proper to human nature for all time. Need I remind the reader that it is this very condition out of which all the ethical elements of our time, some of them not even avowedly Socialistic, are professedly yearning to raise humanity. And yet this same appears to Dr Crozier, who would probably, like a good Christian gentleman, regard roulette or baccarat as very wicked and demoralising, as a source of moral strength and joy in life. To base the whole principle of

human life, with all the serious issues it involves, on chance *plus* cunning is as it should be; to speculate, as an occasional pastime, a few shillings "upon the hazard of a die" is a terrible evil to be promptly dealt with by drastic legislation. While it is wicked to play a game of chance as an occasional episode in life, it is right to treat life itself as a game (Dr Crozier himself calls it the "game of life"), so at least says the *bourgeois* moralist of the Nonconformist persuasion.

Not only does Dr Crozier, like many of his predecessors in the task of finding fault with Socialism, read present conditions into a Socialist society, but he sets himself to depict certain evils which are the conspicuous and inevitable results of present-day competitive society—the dead-level of sordidness, the "scraping together the few odd shillings," broken-up family life, etc.—and then, if he will pardon me for saying so, by an astounding piece of controversial "bluff," attempts to saddle them on to a Socialist Society of his own imagining.

But if we examine the main drift of Dr Crozier's dread of what he terms the "dead-level of economic equality," we shall find that this consists not so much in the fear lest he himself should not get enough of the good things of this life, as in the dislike of the "other fellow" having the same advantages with regard to them as himself. That the fecundity of economic production under Social-

ism cannot fail to provide, not merely a sufficiency but an abundance for each and all, I have already pointed out. But this, I fear, would not satisfy some of the critics of Socialism, Dr Crozier among them. It matters not that they might have within their reach enough to satisfy all their reasonable requirements; they would not be happy, or at least they think they would not, without the knowledge that others were worse off than themselves, without the consciousness that others were suffering from the want of those things which subserved their own necessities and happiness in life. In a word, if we may believe their own report about themselves, their objection to Socialism rests upon the most brutal and unqualified form of egoism, on the confession that complete self-satisfaction is impossible unless accompanied by a sense of economic inequality, *i.e.* of the suffering of others. Now this strikes me as about the rawest and crudest exemplification of that so often misapplied concept—selfishness—which it would be possible to imagine. In fact, so crass in their brutality do the words of these critics strike me that I am loath to “believe their own report” about themselves, and am inclined to take their protests in the light of a dialectical device to cover up the hollowness of their case. However this may be, I have reasons to hope that the views in this sense expressed by them would not be openly admitted by

any considerable section of "human nature" even as it is at present, and would certainly not appeal to the "under dog," to wit, the proletarian masses.

Once again let me point out that the inequality and the scramble for wealth which is the essence of competitive conditions, so far from furnishing an incentive to the best human endeavour, is wholly and solely productive of demoralised and bad work. To place even genius in the position to give the world of its best, the present accursed incentive of immoderate material gain must be removed. This it is which is the breeding-ground of all that is trashy and worthless in literature, in music, in the plastic arts, and in all the higher departments of human activity. The man who has something to give the world worth having feels he must give it even though he suffer materially the while. The charlatan who has nothing of worth to give, and even the genius who has yielded to the temptation to sell his birthright for the economic mess of pottage by pandering to passing and usually depraved public taste, work naught but corruption and degradation. In the case of the latter, indeed, mankind is a positive loser, since genius is perverted by the prospect of material gain from its true function to the production of trash.

Of course, we are treated in this latest attack on Socialism to suggestions as to the tyranny and coercion the "Socialist State" would exercise over

the individual. Of the tyranny exercised to-day by the possessors of capital over the non-possessing classes, nothing is said. The tyranny imposed by the directive power of a Socialist Society would at most amount to the obligation of every average man to contribute a limited portion of his time to the carrying on in some form or shape of the necessary work of the world, by which a true liberty would be ensured to all. Socialism means *the administration of things*, in contradistinction to our present civilisation, which means *the coercion of men*. The present state implies coercion in the interests, direct or indirect, of private property, all round.

The ethical basis, which is the motive-power of the movement for economical and political reconstruction, may be found in the motto of the old revolutionaries of the eighteenth century—"Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." It is, however, pregnant with a new content. The sense in which the earlier revolutionary took it has proved itself illusory, but its ethical significance none the less remains.

The conditions of Capitalism themselves suffice to do the coercion in the economic sphere, but there are other forms of coercion of men in what Mill called "self-regarding actions," which the State still exercises directly. It coerces men, in many cases by military service, to fight its battles with other States. This, again, is the

result of the desire of each national State-system to get the better of its neighbour, and of them all to enslave and plunder the savage and barbaric peoples of the earth in the pursuit of new commercial outlets and of fresh fields for the capitalistic exploitation of natural resources. Modern wars invariably take their origin in commercial or colonial rivalry.

Again, in the purely personal relation of marriage, the existing State claims rights over the individual. Yet again, in the matter of religion it is, as a rule, bound up with, and favours some form of the dogmatic Christian creed, which implies the coercion in various ways of the individual intelligence. Now Socialism stands for liberty in all these things. It stands for equal rights for all nationalities, and for the freedom of weak and backward peoples to pursue their own life and to develop in their own way uncoerced from without. It would free the individual from the obligation to take up arms in defence of the capitalist interests of the class-State to which he happens to belong. With the sentiment of patriotism or its opposite as a mere private emotion it has nothing to do. It would free marriage from coercive laws having their origin in property relations or in superstitious beliefs, while in no way dogmatising on the form which the institution of marriage and the family will take in the future

or as to what is the best form. In this respect Socialism is no more opposed, as is sometimes represented, to the principle of life-long monogamy than it is to less stringent forms of the sexual relation. What it is opposed to is *coercion*, either by law or public opinion, of the individual in such a self-regarding matter. The question of children rests, of course, on a different basis, and ought to be dealt with separately.

Similarly with theological beliefs and religious cults. Socialism claims a secular and scientifically up-to-date education for every child and young person. It would not prevent any citizen from amusing himself with, or persuading himself he believes in, Christian theology, Buddhist theosophy, or any other theory concerning the supernatural. But a Socialist polity, as such, would undoubtedly maintain a rigidly secular attitude, showing no favour or affection for priestcraft, or for dogma claiming supernatural sanctions, in any of its forms.

In conclusion, I think I have said enough to indicate the Socialist's grounds for believing that under Socialism for the first time in history the individual will have the opportunity of real freedom, of real self-development, an opportunity he can never possess under the dead level of sordid struggle which characterises the Capitalist society in which we live.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE PROBLEM OF MODERN FEMINISM

WE may trace the origin of modern Feminism in a fairly continuous line back to the eighteenth century—to protagonists in revolutionary and pre-revolutionary literature—notably to Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin. From that time onward the Feminist question has always been present, though it only became prominent during the second half of the nineteenth century.

It was about the end of the sixties that the Woman's Suffrage plank first made its appearance in the modern Socialist movement, in the original International at the instance of Michael Bakounin and his followers, and was one of the few proposals emanating from that quarter that was accepted by the Marx party. But for a long time the question remained in the background, being hardly referred to at all in the earlier programmes of the Continental parties. In fact, in the German party the "Woman Question," as apart from the general Social question, first received serious attention in

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1883 in Bebel's book, the first edition of which was issued under the title of *Woman in the Past, Present, and Future*, and contained very much Woman and very little Socialism. (In the later editions, under the title *Woman and Socialism*, it is only fair to say, the proportions have been altered.) In this work, Bebel, who virtually admits in his preface that the bulk of the party at that time was against him, maintained the dogma of the equal capacity of woman with man, with its corollary, the right of women to occupy all positions and exercise all functions hitherto controlled by men. In France, Lafargue was active on the Feminist side during the early eighties.

Since then the Feminist dogma has found much favour with Socialists everywhere, and the demand for Female Suffrage has been officially embodied among the planks in the immediate political platform of the Social Democratic party. At the same time, it has been sought to exercise a pressure within the party to prevent dissentient Social Democrats from expressing an adverse opinion.

Time was when Manhood Suffrage was the cry of all Democrats, and there are, doubtless, plenty of Social Democrats to-day who would be glad enough, if they did but dare, to take their stand on the old Suffrage platform, which was good enough for Chartists and earlier Socialists.

The fact is, of course, this sex question cuts athwart other issues. Hence it is that the conventional bourgeois, unwilling as he is to admit the sins of his class towards the proletariat, is often perfectly ready to smite his manly breast and deplore the assumed harshness of his own to the opposite sex. There is no logical reason for Socialism specially championing the position of modern Feminism. That Socialism must bring about changes in the position of women may be allowed, but the special direction of these changes must be the coefficient of the permanent physiological structure and functions of the female sex, with the new economic conditions and the resultant new social forces. To dogmatise on the future as to the precise nature of these changes at the present stage is eminently unscientific.

Let us take the practical issue of the Suffrage. People commonly talk as if the franchise was an end in itself rather than what it is, simply a means to other ends. But Feminists and Suffragists know very well for what purpose they want the franchise. They intend to use their new weapon to give a further edge to what may be termed anti-man legislation. They rightly think that this class of law-making which they have been so successful in promoting indirectly for a generation past, they will in future, with the leverage of the vote, be able to promote directly with a still greater success.

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This is what lies behind all protestations of sex equality and the like. The equality desired is the species of equality the chief characteristic of which is to be "all on one side."

At the same time, some of the arguments adduced against Female Suffrage do not strike me in themselves as altogether conclusive. For example, it cannot be denied that the argument as to the sphere of women being the home, though undoubtedly true in the past, and though containing more truth to-day than the average Feminist would admit, has undoubtedly lost some of its force owing to the changed economic conditions of the present time. Then, again, I have heard it argued that contact with the rough and tumble of political life, with its intrigue, ambitions, sordid rivalries, etc., would defile the pure spirit of womanhood. Well, here again I do not think the argument is altogether convincing, since the rabid Feminist might insist that the pet sex would, on the contrary, infuse an elevating spirit into public life, that a whiff of the breath of Womanhood (with a capital W) would act like magic in disinfecting political life and raising it to a uniform level of pure disinterested virtue. And although we may be personally quite convinced that such would not be the case, yet, seeing that the experiment has not yet been tried on any large scale or for any considerable length of time, it might not be easy

to prove our conviction to anyone choosing to affirm the contrary.

Now the foregoing and some other arguments are put forward, I think, by many men with the unconscious desire to avoid acknowledging the real ground of their objections to Female Suffrage. They don't like to state this ground straight out. Some, if hard pressed, will try to shuffle out of admitting it, perhaps even to themselves. But their secret conviction is that women, *as a sex*, are organically inferior to men, not only physically, but intellectually and morally as well, and hence not fit to be trusted *promiscuously* (*i.e.* barring exceptions) with political power. Now, no man likes to say this, because it sounds rude and arrogant to "the ladies," even though the evidence, physiological, psychological, historical, and common observational for his conviction, is conclusive for him. In my essay on "Female Suffrage and its Implications," I have briefly indicated some of the main heads of this evidence and do not propose to enter into it again here. But I must insist on the fact that for me (barring one other reason which, though decisive for the moment, is not of a fundamental nature, and which I shall refer to directly) there seems no logical ground for opposition to the granting of the franchise to women save the recognition of inferiority, at least, an inferiority *ad hoc*. If one acknowledges complete equality

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in capacity between men and women, the case for the Suffrage seems to me, in itself, unanswerable.

I have said in itself, since, as things are at present in this and most other countries, even if the capacity for political and administrative judgment were conceded, there is another ground on which, so long as it obtains, it would be just to refuse women the franchise. And this ground is the fact that women at present constitute an almost boundlessly privileged section of the community. A woman may, in the present day, do practically what she likes without fear of anything happening to her beyond a nominal punishment. The English marriage laws, with their right of the wife to maintenance, give her almost unlimited power to oppress her husband. (See a case reported in detail, with names and witnesses, etc., in *John Bull* for September 19, 1908.)

Not very long ago a case occurred in the north of England where a workman, out of employment, was about to be committed to prison at his wife's behest for omitting to pay her the weekly allowance ordered by the court. Exasperated, the poor fellow struck his tyrant a fatal blow—hanged! About the same time a wife, during an admittedly trifling tiff with her husband, stabbed him fatally with a hatpin—released on her recognisances. These two cases are typical. It is this practical immunity of women from all consequences for their

actions upon which the crew of Suffragists traded. Had they been liable to one quarter of the penalties men incur they would have "thought" a good many times before inciting to raid the House of Commons or to commit other breaches of the law. As it is, they knew the worst they had to fear was a short term of pampered imprisonment. Male Socialists have had to go to prison, not for trying to raid the House of Commons, but for merely breaking some local bye-law while maintaining the right of free speech.

Do not let us forget that the women who are loudest in bawling for the Suffrage do so on the ground that they are not sufficiently privileged already, and that, as we have said, to obtain the supremacy over men, the savagely vindictive laws against men and complete immunity for women they consider their due, they require the leverage the vote will give them. Under the circumstances one would like to examine with a very strong electric light the intellects of those persons who profess to believe in equality between the sexes, and who yet, as things are to-day, can advocate Female Suffrage. Their idea of equality is, I suppose, "All yours is mine and all mine's my own." No military service for women, and yet they shall dictate war or peace! No corporal punishment for them, and yet they shall decide on the maintenance of corporal punishment

for men in prisons, etc. ! No liability to maintain husband or children, and yet the right to decree laws relating to marriage ; and many more such anomalies. For—let us make no mistake—no Feminist has the smallest intention of abandoning any one of the existing privileges of women. On the contrary, the intention of increasing the power and privileges of the sex is expressly declared without any subterfuge. And be it remembered the “adult suffrage” so much advocated by Socialists means an excess of a million female over male votes so far as Great Britain is concerned.

Socialist bodies proclaim “social and economic equality between the sexes” as one of their aims. Now, as a “stepping stone” towards this end, I would suggest to the advocates of sex equality (from the standpoint of our present society), besides *equal wages for equal work*, which we are all able to agree to, (1) *obligation of wife to maintain herself, also her husband if sick, and to contribute something to the maintenance of the children of the marriage* ; and further (2) *equal punishment for equal crime as between men and women* ; and (3) *abolition of all laws (e.g. the law as regards libel and slander) favouring women at the expense of men* ; and (4) *the liability of women to all duties imposed on men*. I can imagine the sort of wry face the Feminists would make at the bare suggestion of these equitable demands. Otherwise, I

would suggest that wherever "social and economic equality" between the sexes is proposed a note should be added that (to borrow a phrase from the famous *Rule in Shelley's case*) the words be taken as "words of limitation," in short, that the term equality is to be understood in a non-natural sense as implying all the kicks for the brute man and all the halfpence for the angel woman. Otherwise unsophisticated comrades might be disposed to take it in a natural sense, which would involve a grievous misconception.

Now, speaking as a plain man, surely it would be unjust, quite apart from any question of intrinsic suitability, for women to possess the Suffrage until something like the conditions I have before formulated obtain. If others think that giving an already privileged order of human beings the franchise spells equality, I do not.

But supposing the present balance of inequality in favour of women were remedied, there would then remain solely the question of the average inferiority of women. Now here I must again point out that the exercise of the vote is mainly a means to an end—the progress and well-being of society. Hence, if women on the average show an inferiority all round to men, or even an inferiority in the power of practical and equitable judgment in public affairs, then there is no injustice in refusing them "in the bulk" the right of interfering

in these matters, where they are *ex hypothesi* less competent than men. Here we have to deal with a question of fact and evidence. For those who, like myself, regard the evidence for the inferiority as conclusive, there is no possible alternative to opposition to a disintegrative force such as can only be harmful to progress. To discuss the question as to the nature of the evidence would take us outside the immediate purpose of this chapter, but I deny that those to whom the evidence for incapacity appears conclusive can consistently be otherwise than opponents of Female Suffrage in all its forms. For to favour it in the teeth of such a conviction would mean sacrificing the interests of society to a barren abstraction, to wit, the abstract right to exercise a function whether fitted for it or not. And to this no one who really values progress ought surely to be prepared to consent.

The Feminism of modern public opinion, which is reflected in recent statutes and judicial decisions and in the administration of law generally, has been very persistently and very subtly fostered for more than a generation past. The Feminist attitude of public opinion has been sedulously cultivated not only by journalism but by modern literature and art, especially such as is of a popular character. The aim has been to portray Man as an ignoble, mean creature, as a foil to the courage, resource, and gentle virtues of Woman. Who has not seen

a well-known picture representing the 'Thames Embankment at night, and the "unfortunate," possessed of an improbably angelic face, being taken from the river, with the gentleman and lady in evening dress, who have just got out of the cab, in the foreground, the gentleman with ostentatious callousness—brute that he is!—turning away and lighting a cigarette, and the lady—gentle creature!—bending over the dripping form and throwing up her arms in sympathetic horror? It is by claptrap of this sort, both literary and artistic, that sentimental Feminism is both evoked and nourished. Some time ago I received a provincial Socialist paper (*I.L.P.*) which contained a *feuilleton* consisting of the story of a woman who had killed her baby and died after a few weeks in prison—the moral being apparently the monstrous wickedness of imprisoning such women at all, rather than rewarding them with a comfortable pension for life. There are well-known writers I could name who seem to take peculiar pleasure in painting their own sex in an abject light by way of pandering to current Feminist prejudices.

The result of all this nurture of the public mind in Feminist sentiment is everywhere noticeable. An influential section of public opinion has come to regard it as axiomatic that women are capable of everything of which men are capable, and therefore they ought to have full responsibility in all

honourable and lucrative functions and callings. There is only one thing for which unlimited allowance ought to be made on the ground of their womanly inferiority, otherwise so strenuously denied, and that is their own criminal or tortuous acts! In a word, they are not to be held responsible, in the sense that men are, for their own actions when these entail unpleasant consequences for themselves. On the contrary, the obloquy and, where possible, the penalty for the wrongdoing is to be shifted on to the nearest wretched man with whom they have consorted. I cannot quote unlimited cases, but, by way of illustration, I will mention two that occur to me at the moment of writing.

A few years ago a woman deliberately shot at and wounded a solicitor (a married man) with whom she had had relations. The act was so premeditated that it came out in evidence she had been practising shooting with the revolver for days beforehand. There was, moreover, no question of a child in the case, and not even one of financial embarrassment, as she was in receipt of a quarterly allowance under a trust. Hence the case presented itself as a cold-blooded one of attempted murder without a single circumstance of extenuation. The woman was sentenced to the very lenient penalty of seven years' penal servitude. (Had a man attempted to murder in this way a

jilting mistress he would have received, without doubt, twenty years at least, if not a life sentence.) Now it seems incredible, but it is a fact, that a campaign was immediately started throughout the whole of the press, largely by "advanced" women and male Feminists, in favour of this dastardly female criminal, who only fell short of being a murderess by accident! The second case is that of Daisy Lord three or four years ago. To read the gush on that occasion one might have thought that the murder of new-born children represented the highest ideal of motherhood. This Daisy Lord became for the nonce a kind of pinchbeck Madonna in the eyes of the Feminist public. Such women as the above ought, of course, to have equal voting rights with men, but equal consequences for their actions—oh dear, no! If there is one demand which is popular with the Feminists, it is for raising the age of consent from sixteen to eighteen or twenty-one years, at which latter age, presumably, the right to the Franchise, if conceded, would come into operation. They are therefore evidently of opinion that the woman who has only just ceased to need the protection of the law in the control of her own body becomes immediately fully qualified to have a voice in the management of public affairs! The extent to which Feminist sentiment can fling justice to the winds in these days is shown by the savage demand, in

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cases of infant murder, for vicarious vengeance on one who, as regards the offence in question, is wholly innocent—to wit, on that vile and obnoxious creature, “the man.”

The way in which the modern Feminist is dead to every sense of equity in the relations of the sexes as regards elementary fairness to the man’s side of the sexual equation, is illustrated by such documents as Lady Maclaren’s “Woman’s Charter.” One of the demands it contains is that “no married woman should be bound to accept a foreign domicile.” This is delightful! A poor man cannot get work in this country and has to take a position abroad. At her sweet whim his wife may live apart from him as a single woman and compel him to keep her all the same! Here we have a splendid example of “woman’s right” to treat man as a slave! Suggestions of this sort, be it remembered, come from those who indignantly repudiate any desire for female privilege.

As regards this point of the protestations of zeal for equality between the sexes, when specially challenged, I would suggest to the Feminist advocate, male or female, that it would not be amiss if this zeal for sex equality ceased to assume the form of concocting bogus grievances on the woman’s side, and occasionally, at least, took shape in protests against modern one-sided sex legislation, and the favouritism uniformly shown to women

in the courts, civil and criminal. To this might be added a self-denying ordinance by which advanced ladies should agitate for the abolition of reserved seats for "ladies only" in the British Museum reading room, reserved compartments in railway carriages, etc. The New York elevated railway has, I read, begun to reserve whole carriages for women, from which men are rigidly excluded, no matter how full the train may be otherwise. For be it remembered that though all men are forbidden access to female reserves, women in these cases, as a rule, have the run of all available space, there being usually no male reserves. Were they to act thus, the advocates of Feminism would at least give an earnest of their sincerity in the matter of sex equality, which at present assumes such a questionable shape in their agitation and discourses.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE PROBLEM OF SEX AND SENTIMENT

WE are every day reminded of the vitality of survivals in habits of thought no less than in ways of life. With the insidiousness of black beetles in an old house they return again and again to the charge after you think you have finally extirpated them. What I have elsewhere termed the "ethics of introspection" as opposed to the ethics of social utility seems to have a most astonishing vitality. Now the "ethic of introspection" finds its sanction in some traditional sentiment, or mayhap in some catch phrase or abstract formula, which has probably had a meaning once, but which has degenerated into a "canting motto." The ethic of social utility, on the other hand, finds its sanction solely in the definite and obvious demands of the welfare of the social body, and recognises the greatest possible free play of the individual in all matters not directly conflicting with social interests as a whole. The object of the introspective ethics is to erect asceticism into a standard of conduct.

Though it will equally attack any of the wants of the flesh, its special and favourite hunting-ground has always been the sexual impulse. Here it takes the most specious forms calculated to deceive the very elect. We must not, however, be led astray by the sweet reasonableness it may assume. Let us remember that we have to do with a Melusina—that the fair-looking exterior is but a metamorphosed serpent—the old serpent, asceticism, the subtle enemy of human rights, father of hypocrisy, and of every violation of nature—the accursed thing which to recognise should be to strike down.

Now the touchstone of the ethics of Socialism is that the “ought,” though necessarily concerned with  *motive* , as opposed to mere outward act, is none the less only concerned with it in so far as its object is definitely  *social*  and not where its subject matter merely concerns individual taste. The latter belongs not to ethics, but to æsthetics, two standpoints many persons seem to confound.

Believers in the old theological sanctions have no difficulty in finding justification for asceticism. Those, however, who, having abandoned the old ethics of supernaturalism, still possess a hankering after an ascetic ideal, are driven to forage about for a new justification which has a semblance of being based on rational considerations. I say a semblance, since at bottom these considerations

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are not one whit more rational than the old ones. Thus some years ago a pseudonymous writer put forward the thesis that the sexual act was “wrong,” “degrading,” “a prostitution of woman,” and I do not know what all else, when not followed—or at least not engaged in with the object of being followed—by offspring! Now if he had been in a position to inform us that God Almighty, Jesus Christ, the Holy Virgin, the angel Gabriel, or other personages we in divers times and places have been taught to love and reverence, had miraculously revealed this ethical dogma to him, his position would at least have been intelligible. He made no pretensions of this sort, however, so what remained was this pseudonymous gentleman’s assurance—his *ipse dixit*—that it was so “even as he had said.” I have quoted the above instance not on account of its intrinsic importance, but as an extreme example of the Introspective Ethics as applied to sexual matters. There is a mass of writing and thinking to be found not so logical and hence so obvious in its absurdity as the case quoted, but all tending in the same direction.

Another example of the attempt to smuggle in asceticism under cover of lofty ideals is furnished by a writer on the subject of sexual ethics in a Socialist periodical, also of some few years back. This writer, after giving a sufficiently good general

sketch of the development of the sexual instinct, concludes with the thesis that in its highest development in man it is bound up with a "complexity of psychological states which is covered by the term *love*." This is all right. But now comes the extraordinary *non-sequitur* of the article. Obviously, no one objects to the high idyllic sentiment which, from the context, is what the writer evidently understands by the "complexity of states" termed *love*. This may always remain the highest ideal of sex relationship. And I have yet to learn of any recent development of morality which, as the writer alleges, "bids us divest ourselves of this most important element of our spiritual nature." If there be such, it must be so rare and sporadic a development of "degeneracy" as not to be worth serious consideration.

But here, as just said, comes in the extraordinary logical gymnastic of our writer. From the above unimpeachable propositions, to which we can all subscribe, he draws the astounding conclusion that love (in his sense) "*alone can supply the necessary ethical sanction*," etc., for sexual connection. Now, how by any ordinary rational method he has succeeded in reaching this result, I submit, is enough to puzzle the celebrated lawyer of Philadelphia. I for one, when I read this, was fain driven to the hypothesis that he had been interviewing the angel Gabriel or some other distinguished character

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from above, as to the sexually right and wrong. The sexual act viewed on mundane principles, like any other animal function, *per se* belongs to the domain of *æsthetics*, not of *ethics* at all. In order to be brought within the sphere of ethics it must be connected in some way with a distinct social relation outside the persons immediately concerned, otherwise it is, what Mill would have called, "a self-regarding action." We all admit that the idyllic-love sexual relation is the most beautiful. But according to the writer's own showing there are a number of persons who, from temperament or circumstances, are condemned to remain outside it. All these poor creatures whose "complexity of states of the psychological order . . . covered by the term love," do not reach the prescribed sixth-form standard with respect to each other, are to be sent away howling into the wilderness. This is clear since, in spite of his talk about "love in its manifold manifestations," our moralist rules out mutual consent, which to most of us would cover one of the most common "manifestations" of love. What he wants is, clearly, love *à la* Senta and the Flying Dutchman—the *ich bin die dich durch ihre Heil erlöse* sort of thing. Now I should much like to know the percentage of married couples in England who, supposing "the great white throne" were set, the books were opened, and the writer in question acting as heavenly attorney-general,

would not quail before his searching eye as he rose to indict their morality on the principles of his "ethics of sexual relationship."

No one is more alive than myself to the fact that the idyllic love of the poets exists. But it is an exception, rather than the rule, and will, so far as we can see, remain so for a very long time to come. To require of a man, to whom circumstances have not granted this idyllic love, sexual abstention, is about as reasonable as to require him to stop breathing in the courts and alleys of Whitechapel, where he cannot obtain good air, or to tell him that since he cannot get the highest class of French cookery, his "clear line of conduct" ethically is to abstain from eating altogether. For even in the affairs of the stomach there is a higher and a lower, just as in those of other organs. And more betoken this higher and lower has its influence on character. Feeding on "cagmag," London "fried fish," or such-like abominations, under the filthy conditions that prevail, future ages will probably recognise to have defiled the men of to-day as much as what is deemed the most degraded form of sexual indulgence has ever done. The influence of food and drink (apart, of course, from the well-worn subject of excess in alcohol) has been far too much neglected as a factor in the making or marring of character. There is a sentiment in cookery as well

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as in love. If my analogy be objected to on the ground that while we cannot live without food we can without sexual satisfaction, I would point out that this is only relatively true, since, as the anchorites and the Hindoo Yogis have taught us, we can do with a very exiguous minimum of food, and, moreover, I have never heard of even partial starvation being advocated by the modern Puritan as sexual abstinence has been and is advocated by the same individual. Again, when it is said we can live without sexual satisfaction, that is also only true very relatively. There are exceptions, I am aware, but for the average man sexual satisfaction is just as essential to a *healthy life, i.e.* to the *mens sana in corpore sano*, as food is to bare existence. "Continence" is, for the average man, I do not hesitate to say unconditionally, to be deprecated as directly producing an uncleanly habit of body, usually accompanied by an uncleanly habit of mind, if nothing worse. That the latter is the case has been proved *ad nauseam* by the history of religious movements. "Continence" may be conducive to a "virtuously" ascetic life, but it certainly does not conduce to a socially ethical life (at least for the vast majority of men). Hence, I can only again repeat that if you choose to seek for an immediate ethical bearing in the sexual act, you must find it in the duty of a man to be natural (for the sake of his health and usefulness in society),

and natural in the obvious sense and meaning of the word of living according to his nature.

Our pure and lofty moralist wants to be an angel and with the angels sing. That is all right. But then he should not wish to force his neighbours to be angels also, and to make them sing, too, whether they want to or not. The illogical attempt to take back under the name of *duty* what he has conceded under the name of *right* will not help him, since no clear ethical thinker will admit that it can be a "duty" to forego any "right," *i.e. as a matter of principle*. (There may be, of course, special occasions on which, for exceptional and clearly defined reasons, it may be a duty to forego for the moment the particular exercise of a right, but never to surrender the right itself as such.) No, no, my worthy friend, the attempt to force the angelic wings on unwilling recipients has been tried too long and too often throughout history, and has uniformly resulted in failure!

Asceticism (*i.e.* a false introspective view of duty) has invariably proved the parent of hypocrisy and corruption. Socialistic morality must once for all break with it. Our watchword must be, "Let us be natural!" If we are destined to become angels, the wings will grow in their own good time. Surely ever so small a growth of true and genuine angel's wing is of more worth than any amount of the great flapping stage-property wing with which

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Asceticism would adorn us. Applying what is here said to sexual ethics, what results do we obtain? Clearly these: (1) Every human being has a complete ethical right to the physical exercise of his or her sexual instincts apart from anything else whatever. This moral right is, *per se*, "full, round, and orbicular." (2) It is also the *duty* of every human being to exercise this faculty in proportion to the needs of his or her physical constitution, in order to ensure a healthiness of mind and body. (3) The ideal of sexual exercise may be that it take place under the conditions of the love of the idyllic poet. But the most usual condition, and for most men and women a fairly satisfactory one, is what the writer terms "mutual consent" (be the marriage "free" or "legal"), which may also develop into the idyllic love in time, or, least-ways, into a very good imitation of it. The third condition mentioned by the writer—prostitution—must be regarded as a *pis aller* of capitalistic society, a deplorable necessity sometimes within the limits of that society, but in all cases the most undesirable form of sexual relation—though, perhaps, intrinsically not worse than the marriage for money.

It is necessary to come back from heaven to earth in sexual matters, to recognise that the "physical basis" has its own concrete rights apart from aught else. By all means seek the highest form of sexual relationship, but let us recognise

the ethical right of every man—that he is not immoral when, if he *cannot* have what he likes in this connection, he makes himself content with what he has.

As to the “pure-minded man and woman” (a cold-blooded human entity unfortunately oftentimes apt to degenerate into the insufferable prig), he or she has a good deal to learn, and will have to be educated. First of all, he or she will have to be taught to clear his or her mind of cant, sexual as well as other, and to recognise differences of constitution as severally having their own justification. He or she will further have to be taught that it is as wrong to hate those who differ from us sexually as those who differ from us in other matters. Let me adjure our aspiring moralist to take in hand the pure-minded man and woman of his acquaintanceship lest a worse thing happen! For if “the pure-minded man and woman” be allowed to rampage too much in their wild state, the average sexually-minded man and woman may eventually rise in riotous revolt, calling for three cheers for the “old Adam and the old Eve”—and let him think what a shocking thing that would be!

In the foregoing paragraphs I have dealt with an extreme expression of a form of introspective ethics which still lurks consciously or unconsciously in a good many minds and still colours the views of many persons on the subject of the ethical sanction

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of sex. Other aspects of the problem are here left untouched. I have purposely, in the foregoing, left the question of offspring on one side, in itself, undoubtedly, an ethical problem of deep import, and this for the simple reason that I hold it to be, *per se*, distinct from the problem of sexual conduct considered as such. There exists a vast mass of sexual intercourse into which the question of offspring does not enter at all. The two problems, (1) love and sexual intercourse, *per se*, and (2) the procreation of children, should be clearly distinguished and threshed out apart from one another. After having done this thoroughly, we shall be in a position to consider clearly their *mutual* bearings. This we certainly are not when we incontinently mix up these two perfectly distinct aspects of the great problem of sex with one another, thereby hopelessly confusing the issues involved. The first is, *per se*, an æsthetic and personal self-regarding question; the second is pre-eminently an ethical and social question. The recognition of this distinction is for me the primary condition for adequate discussion of the subject. The sexual relation, as such, is a thing of purely personal taste. This is, as yet, not fully recognised. Time was when the notion of toleration in religious belief was unknown, when not merely Catholics but every Protestant sectary thought of nothing else than to impose his own set of dogmas and his

own theory of church organisation *vi et armis* on the rest of the world. Then came the epoch when the doctrine of toleration appeared, and finally gave rise to a mutual resolve that, while each sectary might maintain the belief in the superiority of his own position, it should be regarded as "bad form" to "damn" his neighbour for thinking otherwise—in a word, when the attempt to obtain religious uniformity was abandoned. The world has yet to learn toleration in sexual matters; it has yet to learn that various temperaments must have a latitude of outlook in these things, that, however estimable the current sexual theory of Christendom may be, mechanical monogamy must be definitely abandoned, and freedom of choice, within at least certain limits, granted as just and righteous. The endeavour to enforce sexual uniformity has hitherto been productive of nothing but human misery, and has proved the seed-ground of the worst form of hypocrisy, a hypocrisy which has helped to sap the moral fibre of one generation after another. Whatever else may be *natural*, that is certainly *unnatural*, and not merely *unnatural*, but also in the highest degree *immoral*. These are thy fruits, oh, misnamed "purity"! When, I ask, will society learn the lesson of toleration in sexual matters as it has even now, as compared with past ages, learnt it as regards intellectual matters?

## CHAPTER X

### THE PROBLEM OF ALCOHOL

THE question of the use and abuse of alcohol is one of those questions of the detail of social life in which fanaticism seems to me eminently out of place, and its presence to indicate the degeneration of legitimate opinion or conviction into a fad. By a "fad" (or a "crank"), as I think I have elsewhere explained, I do not mean an opinion (or the champion of an opinion), which I hold to be erroneous in itself, but rather an opinion, whether true or false, championed in a manner showing the lack of all sense of proportion as to its relative importance.

As regards the Alcohol Problem, I must plead guilty to adopting the tame and unheroic attitude of, while condemning the abuse, defending the use of alcohol, an attitude which, if tame and unheroic, strikes me as the only true and sane position. Alcohol may be a poison, but, somehow or other, mankind, as a whole, has got along well with it from prehistoric times up to the rise of modern capitalism, before which time distilled, as dis-

tinguished from naturally fermented liquors, were almost unknown. The rise of the later phases of capitalism and the spread of dram-drinking are practically synchronous. Not that I am prepared unconditionally to condemn the use of distilled forms of alcohol, under favourable circumstances and with due moderation. It is necessary to point out, however, that there is good evidence that a not inconsiderable difference obtains between the physical effects of these two classes of alcoholic liquors, and therefore it is essential to distinguish rather more carefully than do some of our teetotal friends between them in different cases. Again, no teetotal advocate that I have ever heard of has taken the trouble to discriminate to any extent worth speaking of between the action of *pure* alcoholic drinks of all classes and that of the adulterated products of latter-day unscrupulous capitalism. A rich man with his well-stocked cellar may indulge with impunity in a three or more times greater amount of alcohol than his poorer neighbour, who is ruining his constitution with the vile decoctions available at public-house bars. Even so, alcohol and its adulterations are by no means the only, or perhaps not even the worst poisons, eatable or drinkable, which the proletarian is forced to consume under present conditions. To my thinking the teetotal argument is completely vitiated by the indiscriminating and utterly unproven

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attribution to alcohol of all the bodily ills that modern flesh is heir to, and through the almost complete ignoring of the considerations just referred to.

My own "lay" observation leads me to the conclusions that while (1) there is a limit for every man beyond which he cannot continue imbibing alcohol without deleterious effects, (2) that this limit is subject to such wide individual variation that no hard and fast rule can be usefully formulated concerning it. Each man must find this out for himself by personal experience of the effects of alcohol on his own constitution. His duty is, of course, to see to it that he does not habitually exceed this limit, it being a social duty not only to avoid making a nuisance of himself to others, as regular "boozers" do, but in addition to maintain himself in his normal standard of efficiency. In my own case I have been commonly in the company of men who can take, without doing themselves any noticeable harm, three or four times the amount of alcohol that I can. These men, I consider, have a right, therefore, to indulge in this larger quantity, whereas it might well be deemed reprehensible on my part to follow their example.

Now, as to the theory of the absolutely poisonous nature of alcohol on which depends the present anti-alcoholic mania among doctors and others—we must not forget that the present is the day of the discovery of "death in the pot" everywhere.

Time was when tea, as "the cup that cheers but not inebriates," was held to be the most harmless of beverages, and indeed was often enough played off against alcohol as the sober poor man's drink. Now tea is alleged by some of the self-same eminent authorities who condemn alcohol to be almost, if not quite, as deadly, while, in its very nature, more insidious. Some time ago a journal was published called *Rational Food*, the chief function of which was to demonstrate the fatal effects on the health of bread and potatoes! Many of us will recollect some years ago an eminent surgeon's list of foods productive of appendicitis, which included, if I remember rightly, almost every article of diet with the exception of toast and water. We all know that to the vegetarian every form of flesh food is a highly baneful toxic in its physiological effect, and unsuited to the human constitution. If we combine the teachings of all the eminent authorities on the subject of meat and drinks, we shall find ourselves reduced in time to the nutriment afforded by the dead bodies of microbes contained in well-cooked London water, with, say, an occasional bite of digestive biscuit to add solidity.

The allegation that alcohol, *as such*, and in however small quantities, is a poison, is usually supported by two sets of arguments: firstly, the chemico-physiological argument, and, secondly, the statistical. As regards the former, a careful read-

ing of the evidence fails to disclose to me any proof of toxic effects, save when alcohol is taken to excess. This excess, I readily admit, may obtain in some constitutions with an exceedingly small quantity of alcohol. On the other hand, there are plenty of constitutions where the evidences of toxic effect, and hence of excess, are only shown after the consumption of a relatively large amount. Of course we know that there are universally admitted poisons (*e.g.* arsenic) which may be taken without ill effects in small or graduated doses. This, therefore, does not prove that alcohol is not a poison. But all I can say is, that if alcohol is to be reckoned a poison, the range within which it may be taken with impunity is so immensely greater than in the case of the more undoubted poisons as, for all practical purposes, to take it out of the category of true poisons altogether.

The argument from statistics, in most questions an unreliable one, is especially so in the present. As an illustration of this I may quote some of the most recent figures on the subject. A few years ago some elaborate statistics furnished, if I mistake not, originally by Sir Albert Rollit, on the subject of drink and longevity were given in the daily press. Now mark the way in which the published report was put together so as to produce the effect desired. The accuracy of the figures themselves I am not in a position either to impugn or to corro-

borate. But the arrangement of the report is truly significant of the manner in which figures, let them be the most accurate in themselves, can, by a stroke of the pen, be made to prove just what is wanted.

As we all know, the "business end" of the present agitation is directed, not against drunkenness, but against moderate drinking. Accordingly we find that the author of the report referred to divides the population into three classes—total abstainers, moderate drinkers, and publicans. On this basis of the report he readily succeeds in proving that "publicans" have the shortest lives, "moderate drinkers" the next, and "total abstainers" the longest.

Now, it is obvious that publicans, as being a class specially liable to temptation, will be likely to contain a large percentage of excessive drinkers to the extent of ruining their health. We are not surprised, therefore, to find that publicans show up unfavourably in this respect as against total abstainers. It is in the second category that the tricky nature of the arrangement comes out. We need only note that men are not to be exhaustively divided in potatorial matters into publicans, moderate drinkers, and total abstainers. There are, on the contrary, a number of extremely immoderate drinkers who are not publicans by trade, any more than they are total abstainers by practice. Now, on this division, where do *they* come in?

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Obviously they are included under the second, vague and elastic, heading of "moderate drinkers." In this way the second division, that of the "moderate drinkers," swelled by all the non-publican drunkards and semi-drunkards, can, of course, easily be shown to present a higher death-rate, and a shorter average life, than that of the "total abstainers." "That's the way it's done," and moderate drinking sought to be brought into disrepute.

On the other hand, was it not the then Sir Walter Foster who showed some time ago that the really moderate drinker, who carefully kept within the drinking capacities of his constitution, had a longer average life, not merely than the drunkard, but also than the total abstainer? Once more, the late Sir Wilfrid Lawson, a man for whose integrity in public affairs I always had a considerable respect, when on the anti-drink lay, was not always exempt from trickiness in argument. For instance, replying on one occasion to the allegation I have myself often heard medical men make to the effect that more persons kill themselves through over-eating than through over-drinking, Sir Wilfrid Lawson confined himself to making fun of the paucity of cases in which death is certifiable as being directly due to over-eating, omitting, of course, the thousands of cases in which the constitution is weakened and life is

shortened by the habitual practice of guzzling two or three heavy meals a day. What would Sir Wilfrid have thought of a champion, say, of the Licensed Victuallers' Association, who confined his argument to showing that the number of deaths directly certifiable as due to delirium tremens were comparatively few? Yet this is precisely the line he himself takes in endeavouring to minimise the evils of over-eating in order to maximise those of over-drinking.

In conclusion, one must not forget the rôle played in the temperance agitation by the morality of Puritanism and asceticism. This code of morals, belonging to what I have elsewhere termed "the introspective ethics," having survived its theological sanctions, seeks to buttress itself up with appeals to self-sacrifice for its own sake. As if there were not plenty of occasions for the exercise of a self-denial issuing in real good to humanity or in real immediate services to one's fellows, without seeking out opportunities for the display of objectless moral gymnastics such as delight the heart of the anchorite and the Puritan. Hence, not content in resting their case on the good or bad qualities of alcohol as proved by experience, the votaries of this school are apt, in default of better arguments, to appeal to the motives of Simon Stylites. As regards strengthening and disciplining the will power, surely to practise the

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requisite moderation in drinking is more conducive to this end than weakly yielding to the fear of excess by total abstention. Surely the man who can stop at the right moment shows more character than the man who, from fear of not being able to do so, gives up drinking altogether.

A similar line may be taken as regards the argument from *example* so often trotted out by teetotallers. The man, probably the average man, whose constitution can stand a certain amount of alcohol and whose will-power is sufficient to prevent him exceeding the limits in this respect, prescribed by his constitution, ought, it is said, to forego the use of alcohol for the sake of the example offered by his doing so to the exceptional man who drinks to excess. Preachers of this doctrine forget that to be consistent they must give it a wider application than the alcohol question. For instance, I am recovering from a broken leg, or suffering from phlebitis, varicose veins, or some other malady, for which exercise is a bad thing; my inclinations, nevertheless, are to move about and thereby injure myself. It follows, therefore, that my healthy but high-souled neighbours, those with whom I am thrown in contact, ought to forego all walking exercise in order to set an example to me not to injure myself by the same.

The fact is, of course, that this theory of the duty of a healthy man to forego something which his

constitution and temperament permit and, perhaps, even enjoin, as an example to some other weak or unhealthy person not to do the same things, because, in his case, the doing of them would be prejudicial to him, is fundamentally wrong. Not merely has no man a right to require another man to pander to his weakness, but the pandering itself is a direct encouragement to the cultivation of weakness of will in the individuals for whose sake this particular self-sacrifice of the healthy and normal man is made. The weak and abnormal man ought to learn to regulate himself off his own bat, so to say, without exacting from his neighbour a sacrifice on his behalf which is purely irrelevant and unnecessary. The high-souled Puritan who abstains from alcohol, not because it is bad for him or because he is likely to be tempted to take it to excess, but because some other person for whom it *is* bad, or who *may* be liable to drink too much, might conceivably be influenced by his example not to drink at all, is simply helping to promote moral backbonelessness in his weaker brother. A truly virile personal morality in alcohol, as in the other appetites, would strive for the maintenance of the *juste milieu*, as opposed alike to shrivelling in abstinence or wallowing in excess. What is really behind the abstinence movement is the old asceticism in a new guise, and for this reason, if for no other, it is to be distrusted.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE PROBLEM OF LIBERTY AND LIBEL.

WHAT is the *raison d'être* of the law of libel, civil and criminal, and in how far does such a law infringe the principle of the liberty of the Press? The main purpose of a libel suit is supposed to be the clearing of character of false and calumnious aspersion. The effect of the English law of libel in its administration as at present obtaining is to draw into the net of the libel action practically anything that may be said by way of criticism of any person or group of persons. In other words, the existing law of libel is a direct infringement of the principle of liberty of the Press. No distinction is made between a definite allegation, such as that A stole a £10 note from B's pocket in the year 1910, and the statement of the writer's opinion, as an opinion, without quoting facts in support of it, that A is not a trustworthy person. Now, the bringing to book of the maker of a false assertion of a damaging character, as in the first case supposed, may certainly justify the intervention of the

law without involving any real infringement of the liberty of the Press. The same remarks apply to the insinuations of a writer that he has something "up his sleeve," which, "if he listeth," etc. As much cannot be said for the second of the cases supposed. If liberty of the Press is not to be a meaningless phrase, any writer clearly ought to be allowed to publish an expression of opinion on any person, at least if he be in any capacity before the public. The opinion expressed may be utterly wrong, unjust, and unwarranted, but that ought not to hinder the absolute right of the holder of such opinion to give expression to it. If it is wrong, the remedy for this wrong lies with public opinion. People of ordinary intelligence will not accept an opinion of this sort without evidence. And in so far as this elementary principle of justice and fair play is observed, no harm can come from the expression of any opinion as such, however unjustified it may be. So much for the case of an injurious opinion destitute of all foundation whatever.

But in nine cases out of ten a published opinion of this nature is not entirely destitute of foundation. Its justification may have varying degrees of completeness, from a mere rebuttable suspicion to something like moral certainty. Yet, however great may be the grounds of justification of the opinion expressed, this does not shield a writer

expressing such opinion from the terrors of the law of libel. A distinction which is obviously fair is never drawn between the degree of evidence justificatory of the expression of an adverse opinion, direct or indirect, regarding a person, and the evidence that ought to be required before a prisoner in the dock is convicted of an offence. It is a very different thing to publicly express an adverse opinion concerning a man, and to send him to gaol. In the latter case it is undoubtedly right to exact the most rigidly clinching evidence before conviction. In the former case a very much lower degree of probability ought to justify.

As regards the existing law of libel and the way it is administered, there is no doubt whatever that it acts as a powerful weapon for the shielding and aggrandisement of rogues. Cases are known of doubtful characters who have made a good living out of libel actions. Any published statement not laudatory of the subject of it is nowadays adequate ground for taking proceedings for libel. The matter, from the point of view alike of the liberty of the Press and from what is known as the "public interest," is getting serious. But what is the remedy? The remedy which lies nearest to hand would seem to be to effectively render the average plaintiff in libel actions odious to public opinion. No opportunity should be lost to pillory the plaintiff in a libel suit. Those opposed to the

present state of things should not tire of pointing out that the winner of an action for libel is by no means necessarily the injured innocent he makes himself out to be. It should be ceaselessly impressed upon the average man that the winning of a libel suit does not mean the clearing of character, and that there is not even any guarantee that the statements complained of are not substantially true. The aim should be to introduce a social boycott of the plaintiffs in all frivolous and doubtful cases. Until a sufficiently strong body of public opinion is set in motion nothing will be done. Such a prejudice against plaintiffs in libel actions does, I believe, obtain in some of the states of the North American Union, where the libel action, although nominally existing, is practically inoperative. The result is that the worst excesses of yellow journalism in the matter of vilification do no harm to honest men, as no one pays any attention to them, while the rogue has no legal fence behind which he can skulk, and by which the confraternity of rogues can exercise a terrorism over the Press in order to prevent the actual, if technically unprovable, truth about themselves from being made known.

It must not be supposed, however, that the libel action, with its casting in damages, is the only way of dealing with an unjustifiable aspersion on character on the part of the Press. In the case of a journal the law might very well compel an editor

to insert a denial or exculpation of the defamatory statement running (say) to two columns, and this on the first issue of the publication after such communication was received. Failing such immediate publication, an injunction might be obtainable preventing any further issue of the journal in question not containing the rebutting communication. To an editor overcharged with important matter awaiting publication this might in itself be no light punishment.<sup>1</sup>

The unfairness with which the precious "remedy" provided by the English statute-book against aspersed character acts is obvious. In the first place, it compels persons whose character has been in truth wrongfully attacked by some lying organ of the Press to bring a libel action whether they will or not on pain of the false allegations made against them being accepted by the public in default. The really innocent person would in most cases much prefer it if the law would allow him to treat the matter with contempt, relying on his character and reputation as sufficient protection in the eyes of the public. But the legal interest does not see the matter in this light, and

<sup>1</sup> It may be remarked that the principle of the above suggestion is already embodied in the French Code, in the Press Law of 1881, Art. 12, which provides, under penalty of a fine, for the insertion, within three days of its reception, of any explanatory or rectificatory matter up to double the length of the article complained of,

has no intention, if it can be helped, of relinquishing such a mine of professional profit as the libel action ; and judges, acting apparently as guardians of the interests of the great legal trade union, naturally encourage the bringing of these actions.

The unfairness to non-litigious persons of the present state of the law, forcing such willy-nilly to bring libel suits in sheer defence, is bad enough, but worse remains behind. For while any ordinary person can obtain damages, often vindictive damages, for some trivial statement or expression of opinion concerning themselves which displeases them, a man known to hold unpopular opinions (say he is an atheist, a militant Socialist, an anti-jingo, etc.) can obtain no redress for the most serious allegations against his character, allegations that would gain for an ordinary respectable Philistine swingeing damages from a sympathetic and indignant judge and jury. The cases of Mr J. M. Robertson, M.P., of Mr W. E. Williams, and of Mr Edmondson will bear out what is here said. Mr Robertson, the Secularist lecturer, was wrongfully accused of taking part in an improper publication by a Conservative organ. Mr Williams, the Socialist and Labour agitator, was described as a "loafer" by a paper to whom his views were objectionable ; and Mr Edmondson, also a well-known Socialist, who had, of his own accord, gone out to fight in the South African war, was designated a

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“coward” similarly by an organ of public opinion opposed to his political principles. Needless to say, verdict for the defendant in all these cases. Now, for my own part, I don’t think calling a man a “loafer” or calling him a “coward” either, both of which are mere expressions of opinion, views widely differing as to their applicability in any given instance, ought to be actionable, or to render the person using these expressions liable to pains and penalties; in fact, in common with many others, I should regard the act of deliberately going out to fight against the Boer Republics as more morally disgraceful than any act of cowardice from the military point of view committed on the field. But the fact remains that, if used of the respectable Philistine, the above expressions would undoubtedly enable the latter to obtain a heavy sum of money. Hence the remedy provided by law as at present administered is practically only available for him whose views are not known to be distasteful to the ruck of middle-class “respectability.” On him the law of libel, and those who administer it, smile with favour, rogue though he may be. But woe betide the man of heterodox views, however untarnished his honour!

The protection of characters that are worth anything does not in most cases require the intervention of the law, which it can easily be seen does more harm than good. The real remedy lies in

the education of public opinion to prove all things relevant thereto before accepting allegations in aspersion of character, and to be always mindful of the fact that though A may have a perfect right to express any opinion he likes of B, yet that the fact of his expressing it does not prove his statements to be of any value whatever. Public opinion, if it sets its mind to it, is quite capable of dealing with persons or journals carelessly or maliciously publishing libels as it deals with other forms of objectionable social conduct.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE PROBLEM OF BRITAIN AND THE HUMAN RACE

THE Democrat and Socialist of the Continent has got so much into the habit of regarding Great Britain as the home of freedom, that nothing, it seems, will induce him to recognise that the England of to-day and the England of even fifty years ago are two utterly different countries. The Fabian, Sidney Webb, has truly said (*Nineteenth Century*, September 1901) that in that space "the English have become a new nation." He further observes that "centuries separate us from the first period of the reign of Victoria." Allowing for hyperbolic exaggeration, there is a considerable element of truth even in this last assertion. The first period of the reign of Victoria was the period when the proletariat of England was stirred to its depths by the Chartist agitation, when it was more self-conscious, notwithstanding its necessarily strong infiltration with ideas essentially belonging to the small middle class, than the leading class of democracy, than it has ever been since. The

middle class itself, at that time, did not lack ideals. Beyond a certain anti-French feeling, surviving from the Napoleonic era, and the dread of imminent invasion by the *grande armée*, there was no special Chauvinism noticeable. Popular statesmen like Molesworth and Roebuck could even wish success to the French Canadian rebels. An unjust war in Burmah was extremely unpopular. The monarchy itself was by no means in especial favour, still less regarded as above criticism. Colonial expansion as a policy was as yet not dreamt of. The glory of the Englishman was then not his "empire," but his alleged free institutions.

To-day it is far otherwise. Every month that passes shows us clearly that the modern Briton is a moral and political degenerate. The one ideal of the modern Englishman and Scotchman (the Welshman, maybe, is somewhat better in this respect) is the autocracy of Britain over other peoples, and the cheap glory accompanying it. For this he is willing, if necessary, to barter his free institutions, invite conscription, and sacrifice the whole national tradition or legend. Unhappily, one cannot say that the above applies exclusively or even mainly to the well-to-do classes, the aristocracy and *bourgeoisie*. The bulk of the unorganised working classes, at least, are in the same galley.

Britain is to-day in the grip of international

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“high finance.” Therein lies its safety. No continental nation fears the British army, while the manning of the navy is said by experts to leave much to be desired. The real reason of England’s comparative security is its being the head-centre of the world’s finance. The financial interest in every country is always pro-British. The money-lords (*alias* gold-bags) hold the key of the capitalist fortress, and modern capitalism tends to become, with the new era of trusts and big combines, of Rockefellers and Pierpoint-Morgans and Carnegies, more and more dominated by its financial side. Now Great Britain has been the centre of the world of finance from the very beginning. Hence it is that she has become the great bulwark in Europe of modern capitalism. The financier knows what the overthrow of the British power would mean to him and to the order he represents. The British power, in fact, represents capitalism pure and simple, and in its most dangerous form, namely, capitalism with a power of expansion, capitalism in a position to prolong its own life.

But the British nation, including the bulk of its working classes, stands in another and a special sense for the capitalist system in that, of all civilised nations, it is the one possessing the weakest class-conscious proletariat. The English proletariat still remains, in the great mass, slow to assimilate revolu-

tionary Socialism, and therefore there is no effective check upon the worst excesses of market-hunting and colonial labour exploitation. That this has its origin in racial characteristics I have always maintained; but there is the third sense above hinted at, in which Great Britain may be described as the great bulwark of modern capitalism, namely, in the remarkable capacity possessed by the "Anglo-Saxon" (or Anglo-Celtic) races for colonial expansion, in the ability which they, and especially the British themselves, both south and north, possess for effectively occupying and settling new countries. Now, modern Capitalism must either expand or evolve rapidly into Socialism. If it can succeed in conquering new markets and fresh fields for industrial exploitation quickly enough, it may sustain itself under the *régime* of trusts and combines for some time yet. If not, the final phase of its evolution being accomplished, it must make way for the new world-order destined to succeed it. Now the Anglo-Saxon, judging by experience, as already said, is the only race capable of performing the feat of opening up and settling the as yet non-capitalistic portions of the earth's surface within the period necessary. This, I repeat, is his admitted *forte*. The Latin nations that have tried their hand at it (not even excepting France) have failed, and in most cases signally failed. Russia has expanded enough in all conscience, but has

hardly got beyond the phase of penal settlements and military posts. Even Germany, with all her Cameroons and Hereros, has no success in colonisation to signalise. For this reason Britain is that power which presents the greatest obstacle to Socialism.

I know this last statement always sounds like a paradox. It may be asked, where do you have such free institutions as in England? Where such fair play to all political views? Our continental brethren are much impressed, I am well aware, by this argument. But now let us for a moment consider the question of these free institutions. Firstly, what is the difference between the methods of governmental repression on the Continent and here? It is mainly this—on the Continent the forces of reaction, as represented by a class-government, use the police for the repression of adverse opinions; in England, with a much greater astuteness, they use the non-official mob. In using the police, they may be accused of tyrannical oppression, but when, by employing—or, at any rate, encouraging—a gang of venal roughs, they can allege that it is “the people” themselves who rise against their opponents, the base Radicals and Revolutionists, and that they are unable to stem the torrent of popular indignation at the doings of the aforesaid wicked and traitorous firebrands, what more can be said? The result is

the same in either case. Freedom of speech is suppressed.<sup>1</sup>

But, even apart from this, we have in the present day in Britain an absolute indifference to the preservation of those liberties on which the Englishman has hitherto prided himself. For instance, one of his proudest boasts has always been his freedom from compulsory military service. And now what do we see? Societies established and a condition of public feeling fostered that would make that service inevitable! Does anyone believe that the average modern Briton, if he saw his way to enslaving other and weaker nationalities better by means of conscription, would not gladly submit to it? No, the privileged classes of Great Britain have succeeded in demoralising the lower middle and working classes of the country with the cry, or rather the cat-call, of "patriotism" to such an extent that they will sacrifice anything for the pleasure of seeing weaker peoples, barbaric and civilised, trampled under their feet. Hence I argue that the superstition that England is the land of liberty ought by this time to be fairly exploded.

But even if we grant the assumption that within the four seas comprising this island there is greater liberty than elsewhere, and that a similar liberty is enjoyed in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand,

<sup>1</sup> Written during the Boer war.

this can by no possible warranty be affirmed of countries *ruled over* by Great Britain. Nobody could assert that there is greater freedom, greater absence of governmental and police coercion, in Ireland, at the Cape, in India, than in the dependencies of other States. On the contrary, when Britain has dominated over another race, the callous brutality of the methods employed are notorious. Again, another point is often forgotten in comparing the relative internal conditions of Britain and continental European countries. In Germany, France, Russia, governments may be bad, but the heart of the people—the working classes and even large sections of the middle classes—is politically sound. The action of the Government is abhorred by the people as a whole, or at least by large sections of them. In England, on the contrary, at the beginning of this twentieth century, the great mass of the people must needs applaud all that its Government does—for the new-style patriotic reason, if for no other, that it is “the Government of its country.”

We hear much of *Majestätsbeleidigung* in Germany, and indeed it is an atrocious law of which any nation ought to be ashamed. But does anyone suppose that, were such a law sought to be introduced into this country, the masses of the “loyal” British people would protest? Some would doubtless issue indignant remonstrances and hold

meetings, but it would be the same small band of stalwarts who protested against the Transvaal war, and their protest would be about as effectual. As it happens, for the moment, the governing classes have sufficient sense remaining not to wish to imitate the German model. They would doubtless be very willing, however, on occasion, to patronise any band of hooligans who would make it their avocation to administer condign punishment to anyone speaking disrespectfully of royalty. And if the above be true, where is your security against the enactment of a law against *Majestätsbeleidigung* once you get a strong empire with a gilded plutocratic government which declares it necessary to the welfare of the said empire that captious criticism should be suppressed?

On the causes of this corruption of the British character much might be said. But for practical purposes it suffices that it is there, that it has taken its place as a factor in human development. And what does this factor, viewed in conjunction with the aforesaid capacity of the British race for colonial expansion, by which the ends of modern capitalism are best subserved, imply? I answer that human progress has here to face an enemy which is not merely one of class or of caste, but one of race. By mere good-natured optimists it is commonly said that England with all her faults is not so bad after all. Look at

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Russia, look at Germany, look at Italy, we are told! True, in Germany, in Russia, in Italy you may have a system of government which varies in its badness from being merely police-ridden to being inhumanly and atrociously tyrannical. But, after all, you have only *a system of government*, with its embodying caste, to deal with in these cases, even in the worst of them. And a system of government may change from one week to another. The evils it entails are generally more or less transitory and remediable. This is not true of our economic system. The ascendancy of other existing national states means at worst the ascendancy for a period, of a bad government, detested by large sections of the people of these countries. The ascendancy of Great Britain, on the other hand, means the heading back of that great economic revolution which shall transform modern Civilisation into Socialism, inasmuch as the history of the nineteenth century has shown that the Anglo-Saxon alone can effectively open up new countries in the time modern capitalism requires them to be opened up in order to save itself from imminent revolution.

I have spoken of the degeneracy of the modern Britisher. As an illustration of the physical and moral decline of the race, it is almost sufficient to point to such a mob as celebrated the relief of Mafeking, a spectacle which I venture to assert

could be afforded by no capital in Europe other than London. In Paris, in Berlin, in Rome, in Venice, such a thing would be inconceivable. You might have violent mobs, you might have brutal mobs, you might have foolish fanatical mobs, but the squalid inanity of a Mafeking mob you would look for in vain. This unspeakable abomination is not, then, a product of Capitalism merely, but of Capitalism *plus* Race—it represents not merely man, but Anglo-Saxon man in process of decomposition. But lest it should be said that the Mafeking mob is an unfair test of the physical and moral depravity of the modern Briton, let us take certain other circumstances connected with the Boer war, things which were recited and defended in cold blood, without a blush, by English-speaking people, and which I maintain show a complete moral atrophy such as can be found in no other nation of European origin:—(1) The sending out of a quarter of a million men to crush a small nation with an army of 30,000, without the smallest sense of shame, a feat only paralleled by the glorious deeds of the British Army at Omdurman, which consisted in the slaughter of Arabs (who either had no rifles, or who couldn't shoot straight) from behind machine guns; (2) the diabolical extermination of the Boer children in the concentration camps; (3) the sending of expansive bullets to South Africa against the decision of the Hague

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Congress, and then shrieking with indignation when the Boers, who had captured cases of these bullets, intended to be used against themselves, employed them against the British troops; (4) the systematic and brutal burning of homesteads out of sheer wanton spite; (5) the dastardly murder of prisoners of war, notably the massacre at Elandslaagte and the murder of Scheeping, who fell into British hands accidentally through sickness; (6) the excuse that "war is war," used to whitewash every violation of the laws of civilised warfare, followed by a snivelling whine when the Boers mildly ventured to pay the British soldier back in his own coin; (7) the refusal of medicine, doctors and ambulances, to the Boer combatants—a piece of devilish and dastardly ferocity which has not been approached since the worst episodes of the Thirty Years' war.<sup>1</sup>

Now I submit that a nation that approves or even tolerates these things is not fit at the present time to exist as a political entity wielding sway, directly or indirectly, over dependencies in any way alien in blood to itself. I contend, further, that a race that can at the beginning of the twentieth century condone such things must be so morally corrupt that the mere consolidation of

<sup>1</sup> Since the above was written events have shown that other nationalities, *e.g.* the Italians in Tripoli, can emulate the class of acts referred to in the text.

its power among men of its own blood is a serious menace to humanity generally.

Let us make no mistake, I repeat we have to do not with a bad *government*, as in Russia, but with a morally corrupt *people*—a people of which whole sections exhibit the character of the coward, the bully, and the braggart, for such it has shown itself repeatedly within the last few years. Let that heroic nation famous over all Europe for its unconquerable habit, during the Boer war, of surrendering before the slightest show of superior force try conclusions with a single continental army. No one fears England to-day. It is the cosmopolitan financiers at the back of England that are feared. The modern Briton is being discovered now not to be of the heroic mould, in spite of his bullying braggartio on occasion.

And now, what of the other, the American section of the Anglo-Saxon race? Never having been in America, I am unable to speak from first hand; but, so far as I can judge, the American people, while possessing many of the aforesaid undesirable characteristics of the British (some of them, indeed, in an exaggerated form), have been saved from the complete moral degeneracy of the latter by a circumstance which I shall revert to again directly, viz., by the fact that the population is not, as in the other case, pure Anglo-Saxon (using the term Anglo-Saxon for the original blend of Kelt, Roman,

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Jute, Angle, Saxon, Dane, and Norman, constituting in different degrees the population of England and southern Scotland). This blend, which forms the *basis*, has been to some extent modified by a variety of supervening ethnical elements. As an instance of the difference in the two national "tones," the Americans showed a decidedly more widespread and vigorous opposition to their own government's infamous enterprise in the Philippines than can be said of the English opposition to the South African war.

This leads us to our concluding topic, viz., what combination of circumstances would avert the danger threatening human progress through the ascendancy of the Anglo-Saxon as he is at present? First of all, there is the possibility of his changing his Ethiopian skin and his leopard spots. As we all know, changed circumstances often do cause rapid changes in national character. As we have pointed out, the English nation of to-day is very different from the English nation of the forties and fifties of the last century. But does the England of 1912 show such a considerable advance politically and ethically on the England that made merry on Mafeking Day in May 1900? I fear we have no indications of such being the case. Barring, then, a speedy change in the nature of the human Anglo-Saxon as represented in this island, what external conditions would be likely to effect

the result spoken of? These conditions must lie in the direction of the limitation of British power and the disintegration of the British Imperial system. In addition, they might well include the bringing of a new race-blend into those countries where, as in the British Colonies, this could effectively be done owing to the, at present, smallness of the population. The two sides of this question are dependent on one another, since a consolidated British power, with its tentacles stretched over all the world, would be in a position to counteract any such effective blending—promoting rather inter-Imperial migration. A consolidated British empire, as things go at present, would mean an impenetrable bulwark of capitalism in its most effective form, under Anglo-Saxon auspices, athwart progress. The only possibility of the new race-blend arising would seem at present to lie in foreign conquest. The conquest of Australasia by Germany or Japan, however repellant to British colonial feeling, would at least give a chance for the production of the new race-blend, and from this point of view could not be regarded as an unmitigated evil. For the reasons above given a strong *rapprochement* between this country and the United States is to be deprecated as tending to the increased power of the Anglo-Saxon element in America and indirectly to the consolidation of the British colonial power. Where the Anglo-

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Saxon rules, there you seem to have capitalism entrenched in its securest stronghold. Modern finance indispensably needs the Anglo - Saxon power for its international operation. International Socialism, as I contend, imperatively calls for the break-up of the British Imperial system, and hence it should be the policy of the British Socialist Party to favour all disruptive tendencies within the Empire. In furthering the aim of local or national independence unhampered by the suzerainty of a larger capitalist Power under their respective flags, the Socialist Party would be taking the first step towards realising the final ideal of the international union in a world federation under the Red Flag of Social Democracy. Meanwhile "he that letteth will let," and the very strong letting power in this case is—British Imperialism !

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE PROBLEM OF THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY

THE interest attaching to the task of attempting the historico-critical reconstruction of that great episode in universal history which, through a combination of circumstances, became the landmark of the turning point in the evolution of the civilised world, namely, the origin of Christianity, never seems to lose its fascination. Among the immense number of scholars and thinkers who, for a century past, have set their intellects and their pens to the task there is no risk in affirming that few have produced more remarkable results than Karl Kautsky in his *Ursprung des Christentums*. On a basis of fact well known to scholars and historical students, but by no means familiar to the average man of intelligence and culture—whose culture is, by the way, generally confined to literature and literary criticism and reckes little of history—Kautsky has succeeded in producing a volume of absorbing interest. In fact, as a purely literary production we would unhesitatingly pronounce

*Der Ursprung des Christentums* to be the masterpiece of the great literary protagonist of Socialism in Germany. This, notwithstanding that the arrangement of the work we hold to be faulty. The book is divided into four sections, the first a short one on the sources of Pagan and Christian tradition for the personality of Jesus. This is followed by a long section containing a brilliant and graphic summary of the social conditions of the early Empire. The author then returns chronologically in the third section to an equally brilliant survey of Jewish history from its origin. The latter part of this deals, it is true, with post-exilian Judaism and the Jewish sects of the Christian era, thereby leading on to the fourth and longest section, which is concerned with the beginning of Christianity itself. The arrangement strikes us as clumsy. The portion of the fourth section dealing with the early history of Israel ought surely to have come before the discussion on the sources of the Jesus-figure and the description and analysis of the society of the Augustan period.

Apart from the vigour and interest of its literary presentation and marshalling of historical facts, Kautsky's book is remarkable, as those who know anything of the other works of the author will scarcely need to be told, for its thorough-going and consistent attempt to reduce Christian origins and the phenomena connected with them to

economic causes. The book represents, indeed, an endeavour to apply practically the materialistic doctrine of history of Marx. But, in addition to this, many interesting points are brought out in the course of the discussions of various historical problems. What Kautsky has to say on the traditional Jesus-figure is practically summed up on page 19, where the author insists that the historical kernel of the Jesus legend amounts to no more than what Tacitus reports, to the effect that during the reign of Tiberius a Jewish prophet was executed, from whom the Christian sect took its origin. "What this prophet did and thought," observes Kautsky, "we have not the slightest means of ascertaining with any certainty. In no case could he have aroused the attention alleged by the early Christian writers, otherwise assuredly Josephus, who relates many unimportant matters, would have had something to say about him.<sup>1</sup> The agitation and execution of Jesus unquestionably excited not the least interest among his contemporaries."

The legendary figure which has come down to us formed itself gradually, as the originally small and obscure sect grew out of the aspirations and ideas of the various successive layers of its increasing adherents. How the sect came to grow in numbers

<sup>1</sup> The single passage in our Josephus in which the founder of Christianity is referred to is now universally admitted to be a later forgery.

and importance, ultimately occupying the place it did in the Roman world, is the task Kautsky has set himself to solve by aid of the Marxian key, as we shall see later on. Meanwhile, we may linger a moment over the Kautskian view of the titular founder of Christianity and the nature of his personality. For Kautsky, Jesus was simply one of the numerous agitators and messiahs which the two last generations of the Jewish State brought forth. On the absurdities and contradictions of the Gospel version of the events preceding the execution of Jesus our author has much to say. He points out the clumsiness with which probably authentic scraps of tradition concerning the character of the historical rebel-zealot, opposed alike to the Roman power and to the respectable Jewish parties of the time, who were prepared to compromise with the former, were allowed to remain in the Gospel narrative side by side with the later conception of Jesus as the meek and lowly apostle of non-resistance and passive obedience, which it was one of the new Gospel's main objects to embody.

The unhistorical absurdity of the whole Gospel narrative of the trial and crucifixion is well brought out. Kautsky's view of the story of the arrest is that it took place during, and was in consequence of, a conspiracy started by Jesus and his band against the authorities of Jerusalem—the rendez-vous of the conspirators being the Mount of Olives

—and which seems to have been planned to follow on the disturbance in the court of the Temple which resulted in the driving out of the bankers and salesmen who were installed there. On an impartial survey of the evidence, which will be found well marshalled in the work under review, no fair-minded reader, we think, will be able to avoid the conclusion arrived at by Kautsky, to wit, that the historical Jesus was simply the leader of a not very important local attempt at insurrection, and that his seizure, trial, and execution followed immediately on the suppression of the revolt. The unimportance is attested by the fact that, while other messiahs acquired sufficient influence to have left a name in contemporary historical testimony, Jesus of Nazareth did not do so. How then, it may be asked, was it, if the original movement of Jesus was of a local and temporary character, that the Christianity of history eventually arose out of it? This is the problem for which Kautsky has his own solution to offer, and in respect to this solution some of us may be inclined to part company with our distinguished author.

As already said, the idea of Kautsky in writing the *Ursprung des Christentums* was, in the first instance, to furnish a practical application of the “materialistic doctrine of history.” Now, in the present case, Kautsky’s trump card is to be found

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in the alleged communistic tendencies of the early Christian communities. The far-reaching influence acquired by the tradition of these communities, as well as the growth and diffusion of the communities themselves in spite of their insignificant origin, Kautsky attributes mainly, if not entirely, to their association with the principle of communistic property-holding. As against this, however, two important considerations may be urged: (1) Is the assumed communism of the early Christians demonstrable as an historical fact? and (2) Even conceding this fact, is it possible to regard it as even a remotely adequate cause of the very far-reaching effects ascribed to it? For my own part I am constrained to answer both questions by a decided negative. The so-called communism of the primitive Christian community at Jerusalem, when closely viewed, amounted to no more than an exaggerated alms-giving called forth by special circumstances. The principal, and indeed, only original source we have for its existence at all, seems specially to emphasise its voluntary, and hence so far as the principles of the community were concerned, its non-essential, character. Evidence we have none of any organisation in the early Church embodying real communism in contradistinction to the charity of the richer members towards the poorer brethren of the community or certain forms of ceremonial obser-

vance in common. Kautsky is, of course, anxious to "rope in" every statement or tradition he can to prove his thesis, to wit, that the Christian Church was originally a communistic organisation; the dogmas that it embraced, or that grew up around it being, in the first instance, little more than "ideological" decorations and emblems of this central economic fact. The circumstance recorded of the Apostles that when on a journey they had a common purse or "bag" is noted by our author as evidence of the communistic doctrine and tendencies of primitive Christianity. At this rate there should be plenty of communism going about in Western Europe every autumn holiday season (especially in connection with Cook's tours), considering the number of tourist parties whose members find it convenient to have a common account during their trip. I give this as an instance of how perfectly commonplace statements can be coloured by a pre-conceived theory.

But if, even in spite of the lack of evidence, we concede the communistic character of the early Christian churches, what necessary or probable reason have we, I ask, for assuming this character to have been even the central element in them, much less the distinguishing feature in Christianity, that which differentiated it from amid the welter of religio-mystical cults, sects, and brotherhoods with which it was surrounded in the world of

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the contemporary Roman Empire? Was the admittedly crude and imperfect communism of consumption (as opposed to that of production), alleged to have been practised by the early Christians, a sufficiently distinctive and important phenomenon in that age to have by itself attracted numbers to the Church, and to have acquired for Christianity the influence it obtained? Kautsky, himself, indirectly answers this question against his own thesis.

A certain theologian, anxious to rescue primitive Christianity from the charge of communism, urged against Kautsky that, although a variety of ugly accusations were brought by the contemporary Pagan world against the Christian sect, nowhere do we find any indications that the early Christians were ever charged with practising communism. The fact of its not being mentioned by contemporary critics of Christianity might indeed militate against the theory that it formed a very prominent side of the new sect, but the argument from the silence of these opponents is, we must agree with Kautsky, certainly not any proof of its not having existed. For, as Kautsky very pertinently points out, communism as it was understood in the ancient world, did not, either in theory or practice, imply any reproach. It was not viewed as having any special connection with revolutionary tendencies. On the contrary, it was

associated, more or less, with many forms of religious, social, and even political organisation that were in high esteem and was traditionally connected with the honoured names of Pythagoras and Plato. But in pointing this out, Kautsky does not seem to see that he is arguing against his own main position, to wit, that communism was a *distinguishing* feature of Christianity.

What may possibly be regarded as ceremonial survivals of the traditions of communism in the early forms of human society obtained in well-nigh all the fraternities, guilds, and corporations of the ancient world, so that, for that matter, it is quite likely, notwithstanding the absence of affirmative evidence, that the early Christians may have had certain tendencies pointing to communism in the life of their organisation. As for the periodical social feasts, these they undoubtedly had, though probably no one but Kautsky would regard them as any evidence of actual communism. On the contrary, in their Love feasts, which, as pointed out by the Rev. Baring-Gould (*Strange Survivals*, pp. 161-162), were but an adaptation of the feasts of Aphrodite, "the well-to-do brought food and wine with them and ate and drank by themselves," while the poorer brethren were often compelled "to look hungrily on." But even allowing the utmost latitude to the alleged communistic tendencies of early Christianity, we are

still a long way from the assumption that communism was an essential part of Christian doctrine, or even practice, still less that it was the ground of its success over similar sects and doctrines. Even if communism, in the sense of the dividing-up of consumable wealth, obtained in the early Christian Churches, this was quite certainly a purely side-issue. It was not this which led Christianity to victory over the Roman world. It was not mere exaggerated alms-giving, such as that described in the Acts, which effected this result. Moreover, the first great successes of the new sect began after the supposed communistic practices were admittedly becoming obsolete in the Church.

What, then, was the distinctive feature in early Christianity which gave it "the pull" over Judaism and the various Pagan cults and mysteries professing the same general intellectual and moral outlook as Christianity? The answer, I take it, is in the main obvious. During the second century, how and why we cannot at present trace, the Christian Church discovered, and made its own, the formula or formulæ best adapted to express a strong intellectual and moral current already existing for some generations throughout the East and the Mediterranean lands, while at the same time it absorbed from the various Pagan cults around it the ceremonies and ritual best adapted to body it forth.

How and why it managed to effect this by a process of selection, conscious or unconscious, as just said, it is impossible at this distance of time to find out. That the purely materialistic side of the organisation of the early Christian communities, together with the general conditions of life in the great cities of the Empire, powerfully contributed in the general result is undeniable. But neither the economic conditions of the society out of which it grew nor those which it shaped for itself within its own communities, can, having regard to the historical evidence, be located as the central or determining factor in the evolution of the Christian Church. What, then, was this central factor? Undoubtedly the doctrine of the relation of the individual human soul to the central power of the universe. This was the problem round which the thought of the then civilised world had been circling for generations. This was the theme of the Mysteries, of the new cults introduced from the East, and the new interpretation of the old myths and ceremonies of an earlier Paganism. It was the ideal content of the dominant thought of the age which crystallised in the Christian sect and around its central figure, which came to serve, so to say, as the tailor's block to set forth these tendencies. That every doctrine and practice belonging to the Christian religion is traceable in the contemporary

and pre-existing Paganism and Judaism of the time is a fact no longer disputed by any serious student of history, and to enlarge upon it here, at any length, would be superfluous.

Why these ideas, common as they were to the serious-minded men of the age and expressed in a detached form in the various cults and mysteries, should have concentrated themselves, as in a focus, precisely in the Christian sect rather than in any other of the various cults then prevalent, I again repeat, is, to a large extent, one of the secrets of history to which our imperfect materials for a knowledge of the time furnish us with no adequate key. We can only explain it in general terms as due to the fact that the Christian religion succeeded in finding the formula most suitable for the growing monotheism and ever-intensifying introspective spiritual and ethical tendencies of the age, together with the form of organisation best adapted to maintain material continuity and independence for the Christian sect as a sect. That the alleged element of communistic practice in the Christian Church, if it ever existed, had nothing to do with historical Christianity can hardly be doubted when we reflect that the Essenes, the Therapeutæ, the votaries of Serapis, not to speak of other lesser communistic brotherhoods and religious bodies existing at the time—whose communism is not a matter of doubt, and

was developed, it will not be denied, to a much greater degree than could have been the case with the early Christian Churches — nevertheless did not maintain their independence as was the case with the new sect. It may, perhaps, be conjectured that the elaborate system of inter-communication by wandering preachers and by letters in which intercourse was kept up, and a uniformity of doctrine and practice promoted among the Christian communities of the Empire, and under the influence of which gradually the *imperium in imperio* of the Catholico-Christian Church was developed, was the most powerful factor on the material side in the success of the new religion.

As regards the ideal side of the latter, the essential element in Christianity, so far from its being communistic, was the very antithesis of communism. The Christianity of history represents, primarily, the quintessence of the individualism of a decadent civilisation as far as possible removed from the communism of primitive times, which had its symbolical expression rather in those primitive local Pagan practices with which Christianity waged so deadly a war. The central point of Christianity was the relationship of the individual soul to God as the creative principle of the universe, combined with the idea of a future life. It was this mystical relation of the individual soul to God who, in popular thought, came to be

regarded as a preternatural superman, on which the whole Christian theory turns. This it was, and not any exaggerated almsgiving, in which Kautsky discovers communistic tendencies, that really gained over the Roman world of the first three centuries. Kautsky, in his sacramental devotion to the historical materialism of Marx, fails altogether to recognise the importance of this introspective individualism and mysticism as a salient phase of human evolution. The latter, of course, got overshadowed, among the great mass of nominal Christians as soon as large populations became converted and the Church waxed rich, by interested motives; while, with the acceptance of the Christian creed by the barbarians, and, still more, with the establishment of their kingdoms, it became entirely overgrown with the crude animistic beliefs of an earlier phase of social life and thought. But, though this continued substantially throughout the Middle Ages, the mystic-individualist idea remained always, nevertheless, the motive power of the saint and the higher intellects of the Church.

The above criticism must on no account be taken to imply that the present writer underrates the value of Kautsky's investigations. His work contains much historical suggestiveness of a very high order. He may not have succeeded in proving the existence of communistic tendencies in any

legitimate sense of the word, in the early Church—not even in the primitive Church of Jerusalem, and assuredly not in the Christian communities which spread over the Mediterranean countries after the fall of Jerusalem—but he has succeeded, nevertheless, in establishing an important fact in connection with primitive Christianity. Kautsky has shown, beyond all probable doubt, that the little-noticed sect of rebel-zealots at Jerusalem who claimed Jesus of Nazareth as their founder, was predominantly of a proletarian-anarchist character—understanding the word proletarian in the classical sense of the word, as denoting a rabble of indigent or destitute freemen. That its objects were substantially the same as that of the other insurrectionary cliques then common throughout Palestine is highly probable, to wit, the freeing of the country from the Roman yoke and the re-establishment of the Jewish religion on a democratic and popular basis, with the control of the Temple and its vast treasures by their own leaders. Unlike other bodies professing similar aims, the above revolutionary society succeeded in holding together after the death of its leader. The community at Jerusalem it was to which all the proletarian associations of Christianity were attached, and it came to an end soon after the year 70.

From this date Christianity assumes quite another character; it ceases to be rebellious, and

becomes a religion of non-resistance to evil, and it is from this time forward that it begins to absorb the mystical tendencies of the age. The old messianic and rebellious doctrines of the original Jerusalem community became soon a heresy, the so-called "Ebionite" heresy. "True Christianity," if by this be meant the Christianity of history, began its career. The figures most intimately associated with the changed Christianity of the closing period of the first century is that of Paul the Apostle. Now the greatest blemish in Kautsky's book is his complete ignoring of the figure of Paul. A treatise on the origin of Christianity which ignores the author of the four great Epistles constituting the foundation of the Christian theology, and therewith the Christianity of history, certainly suggests the notorious performance of the play of *Hamlet* with the part of the Prince of Denmark left out; for, whatever may be said for or against the historicity of the Jesus-figure, the fact remains that it is to the author of the Pauline Epistles that the origin of the Christian dogmas are due. From the closing years of the first century onwards Christianity began absorbing elements of various Pagan cults and tendencies of the age, and it is not too much to assert that the bulk of the dogmas and ceremonies constituting Christianity at the present time, in all its various forms, and which have constituted it

throughout its historical career, date from the first half of the second century. This, the only Christianity with which, for practical purposes, we are concerned to-day, is, in essence, neither communistic nor proletarian, but, on the contrary, mystical, introspective, and individualistic.

As has been recently pointed out, the mystical Christ of the Pauline Epistles in the later theology has nothing really in common with the patriotic rebel leader of the reign of Tiberius. The former is a supernatural or quasi-supernatural being, with no essential relation to any mortal individual. (Cf. Brückner, *Die Entstehung der paulinischen Christologie*, 1903, 12; also Drews' *Christmythus*.) For Paul, the historical existence of any human being who played a part in the social and religious struggles of contemporary Palestine, and to whom the origin of the Christian sect could be traced, would probably have been a matter of complete indifference. What he was interested in was the new mystical interpretation of the old corn-god myth which meets us in so many guises in the cults and legends of the ancient world. In its new interpretation, the story of the god or the god-man dying and rising again became a symbol of the mediative agency between the individual soul and the world-soul, between the all-powerful creative *persona* and its imperfect created image. It was the symbol of an eternal

process. As Professor Drews has said, Paul would not have regarded the execution of any individual human being as being anything more than the accomplishment of a symbolical rite, the personality of the victim in any particular case being a matter of indifference. The few passages in the Pauline Epistles in which the historical Jesus is referred to, the same writer shows good grounds for regarding as later interpolations. In any case, an historical mundane Christ-personality does not seem to fit in with the main system of the Pauline theology.

Reverting to the Jesus-figure as portrayed in the Gospels, assuming it be historical at all, it would seem as though we had to do with something like a composite portrait, combining the divergent and, even in some cases, contradictory characteristics of, at least, two or three distinct personalities. The somewhat ferocious rebel leader, apotheosised by the dissenting hymn-maker as "gentle Jesus, meek and mild," the social guest at wedding feasts, the companion of publicans and sinners, and the introspective moral and religious Rabbi of the Sermon on the Mount, may quite possibly indicate the traits of distinct individuals. It is certainly a very common phenomenon of legend-formation, this merging of different types in one complex legendary personality. In any case, with the Jesus-figure alone as portrayed in our Gospels, it is improbable Christianity would have got very far.

The Christianity of history has, as its real founder, Paul the Apostle, if by that name we may designate the author of the four great Epistles and the missionary forming the central figure of the narrative in the Acts. It was the theology, founded originally on the mythical groundwork common to the races of Western Asia and Egypt, and elaborated with the help of Greek metaphysics, that found a convenient rallying point in the communities whose ensign was the figure of the rebel prophet, the messiah-patriot of Galilee. It was the satisfaction this theology afforded to the spirit of an age whose chief serious interest lay in questions concerning the individual's destiny after death and his relation to the Supreme Power of the universe, inasmuch as it offered a convenient answer, on a basis not foreign to the general speculative outlook of the age, to these questions. Successful organisation, almsgiving, the duty of mutual assistance and the like, undoubtedly contributed their part to the successes of the early Christian Church, but I contend it is at once un-historical and unpsychological to regard them as the chief even, not to say the sole, cause of those successes.

What many persons, and it would seem Kautsky among the number, seem to fail to realise is that the really living belief in a speculative theory which, because it is a really living belief, powerfully

affects the imagination of its votaries, can form fully as mighty a motive power for action as is to-day constituted by economic interests. Now such was the case amid large sections of the society of the Roman Empire. It is a fact familiar to all students of Pagan literature of the early Christian centuries that the dread of death continually appears as casting a gloom over the life of the period. We meet with it even in the Augustan age of classical literature, in Horace, Virgil, Catullus, etc. The tendency, of course, increased with the decadence of the Græco-Roman world. According to Kautsky it was the economic blessings afforded by its supposed communism or its real dispensation of eleemosynary relief, that accounts for the growth of the early Christian Church. For him the economic factor is the exclusively determining one throughout every period of history and in every stage of social evolution, all other interests being defined by it alone. For the present writer the economic factor, though in modern times, under the régime of a fully developed capitalism, undoubtedly predominant well-nigh to the exclusion of all else, and though in the main dominant throughout history as the motive power of change, may be, and has been, on occasion, subordinated, as a motive-power, to the other, the intellectual and emotional factor, in human affairs.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE PROBLEM OF CHRISTIANITY AS "VALUE"

THE modern view of the reign of law in history, and of the "historical relativity" which is its outcome, often leads the unwary to a kind of mechanical fatalism in the estimation of historical phenomena. The truth that everything is relative to the general conditions of a period leads with some to a sort of sacramental necessity being assumed as attached to the whole of the concrete reality of an age which it is conceived *must* have happened so, and *could not* have happened otherwise.

For example, in discussing the question of the origin and success of the Christian propaganda in the lands constituting the Roman Empire during the first three centuries of the Christian era, the average modern rationalist is apt to assume the Christian religion in all its aspects to have been the necessary form for the ethical and theological thoughts of mankind to take at this period, and hence that its success was, as it were, pre-ordained by the general conditions of historical evolution.

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Now this view belongs to the order of ideas which consciously or unconsciously treats the real world as being wholly composed of, or dominated by, determinate and determining concepts, rules, and laws: in a word, by its logical aspect alone. It is a view that ignores the truth elsewhere insisted upon by me with considerable elaboration (cf. *The Roots of Reality*): to wit, that all reality consists *au fond* of two elements or aspects, an alogical as well as a logical; that the former can never be completely absorbed by the latter or legitimately treated as reducible under it, notwithstanding that in our experience we find both elements in indissoluble union.

Now, if we are to form a correct judgment upon the content of history as a real process in time, it is essential to distinguish between the element in that content which is determined by the inner necessity of the whole historical movement at the period dealt with, and that other element which, while forming part of the total result, is nevertheless *per se* accidental, and hence which might have happened otherwise, which, in short, belongs to the alogical side of the historical process.

Reverting to the instance before mentioned, which forms the main subject of the present chapter, as to the way in which we regard the functions of the Christian religion in history, the problem would

seem to stand as follows:—In how far are we to attribute the success of the Christian Church in the Roman Empire to its answering to certain intellectual and moral aspirations (*i.e.* to its having a certain *value*) forming part of the mental atmosphere of the then world, and hence in how far may we regard it as a necessity of the historical process itself, and in how far it was an event which, consistently with the general trend of that process, need not have happened or might have happened otherwise?

If we take an impartial view of the conditions of the first three centuries, we shall find that the general consciousness was moving along certain lines, and was becoming dominated by certain beliefs and aspirations. The *serious-minded man* of all classes and of all countries (in the first and second centuries), coming within the range of the civilisation of the ancient world, was eminently introspective, *i.e.* his chief object of interest was his own soul and its welfare after death, which he connected with some mystical relation it bore to the Supreme Power of the universe as personified in him. His whole theory of life was based on the supernatural and the belief in magic. Hence for him questions of God and personal existence after death were questions of very intense and practical moment indeed, just as for the serious-minded man of to-day are social and economic questions. Of

the course of social life and thought from earlier times which led up to this state of things, of the contemporary political and economic condition which contributed to intensify the general intellectual attitude, it is unnecessary to speak here. It is sufficient that it existed, that notions derivable from this thought and atmosphere belonged to the social consciousness of the time, and that some religious system formulating them, together with the needs and aspirations bred of them, was inevitable. Every philosophical and religious theory of the universe which was then current endeavoured to meet these demands in its own way. Christianity did this, and gradually absorbed, or successfully competed with, the rest, owing to reasons which, with our scant and imperfect data, it is impossible at present fully to determine.

Now, the main point of interest for us here is that the element of "inevitability" in the historical success of Christianity consisted solely in its expression of the aforesaid tendency of thought and aspiration. That which is logically given in the general movement is inevitable; that which is not so given is not inevitable. But there were other features specially characterising the Christian faith and Church, which we have no reason to regard as inevitable, *i.e.* as necessarily given in the conditions of the time, but which might well have been otherwise.

First and foremost among the features which from out all the creeds and cults of the Roman Empire is peculiar to Christianity alone is the idea of religious intolerance, of compulsory assent to dogma, of a disbelief in a theory as being criminal. There is no difficulty in conceiving that (let us say) the religion of Mithras, that Neoplatonism, that Manicheeism—all of which systems embodied the same general tendencies as Christianity—might have succeeded in ousting their rival. In fact, it is well known that there was a time during the third century when, to the modern scholar looking back, it seems to have been a mere toss up which the world should become, Mithraic, Manicheean, or Christian. Now, had the former alternative happened—had, indeed, any one of these other claimants for the suffrages of the serious-minded man of the three first centuries succeeded in overcoming the Christian Church—the element of dogmatic intolerance, and with it of religious persecution, which was otherwise alien to the ancient world, would never have arisen to stain the pages of subsequent history.

Another peculiarity of the Christian religion, doubtless derived from the Judaism in which it first originated, was the dogmatic aggressiveness of its monotheism. The Trinitarian dogma which it evolved later was a concession, of course, to Pagan thought, but did not materially affect the

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issue. That issue was the direct responsibility of the Supreme Being conceived of as personified and as perfect, for the creation and the ordering of the world. This was the main point at issue between the Church of the second century and the Gnostic systems. While the Church maintained that all things evil no less than good had been called into being by the direct fiat of the Creator, who was identified with the Supreme God, the Gnostics relegated the responsibility for the creation of a world in which evil was predominant to an inferior being or beings, partially at least the negation of the higher spiritual powers, and in no sense the object of adoration. Now it is by no means clear that the late Judeo-Christian conception of a Creator-God, the sum of all perfection in power, wisdom, and goodness, and yet the Creator and Providence of a world in which the element of evil is prominent, was essential to the intellectual and emotional aspirations of the first two centuries. Other contemporary religious systems were spared the immoral and illogical attempt to justify the ways of the Creator-God. Paganism recognised no special embodiment of the universal *Creative Power*. Hence we have no reason for regarding the erection into a supreme object of worship of the author of this world as inevitably given in the speculative thought of the age, and as such we may fairly treat it as a speciality of the Christian faith.

Yet another speciality of the faith propagated by the Christian Church, but the inevitability of which cannot be concluded from the general historical process, is the imperfection of the character-ideal embodied in its central figure. I am aware that many hold the Jesus-figure to have been the great *pièce de résistance* of the Christian faith, that which enabled it to successfully outbid rival systems and cults. While it is often admitted that the morality of the Gospel discourses is not original, since it is to be found in earlier and elsewhere in contemporary thought, the Jesus-figure is supposed to have exercised a unique charm on that most uncritical stratum of the population of an uncritical age, from among which the converts to the Christianity of the first and second centuries were mainly drawn. Even if we admitted that there might be something in this, the relative success of other religious systems—one, at least, very nearly approaching in numbers and influence Christianity—which had no historical or quasi-historical figure as an object of devotion, would tend to show that such a figure was not essential or inevitable to the religious consciousness of the time.

Professor Bury, in his introduction to Mr Stewart Hay's remarkable study of the Emperor Elagabalus (xxvii.), speaking of the relation of Christianity to other cults of the time, observes: "It is unproven that Christianity is the best alternative." He

further expresses the opinion that, had it succumbed before one of its rivals, "we should be to-day very much where we are." I therefore contend that both the principle of religious intolerance, *i.e.* of the culpability of disbelief, the cult of the Creator-God, and the Jesus-figure, with all its imperfections, belong to the accidental side of the history of the time, and not to its essential and inevitable trend, that they are special characteristics of the Christian Church and its doctrine, and not given in the general tendencies of the age; and that hence we are justified in charging them, for good or evil, to the account of the Christian religion, *per se*, —namely, as a particular product of the human mind, and judging it with regard to them as an isolated phenomenon. It is from this point of view that I hold we are further justified in pronouncing Christianity as on the whole a bad religion from the outset, just as I pronounce a man to be a bad man who has certain bad personal qualities over and above those attributable to his age, class, or race. With the Christian religion the case would seem to stand thus: Its good sides are not original, but are shared by it in common with other contemporary creeds and cults. What is peculiar to it are three points named, *i.e.* dogmatic intolerance, the cult of the Creator-God, and the Jesus-figure of the Gospels.

If challenged as to the super-eminent human

virtues of the Jesus-figure as presented in the Gospels, I am ready with my answer. I do not rest my case on my non-appreciation of particular traits—*e.g.* of a young person who at twelve years takes to "disputing" with his learned elders, or of the wisdom of heaven-sent teachers who use strong language at trees for not bearing fruit at the wrong time of year as a vent to their ill-humour at being unable to satisfy their hunger. Neither do I press home too severely the question as to the reasonableness of basing a dogmatic estimate of personal character solely on an avowedly partisan recital<sup>1</sup> of certain events and speeches selected out of a three years' propaganda tour. What I do say is, that

<sup>1</sup> The unscrupulously partisan nature of the Gospel narrative is strikingly exemplified in the treatment of a rival agitator to Jesus. "Barabbas," whose name is now a byword, but which simply means the Son of Abba, is abusively styled a "robber," and is accused of "committing murder" in an insurrection. The data given would simply seem to indicate that this Son of Abba was a leader of one of the numerous abortive *émeutes* occurring in Jerusalem at the time, and that his worst crime was probably an excess of patriotic zeal and religious enthusiasm. Insurrections are not generally made with rose water, and that lives were lost in street fighting is likely enough; but to charge "Barabbas" with "murder" looks like sheer malignancy. How about the attack on persons lawfully engaged in earning their livelihood in the forecourt of the Temple by Jesus and his followers? For, as Mr Sturt of Oxford has recently shown, it is quite clear that this incident, if historical at all, implies the armed raid of a band, by whom the Temple authorities were for the time being overpowered. Would lives lost in this case have meant "murder"? It would seem from the narrative that the parallel between the cases of Barabbas and Jesus was obvious alike to Pilate and the Jerusalem mob.

the character portrayed in the Gospel narrative, so far as one can form a judgment on it from the data given, conveys the impression of a real self-idolatry, combined with a disingenuous humility which is singularly unpleasing, and which, elevated to the rank of a model, has, I conceive, been a fruitful source of that vice of hypocrisy to which the Christian religion in all ages has so readily lent itself. In the above-mentioned impression I am so far from being alone that an eminent divine of the Scottish Church, in an article in a leading review some few years ago, virtually admits the self-idolatry, but saves his ecclesiastical face by trying to forge out of it an argument for the dogma of the divinity of Jesus. We are, says he in effect, on the horns of a dilemma—either Jesus was a vain person and a quite imperfect character, or else he was God, and as representing divinity in human form he had a perfect right to—“put on side” (so to say)! Our Scotch theologian, if I remember rightly, even adduces the case of an ambassador of a great power who has to remind the foreigner perpetually of his importance and dignity. The naïve and childlike suggestion of the eminent Scottish divine will hardly fail to excite a smile with many persons. The idea of God, of the divine government, sending down to earth an envoy-extraordinary is to me humorous, but it would certainly appeal to the barbaric mind. Be this as it may, the recogni-

tion of the imperfection of the character from a human point of view is significant as coming from a distinguished luminary of the Christian Church.

Who of us has not known, or known of, propagandists of to-day who, alike without personal exaltation, without parading the fact that they have had no certainty of a night's lodging, and without ostentatious "humility," have carried on their work for a lifetime (*e.g.* the protagonists of the Russian revolutionary movement)?

There is a third point regarding Christianity as a special and particular manifestation of the religious tendency of the age in which it arose, over and above the necessities of that tendency itself, and which is also reflected in the recorded conduct of its founder. I refer to the apparently unacknowledged plagiarism of the precepts of the Gospel discourses, precepts which we all (at least up to a certain point) recognise. We all know that the morality called Christian had been preached before, and was being preached at the time by Stoics, Buddhists, probably by the Essenes, and certainly a little earlier by the Jewish Rabbi Hillel. Now, whatever may be the case with the other sources mentioned, it is hardly conceivable that a Jew of Palestine in the time of Augustus, interested in religious matters, should not have heard of the Rabbi Hillel and his teaching. Hence it is very difficult to acquit the author of the Gospel dis-

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courses of appropriating noble ideas without acknowledgment!

The foregoing are certainly defects in the Christian system viewed as a special phenomenon of human culture. The reply of the Christian to such a criticism (apart from personal abuse of the critic, his usual weapon) I can very well foresee. "By its fruits ye shall judge it," he will say. "(1) How came it that such an imperfect creed, as you picture it, gained over other systems also embodying the general religious aspirations of the first three centuries? and (2) how was it that such a creed purified and regenerated the world?"

The rejoinder to the first question is that in the absence of any even approximately adequate data as to the inner social and intellectual life of the period, above all, our almost total absence of knowledge of the feelings and aspirations of the masses, it is a sheer begging of the question to assume that the success of Christianity was due to its intrinsic merits. Even as it is, we can see many external causes which undoubtedly contributed to that success (*c.g.* a skilfully devised and carried out system of agitation and organisation, the latter including eleemosynary relief). The conversion of the Roman world was a slow process; moreover, its greatest numerical extension, it should be noted, took place precisely at a time when it is admitted by most Christians themselves that their religion

had lost its original purity, and was, indeed, advanced far in the path of corruption.

The second question, as to the purifying and regenerative effects of Christianity, may be answered by a simple denial of the facts. To make good this denial at the present time and place does not lie within my present scope; but the open-minded reader may be referred to two popular and succinct statements of the case from this point of view—to the late Cotter Morison's *Service of Man*, and to Mr M'Cabe's recently published work, *The Bible in Europe*. In short, it can be very easily and conclusively shown that not a single one of the beneficent effects ascribed to the advent of the Christian religion in the Roman Empire are really due to it, but, in so far as they rest on facts, are traceable to quite other causes—causes in most cases already in operation before Christianity dawned on mankind.

On the other hand, three things Christianity has undoubtedly given to mankind—viz., religious persecution, an evil-producing world-creator as object of worship, and religious hypocrisy. A Catholic bishop had the effrontery, after the judicial murder of Ferrer, to talk in an encyclical about the antagonism of the wicked world to "Christ and His Church." Yes, there has been, is, and will continue so long as a vestige of organised Christianity remains, an antagonism between all that is best in

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the world, all that is worth living and fighting for in human affairs, and the solid phalanx of opposition to knowledge, backed by cruelty, toadyism to wealth, privilege, and lust of oligarchic power, for which in the main "Christ and His Church" have always stood. The men of movements are, after all, largely symbols. It may well be that the Idealist, the Socialist, and the Free-thinker of the future, will oppose to the memory of the self-glorifying Galilean of what by an arbitrary convention (as reckoning from the 27th year of Augustus, A.U.C. 753) we term the first century, that of the self-effacing Catalonian of what by the same reckoning we term the twentieth century.

## CHAPTER XV

### PROBLEM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AS THE DERELICT OF THE AGES

#### I

THE collapse of all forms of dogmatic Christianity during the latter half of the nineteenth century is a matter that will repay the careful attention of the student of history and sociology. The most interesting example of this collapse, or decay from within, is afforded by the Roman Catholic Church. The great, co-equal, sometimes rival, sometimes coadjutor, of the secular powers of the civilised world during the Middle Ages is now left stranded, a hollow wreck, imperfectly concealing in the quasi-integrity of its outward forms the decaying rottenness within. In a recent work the ex-Jesuit father, Mr Joseph M'Cabe, has traced the fact of this decay and shown it to be not confined to one country or group of countries, but general throughout all the nations comprising what is known as Christendom. He shows it to have followed closely in all cases the advance of education. In

the Latin countries, Catholic religion is to all intents and purposes dead in the large towns, while even in the countryside its influence is not a tithe of what it was half a century ago. In France, with the exception of some of the districts in the south-west, Catholicism can hardly be said to exist any longer as a living faith. It would be interesting, could we get at the facts as to the number of "true believers," that is, persons for whom the appellation Catholic is more than a mere label.

An eminent authority friendly to Catholicism has estimated the number of French Catholics at not more than "three or four millions," all told, out of the nearly forty millions of the French population. This estimate, which certainly confirms the impressions of those acquainted with modern French life, even if it be only approximately true, would fully justify the statement that Catholicism as a national faith in France is dead. The same writer, Sabatier, puts the number of French Catholics in the earlier part of the nineteenth century at thirty millions. These figures, which, as Mr McCabe shows, cannot be much exaggerated on either side, are indeed significant. A similar state of things to the above is to be found in the other Latin countries, with the exception that the hold of the Church on the peasantry, who, in many cases, are wholly illiterate, is proportionately stronger.

In the German Empire, in spite of appearances, the strength of the "Centre" representation in the Reichstag is demonstrably due to the inequality of electoral districts. Mr M'Cabe points out that while a Social Democratic deputy represents 70,000 votes, a Catholic deputy will only represent 21,000. The Catholic vote, moreover, is shown to have fallen from 27 to 19 per cent. in twenty years. In Austria the Romano-Christian faith, while dead to all intents and purposes in the large centres, retains a steadily diminishing hold in many peasant districts of the Tyrol, Steiermark, Kärnthen, etc. In Hungary, the strength of the Church lies exclusively in the illiterate peasantry. As regards the smaller countries of Western and Central Europe, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, they all tell the same tale—to wit, a heavy loss to the Church in the number even of its nominal adherents, while its real influence is reduced to a fraction of what it was two generations ago, or even less. The statistical and other details confirming what is here said will be found set forth in Mr M'Cabe's book, *The Decay of the Church of Rome*.

There is a general impression abroad that though the Catholic Church may be losing in the Latin countries, it is gaining in those occupied by the Anglo-Saxon race. We commend to those who think thus the chapters in which Mr M'Cabe conclusively demolishes this notion. As regards

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the English-speaking world, Mr M'Cabe's verdict is, after giving figures in support of his statement, that, apart from France, the Roman Catholic Church has lost as heavily in the English-speaking world as it has done in the Latin world. Of the United States the same story might be told as of Great Britain and its colonies. A million of the "faithful" is shown to have fallen away in the last decade of the nineteenth century alone. The general loss, as will be seen, is no less here than elsewhere, notwithstanding the fact that of late years the Church has undoubtedly effected some transfers to itself from the dogmatic Protestant sects. The change from one form of dogmatic Christianity to another, it may be remarked, does not, of course, touch the general decay of Christian theology all along the line.

The remarkable rationalist movement within the Roman Church which has sprung up during the last ten years, corresponding to similar movements in the Protestant Churches, and known as Modernism, has rapidly grown to such proportions as to throw the authorities at the Vatican into something like a panic. The only remedy the latter seem to have been able to devise against it, in the abjectness of their terror, is the exaction of a special oath from its clergy pledging themselves in advance not to accept or preach the doctrine even before they have investigated it. Such a

measure will seem to most impartial persons to partake of the nature of Mrs Partington's operation with her broom. Yet the anxiety of the curia "bosses" respecting Modernism is not without good ground. They feel that once the dogmatic integrity of the traditional Church system is gone, the whole *raison d'être* of the Church organisation will have gone too.

Up to the present time, while the Church has lost in everything else, in numbers, influence, character, there is one point in which it has not lost—namely, in money. Its real property and its invested funds have gone on increasing. What this is may be gathered when it is said that on a moderate estimate over thirty years ago, *i.e.* in 1880, in France alone, the Jesuit property was computed at seven hundred million francs, or nearly three millions sterling, while the total value of the real estate of the monastic orders has been estimated approximately by good authorities at £80,000,000 (eighty millions sterling). This is quite apart from the privileges enjoyed by the Catholic hierarchy in France, by which they are allowed the free use of the churches, *i.e.* the national property, in itself equivalent to a large state subsidy. Such being its financial condition in one country alone, the prodigious wealth of the Church as a whole may be fairly well gauged. Its possessions in Spain, Italy, and Austria, and

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in the Catholic parts of the German Empire, are, on the average, certainly not less in proportion, and in some cases much more. Altogether, the present condition of the Catholic world points to the probability that the moribund hulk of the once mighty organisation is kept in being solely by the aid of its material assets, and that, were it deprived of these, or even were their amount substantially reduced, the Catholic community would in a very short time sink to the level of a small sect.

Not the least striking point in Mr M'Cabe's exposure of the decay of the Roman Church is his proof of the fact that the enormous majority of its nominal votaries are unable to read or write. Of the Vatican's 190,000,000 followers, more than 120,000,000 are illiterate. The Latins and Slavs, we are told, alone furnish more than 100,000,000 of these illiterate followers. This means, says Mr M'Cabe, "that the majority of the Roman Catholics in the world to-day consist of American Indians, half-castes, negroes, and mulattoes; Italian, Spanish, Russian, and Slavonic peasants of the most backward character; and Indian, Chinese, and African natives" (pp. 304-5).

In the following section I deal with the attempts made by the Catholic interest to bluff the real situation as regards the strength and influence of Catholicism and to make the world believe that

the derelict carcass still shows signs of life, and, indeed, of a reviving life, in endeavouring to make the defence of Catholicism an up-to-date pose by attracting to it, here and there, a smart journalist, and as many dabblers in literature of the decadent and intellectual dude type as can be roped in.

## II

The question we have to consider now is the inner meaning of the rapid decay of Catholicism in its social, political, and personal influence. The first and most obvious explanation is that Catholicism shares in the common fate which has overtaken all traditional dogmatic faiths resting on authority—the “institutional religions” of the world, as they are sometimes termed. The latter respond to and are the products of a phase of human culture which civilised mankind in modern times is fast outgrowing where it has not already outgrown it. The early and classical expression of decaying belief is the familiar antithesis between the *dévo*t and the *honnête homme*. The advance of human knowledge and the condition of mind engendered by modern thought generally, has, within the last half century at least, caused the attitude of the *honnête homme* to become the typical and normal one for civilised mankind in general. Yet, in spite of this, we see the forms of dogmatic Christianity still outwardly subsisting, at the worst,

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in a state of decayed grandeur, and still nominally exercising some influence. How is this? The answer is, that the decay in the vitality of these dogmatic creeds, the progress of the outgrowing of them and of the fundamental conception of the world on which they are based, is modified in its manifestations by two important factors—to wit, (1) the conservatism of the human mind as regards forms, even after all the vital meaning has left them; and (2) the instinctive conviction of the dominant classes that their interests, *i.e.* the existing economic and political structure of society, is bound up with their maintenance in, at least, apparent outward integrity.

The first of these influences is a sociologic phenomenon familiar to students of folklore and kindred branches of inquiry. All interested in these subjects know how prehistoric modes of thought have survived in peasant communities up to modern time. Or, to take a historical instance interesting in point of view of our present subject. St. Benedict in the sixth century, more than two centuries after the establishment of Christianity as the imperial religion by Constantine, found at Monte Cassino, not a hundred miles from Rome itself, the old rites, ceremonies, and beliefs of Paganism in full force without a trace of Christian influence being observable. In the secluded valleys of Thessaly it is said that the rites of the

local Zeus, and other cults dating from classic times and before, continued to be celebrated uninterruptedly in their old forms far into the early Middle Ages. Even to-day Mr Farnell, in his *Cults of the Greek States*, is able to quote an instance of peasant practices in the same districts, clearly deriving, with but little modification, from the ancient cult of Dionysos. Taking this tendency of the human mind into consideration, the wonder is not the extent to which Christian observances continue in vogue, but rather the extent to which they and the beliefs of which they are the expression have lapsed, and that within a comparatively short period.

As regards the second of the causes mentioned as tending to militate against the rapid extinction of theological creeds and their cults—namely, their being so intimately bound up with the structure and traditions of existing society, and hence with the interests of the economically and politically privileged classes of that society—it is unnecessary to do much more than call attention to the fact, obvious as it is. This fact, however, renders it improbable that the class-interests in question will allow dogmatic theology and its cultural expressions to die a natural death so long as modern capitalist society continues to exist; and hence so long, in all probability, will institutional religion survive, at least in its outward manifestations. It

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will be readily understood from this why the policy of the Catholic Church is to pander to modern capitalism even in its worst forms. It may be said justly that the State Churches of dogmatic Protestantism are no better in this respect, being mere adjuncts of the economical and political powers that be. But it cannot be denied that the Catholic Church in its efforts to ingratiate itself with these same powers often does not scruple to go "one better" than its rivals. The fact is, moreover, especially noticeable in the case of Roman Ecclesiasticism, seeing that it has always claimed an independence over and against the secular power and secular interests, whereas the Protestant Churches, in so far as they are State Churches, have hardly professed to be much more than spiritual satraps of the governing classes. Add to this that Roman Catholicism, while quite prepared to be up-to-date in making its peace with all forms of modern capitalist unrighteousness, still retains a mediæval penchant for persecution and cruelty.

It thus embodies in its present-day form oftentimes the worst characteristics of two different periods of history. While, on the one hand, it will back up colonial expansion and aggressive wars on backward races, market-hunting, and capitalist exploitation generally, on the other it will champion barbarous forms of punishment. There is no more

zealous advocate of the death-penalty in criminal law than the Roman Church. It is generally supposed by the modern man that the apparent blood-lust of the Catholic Church in earlier periods of history was largely attributable to the general custom and spirit of those times, though a glance into the writings of eminent modern Catholic theologians hardly confirms this view. What, however, opened the eyes of the world at large to the hideous possibilities inherent even in modern Catholic practice was the atrocious judicial murder of Francesco Ferrer at Barcelona in the autumn of 1909. The latter event afforded striking evidence of the fact that the proceedings of the Inquisition, etc., in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are not wholly to be attributed to the general character of the period in question, but that, to put it moderately, a considerable share of the iniquities perpetrated is deducible from the intrinsic character of Catholic Christianity itself. The Catholic Church can be modern enough in currying favour with wealth and privilege, by casting its agis over current capitalism and its methods, but it cannot be modern, it seems, in adopting latter-day principles of toleration and decent humanity. This is one small point the apologist of Catholicism might do well to ponder.

The question now arises why—given the enormous “pull” that traditional belief and custom

have, given the support, tacit or avowed, of powerful interests in modern society, and last, but not least, the enormous wealth at its disposal—the Catholic Church has not made a better fight for its numerical standing and its influence than it has. Dead in the Latin nations amongst the entire educated sections of the population, and with a visibly waning influence even among the peasantry in most districts; even in Anglo-Saxon countries fully sharing in the general decline of dogmatic Christianity, mainly drawing recruits, where it does so at all, from the other sects, and in no way gaining on the advance of rationalist thought; in similar case, as regards the vast Germanic populations of Central Europe, with everything else in its favour and only education and enlightened thought against it, one would certainly have imagined that such a great organisation would have succeeded more effectively than it has in at least holding its own. Certainly the facts suggest either a want of ability or a gross mismanagement on the part of the heads of the ecclesiastical hierarchy from their own point of view.

And what has the Church got to show on the other side? How, it may be asked, has it succeeded in imbuing many not unintelligent persons in this country, and elsewhere, with the notion that it is making progress? The answer is, bluff! We hear sometimes talk of the “modern Catholic revival.”

Where is this "revival" to be sought? The real truth is this: in addition to the old logic-chopping Jesuit, whose intellectual subtlety and profound cleverness we are always hearing puffed, there does exist a small "cultured" sect, mostly of literary decadents, in London, Paris, and possibly elsewhere, who are just now engaged in "running" Catholicism as a "going concern." In this country these are mostly young men of the "Yah! early Victorian!" type. They need not necessarily be avowedly Catholics themselves, but they make it their business to adopt the Catholic pose, bowing respectfully towards the Church as an organisation, and defending its dogma and practice in an indirect and cryptic manner against the assaults of rationalism, which are waved aside in a lofty manner. Such also talk mysteriously and with awe of the mighty progress and universal influence of the Holy Catholic Church. The one thing these gentlemen dislike is plain speech. Straightforward English is for them too utterly "early Victorian." [They call everything they don't like "early Victorian"!] ]

They may not say so outright, but these intellectual dudes evidently wish to convey the impression that the great truths established in the fifties and sixties of the last century, and that have become incorporated as matters of course in the intellectual outlook of the present age, are, somehow or other, no longer true. They belong to the same type,

*mutatis mutandis*, that in the early eighties we knew as the knights of the sunflower and the lily, and as personified in Savoy opera in the character of Bunthorne. The successors of this type are machining the imaginary "boom" of the present time. The game of bluff can rarely be kept up for very long, and this Catholic pose, we may safely assume, will pass into some other before many years are over.

If it should be asked, Is Protestantism in any better case than Catholicism? the answer must be emphatically in the negative. Indeed, it is the collapse of the Protestant sects, or at least of their dogmatic *raison d'être*, which has given a superficially plausible colour to the notion of the increasing influence of Catholicism, especially in Anglo-Saxon countries. Protestant Christian dogma as such has ceased to count. The sects still may remain, but under the auspices of "new theologies," with their character completely changed. The old theology which gave them meaning is, in any case, explained away with more or less ingenuity, where not openly repudiated. To speak in "early Victorian" plain language, the belief in the traditional Protestant variations is no less moribund than in the dogmas of the Catholic Church itself.















