

## CHAPTER XXVII--THE MANAGEMENT

In this final chapter it were well to look at the Social Abyss in its widest aspect, and to put certain questions to Civilisation, by the answers to which Civilisation must stand or fall. For instance, has Civilisation bettered the lot of man? "Man," I use in its democratic sense, meaning the average man. So the question re-shapes itself: Has Civilisation bettered the lot of the average man?

Let us see. In Alaska, along the banks of the Yukon River, near its mouth, live the Innuits folk. They are a very primitive people, manifesting but mere glimmering adumbrations of that tremendous artifice, Civilisation. Their capital amounts possibly to 2 pounds per head. They hunt and fish for their food with bone-headed spears and arrows. They never suffer from lack of shelter. Their clothes, largely made from the skins of animals, are warm. They always have fuel for their fires, likewise timber for their houses, which they build partly underground, and in which they lie snugly during the periods of intense cold. In the summer they live in tents, open to every breeze and cool. They are healthy, and strong, and happy. Their one problem is food. They have their times of plenty and times of famine. In good times they feast; in bad times they die of starvation. But starvation, as a chronic condition, present with a large number of them all the time, is a thing unknown. Further, they have no debts.

In the United Kingdom, on the rim of the Western Ocean, live the English folk. They are a consummately civilised people. Their capital amounts to at least 300 pounds per head. They gain their food, not by hunting and fishing, but by toil at colossal artifices. For the most part, they suffer from lack of shelter. The greater number of them are vilely housed, do not have enough fuel to keep them warm, and are insufficiently clothed. A constant number never have any houses at all, and sleep shelterless under the stars. Many are to be found, winter and summer, shivering on the streets in their rags. They have good times and bad. In good times most of them manage to get enough to eat, in bad times they die of starvation. They are dying now, they were dying yesterday and last year, they will die to-morrow and next year, of starvation; for they, unlike the Innuits, suffer from a chronic condition of starvation. There are 40,000,000 of the English folk, and 939 out of every 1000 of them die in poverty, while a constant army of 8,000,000 struggles on the ragged edge of starvation. Further, each babe that is born, is born in debt to the sum of 22 pounds. This is because of an artifice called the National Debt.

In a fair comparison of the average Innuits and the average Englishman, it will be seen that life is less rigorous for the Innuits; that while the Innuits suffers only during bad times from starvation, the Englishman suffers during good times as well; that no Innuits lacks fuel, clothing, or housing, while the Englishman is in perpetual lack of these three essentials. In this connection it is well to instance the judgment of a man such as Huxley. From the knowledge gained as a medical officer in

the East End of London, and as a scientist pursuing investigations among the most elemental savages, he concludes, "Were the alternative presented to me, I would deliberately prefer the life of the savage to that of those people of Christian London."

The creature comforts man enjoys are the products of man's labour. Since Civilisation has failed to give the average Englishman food and shelter equal to that enjoyed by the Innuite, the question arises: Has Civilisation increased the producing power of the average man? If it has not increased man's producing power, then Civilisation cannot stand.

But, it will be instantly admitted, Civilisation has increased man's producing power. Five men can produce bread for a thousand. One man can produce cotton cloth for 250 people, woollens for 300, and boots and shoes for 1000. Yet it has been shown throughout the pages of this book that English folk by the millions do not receive enough food, clothes, and boots. Then arises the third and inexorable question: If Civilisation has increased the producing power of the average man, why has it not bettered the lot of the average man?

There can be one answer only--MISMANAGEMENT. Civilisation has made possible all manner of creature comforts and heart's delights. In these the average Englishman does not participate. If he shall be forever unable to participate, then Civilisation falls. There is no reason for the continued existence of an artifice so avowed a failure. But it is impossible that men should have reared this tremendous artifice in vain.

It stuns the intellect. To acknowledge so crushing a defeat is to give the death-blow to striving and progress.

One other alternative, and one other only, presents itself. Civilisation must be compelled to better the lot of the average men. This accepted, it becomes at once a question of business management. Things profitable must be continued; things unprofitable must be eliminated. Either the Empire is a profit to England, or it is a loss. If it is a loss, it must be done away with. If it is a profit, it must be managed so that the average man comes in for a share of the profit.

If the struggle for commercial supremacy is profitable, continue it. If it is not, if it hurts the worker and makes his lot worse than the lot of a savage, then fling foreign markets and industrial empire overboard. For it is a patent fact that if 40,000,000 people, aided by Civilisation, possess a greater individual producing power than the Innuits, then those 40,000,000 people should enjoy more creature comforts and heart's delights than the Innuits enjoy.

If the 400,000 English gentlemen, "of no occupation," according to their own statement in the Census of 1881, are unprofitable, do away with them. Set them to work ploughing game preserves and planting potatoes. If they are profitable, continue them by all means, but let it be seen to that the average Englishman shares somewhat in the profits they produce by working at no occupation.

In short, society must be reorganised, and a capable management put at the head. That the present management is incapable, there can be no discussion. It has drained the United Kingdom of its life-blood. It has enfeebled the stay-at-home folk till they are unable longer to struggle in the van of the competing nations. It has built up a West End and an East End as large as the Kingdom is large, in which one end is riotous and rotten, the other end sickly and underfed.

A vast empire is foundering on the hands of this incapable management. And by empire is meant the political machinery which holds together the English-speaking people of the world outside of the United States. Nor is this charged in a pessimistic spirit. Blood empire is greater than political empire, and the English of the New World and the Antipodes are strong and vigorous as ever. But the political empire under which they are nominally assembled is perishing. The political machine known as the British Empire is running down. In the hands of its management it is losing momentum every day.

It is inevitable that this management, which has grossly and criminally mismanaged, shall be swept away. Not only has it been wasteful and inefficient, but it has misappropriated the funds. Every worn-out, pasty-faced pauper, every blind man, every prison babe, every man, woman, and child whose belly is gnawing with hunger pangs, is hungry because the funds have been misappropriated by the management.

Nor can one member of this managing class plead not guilty before the

judgment bar of Man. "The living in their houses, and in their graves the dead," are challenged by every babe that dies of innutrition, by every girl that flees the sweater's den to the nightly promenade of Piccadilly, by every worked-out toiler that plunges into the canal. The food this managing class eats, the wine it drinks, the shows it makes, and the fine clothes it wears, are challenged by eight million mouths which have never had enough to fill them, and by twice eight million bodies which have never been sufficiently clothed and housed.

There can be no mistake. Civilisation has increased man's producing power an hundred-fold, and through mismanagement the men of Civilisation live worse than the beasts, and have less to eat and wear and protect them from the elements than the savage Innuin in a frigid climate who lives to-day as he lived in the stone age ten thousand years ago.

## CHALLENGE

I have a vague remembrance  
Of a story that is told  
In some ancient Spanish legend  
Or chronicle of old.

It was when brave King Sanche  
Was before Zamora slain,  
And his great besieging army  
Lay encamped upon the plain.

Don Diego de Ordenez  
Sallied forth in front of all,  
And shouted loud his challenge  
To the warders on the wall.

All the people of Zamora,  
Both the born and the unborn,  
As traitors did he challenge  
With taunting words of scorn.

The living in their houses,  
And in their graves the dead,  
And the waters in their rivers,  
And their wine, and oil, and bread.

There is a greater army  
That besets us round with strife,  
A starving, numberless army  
At all the gates of life.

The poverty-stricken millions

Who challenge our wine and bread,  
And impeach us all as traitors,  
Both the living and the dead.

And whenever I sit at the banquet,  
Where the feast and song are high,  
Amid the mirth and music  
I can hear that fearful cry.

And hollow and haggard faces  
Look into the lighted hall,  
And wasted hands are extended  
To catch the crumbs that fall

And within there is light and plenty,  
And odours fill the air;  
But without there is cold and darkness,  
And hunger and despair.

And there in the camp of famine,  
In wind, and cold, and rain,  
Christ, the great Lord of the Army,  
Lies dead upon the plain.

LONGFELLOW