CHAPTER III

THE FIRST MAIN GENERALIZATION OF SOCIALISM

§ 1.

The first--the chief aspect of social life in relation to which the Socialist finds the world now planless and drifting, and for which he earnestly propounds the scheme of a better order, is that whole side of existence which is turned towards children, their begetting and upbringing, their care and education. Perpetually the world begins anew, perpetually death wipes out failure, disease, unteachableness and all that has served life and accomplished itself; and to many Socialists, if not to all, this is the supreme fact in the social scheme. The whole measure of progress in a generation is the measure in which the children improve in physical and mental quality, in social co-ordination, in opportunity, upon their parents. Nothing else matters in the way of success if in that way the Good Will fails.

Let us now consider how such matters stand in our world at the present time, and let us examine them in the light of the Socialist spirit. I have already quoted certain facts from the London Education Committee's Report, by which you have seen that by taking a school haphazard--dipping a ladle, as it were, into the welter of the London population--we find more than eighty in the hundred of the London

children insufficiently clad, more than half unwholesomely dirty--eleven per cent. verminous--and more than half the infants infested with vermin! The nutrition of these children is equally bad. The same report shows clearly that differences in clothing and cleanliness are paralleled with differences in nutrition that are equally striking.

> "The 30 boys of the lowest class showed considerable failure to reach the average weight for their age of the school; the average shortage per boy for his age being as much as .7 kilogram. The effect upon weight was more striking than upon height, as the average failure in height was one centimetre. The 141 boys of the next class worked out at exactly the average. The 49 well-clad boys showed an average excess per age-weight of .54 kilogram and age-height of 1.8 centimetres."

And who can doubt the amount of mental and moral dwarfing that is going on side by side with this physical shortage?

Now, it may be argued that this is not a fair sample of our general population, that these facts have been culled from a special section of the population, that here we are dealing with the congestion of London slums and altogether exceptional conditions. This is not so. The school examined was not from a specially bad district. And it happens that the entire working-class population of one typical English town, York, has been exhaustively studied by Mr. B. S.

Rowntree, and here are some facts from his result that quite confirm the impression given by the London figures.

"It was quite impossible to make a thorough examination of the physical condition of all the children, but as they came up to be weighed and measured, they were classified under the four headings, 'Very Good,' 'Good,' 'Fair,' or 'Bad,' by an investigator whose training and previous experience in similar work enabled her to make a reliable, even if rough, classification....

"'Bad' implies that the child bore physical traces of underfeeding and neglect.

"The numbers classified under the various heads were as follows:--

BOYS.

	Very Good, per cent.	Good, per cent.	Fair, per cent.	Bad, per cent.
Section 1 (poorest)	2.8	14.6	31.	51.6
Section 2 (middle)	7.4	20.1	53.7	18.8
Section 3 (highest)	27.4	33.8	27.4	11.4

GIRLS.

Section 1 (poorest)	2.1	14.6	31.	52.3
Section 2 (middle)	7.5	21.2	50.4	20.9
Section 3 (highest)	27.2	38.	23.1	11.7

"It will be seen that the proportion of children classed as 'very good' in Section 3 is about ten times as large as in the poorest section, and that more than half of the children in the poorest section are classed as 'bad.'

"These 'bad' children presented a pathetic spectacle, all bore some mark of the hard conditions against which they were struggling. Puny and feeble bodies, dirty and often sadly insufficient clothing, sore eyes, in many cases acutely inflamed through continued want of attention, filthy heads, cases of hip disease, swollen glands--all these and other signs told the same tale of privation and neglect. It will be noticed that the condition of the children in Section 2 (middle-class labour) comes about half-way between Sections 1 and 3. In considering the above table it must of course be remembered that there was no absolute standard by which each child could be judged, but the broad comparison between the different classes is unimpeachable. The table affords further evidence of serious physical deterioration amongst the poorest

section of the community."

And if York and London will not satisfy, let the reader take Edinburgh, whose Charity Organization Society has produced an admirable but infinitely distressing report of the physical conditions of the school children there. It gives a summary account of the homes of fourteen hundred children in one of the Edinburgh Elementary Schools, selected because it represented a fair mixture of prosperous and unprosperous people. I take the first ten entries of this list just as they come, representing thirty-eight children, and they are a fair sample of the whole list. No amount of writing could make these little thumbnail sketches of the reality of domestic life among our population to-day more impressive than they are, thus barrenly given.

"1. A bad home. Woman twice married; second husband deserted her six or seven years ago and she now keeps a bad house in which much drinking and rioting goes on. Daughter on stage sends 10/- a week, son is out of work. A son is in an institution. All as filthy as is the house. The food is irregular. Two children have had free dinners from school this and last winter, clothes were also given for one each time. The boy attends regularly. The woman is a hard drinker, and gets money in undesirable ways. The eldest child has glands, neck; hair not good but clean; fleabitten. The second child, adenoids and tonsils. Housing: five in one room. Evidence from Police, School Charity, Headmistress, School Officers and

Doctors.

"2. The drinking capacity of this family cannot be too much emphasized. The parents can't agree, and live apart, the man allowing 7/6 a week when girl is with mother, and 5/- when she comes to him. She is verminous and very badly kept. Mother can't get charing, as she lives in so bad a neighbourhood, so means to move; at present she keeps other women's babies at 6d. a day each. Elder boy out of work, a tidy lad, reads in Free Library. One child has died. Housing: three in one room. House not so very untidy. Evidence from Police, Church and Officer.

"3. A miserable family and in very wretched circumstances. Father deserts home at intervals, but last time seemed 'sent back by providence,' as the works in the town he was in were burnt down. Children starving in his absence; one had pneumonia, and died since of the effects. The eldest child has adenoids; the second, urticaria; lice, bad; clothes full of pediculi. Housing: six in two rooms. Mother hard-working, does her best, but has chronic bronchitis; does not keep house over tidy. The two elder boys are very idle, tiresome fellows, and worry the father a great deal. They improved and found work during the year following the visit, in which time the father got into decent work in the City. The S. P. C. C. branch had to interfere on behalf of small children. Three dead since

marriage, when parents were at ages 23 and 20. Food good when there is any. School gave free dinners and clothes to two. Evidence from Police, S. P. C. C. branch, School Charity, Parish Sister, Employer, Headmistress, School Officer and Doctors.

"4. The father a complete wreck through intemperate and fast living; speculation first brought him down. Was later moved to hospital, where he died. Had worked on railway a little time. Mother hard-working, works out, home untidy owing to her being out so much. She pays rent regularly, and does her best. An elder boy groom, fed and clad by his master, sends home what he can. Eldest boy does odd jobs, but seems a wastrel. Parish gave 7/6 after father ill, and feeds four children now. Winter of visit school dined five free daily, and clothed three, and previous winter three had free dinners and two had clothes. A school-boy earns. The twins are delicate. There are two lodgers. The eldest child very dirty; the second, glands; the third, knock-kneed, pigeon chest; very feeble, enlarged radices. Three children have died. Housing: nine in three rooms. Evidence from Police, Poor Law Officer, Parish Sister, School Charity, Army Charity, Children's Employment, School Officer, Factor, Pawnbroker and Doctors.

"5. The mother, a nice, clean, tidy woman, doing pretty well by the children. They kept a little shop for a time, and she

used to do a day's charing now and then, but has too many babies now. Parents married at 21 and 18 respectively; two children dead and another expected. He reads papers a good deal, gets them out of trains. This is his first spell of regular work. Two boys sell papers, and a Mission gives cheap meal. Food none too plentiful. One child gets free dinners. The eldest child has glands; impetigo; thin and badly nourished. The second, glands, hair lice and nits bad. The third, boils on neck, glands, thin. The fourth, glands. Housing: eight in two rooms. They are in two thrift societies. Evidence from School-master, Police, Parish Sister, Club, Army Charity, Charity School, Pawnbroker and Doctors.

"6. Father works in a shop in daytime, and in a public-house at night. Rather soft; but wife industrious and energetic and does her best. Children well fed and regular at school. Two children have enlarged tonsils. They get no help, and belong to two thrift societies. One of six children dead in ten years of married life. Housing: seven in two rooms. Evidence from Police, Doctors, Society, Church, Mission, Club, Headmistress, Charity School and Pawnbrokers.

"7. A family where parents are much given to drink; father invalided and being helped by a Sick Society, 3/- a week, and Parish 5/- a week. Housing: five in two rooms. They are in a burying club. Children fleabitten. Two have died. Food is

rather scanty. Wife very quarrelsome and drunken. The boys play truant often. Two were given free food and clothes two winters ago, and this winter one has free dinners and clothes given. A Mission has given cheap clothes. Evidence from School-master, Police, Poor Law Officer, C.O.S. branch, Church, School Charity, Sick Society, Children's Employment, Factor, School Officer, Charity School, Pawnbroker and Doctors.

"8. Fairly decent family; mother washes out, and man has very early work. He drinks, and his employment is somewhat irregular. A son in the country on a farm, and two dead. They were married at 21 and 18. The food is erratic, the children getting 'pieces' at dinner-time, or free school dinners; or when mother comes home, soup with her. The children are rather neglected, and the police give the parents an indifferent character. The eldest child has Eustacian catarrh and nasopharyngitis; glands. The second, enlarged uvula. Housing: four in two very small rooms. Evidence from School-master, Police, Parish Sister, Church, Factor and Doctors.

"9. Father an old soldier without a pension, who reads novels. All the small children were found eating a large meal of ham and eggs and strong tea after 8 p.m., he in bed at the time. They have lapsed from thrift society membership. They are extremely filthy and the man drinks. A Mission sells them meal

cheap. Wife 18 at marriage and one child died. They feed pretty largely but unhealthily, and eat 'pieces' at lunch-time. At time of visit, though very dirty, they were tidier than ever found before. The eldest child has chronic suppuration and large perforation of ear. Housing: five in two rooms. Evidence from Police, Parish Sister, Factor, Soldiers' Society, Charity School and Doctors.

"10. The man a carter, who drank to a certain extent, and died some months after visit, when a Charity gave her help. She had an illegitimate child and two others. He was careless, and both neglected church-going. No medical evidence. Housing: five in two rooms. Evidence from Police, two Churches, Parish Sister, Employer and Charity School."

§ 2.

Now to the Socialist, as to any one who has caught any tinge of the modern scientific spirit, these facts present themselves simply as an atrocious failure of statesmanship. Indeed, a social system in which the mass of the population is growing up under these conditions, he scarcely recognizes as a State, rather it seems to him a mere preliminary higgledy-piggledy aggregation of human beings, out of which a State has to be made. It seems to him that this wretched confusion of affairs which repeats itself throughout the country

wherever population has gathered, must be due to more than individual inadequacy; it must be due to some general and essential failure, some unsoundness in the broad principles upon which the whole organization is conducted.

What is this general principle of failure beneath all these particular cases?

In any given instance this or that reason for the failure of a child may be given. In one case it may be the father or mother drinks, in another that the child is an orphan, neglected by aunt or stepmother, in another that the mother is an invalid or a sweated worker too overwrought to do much for him, or, though a good-hearted soul, she is careless and dirty or ignorant, or that she is immoral and reckless, and so on and so on. Our haphazard sample of ten Scotch cases gives instances of nearly all these alternatives. And from these proximate causes one might work back to more general ones, to the necessity of controlling the drink traffic, of abolishing sweating, of shortening women's hours of labour, of suppressing vice. But for the present argument it is not necessary to follow up these special causes. We can make a wider generalization. For our present analysis it is sufficient to say that one more general maladjustment covers every case of neglected or ill-brought-up children in the world, and that is this, that with or without a decent excuse, the parent has not been equal to the task of rearing a civilized citizen. We have demanded too much from the parent, materially and morally, and the ten cases we have

quoted are just ten out of ten millions of the replies to that demand. Of fifty-two children born, fourteen are dead; and of the remainder we can hardly regard more than thirteen as being tolerably reared.

Is it not obvious then that, unless we are content that things should remain as they are, we must put the relations of parent to child on some securer and more wholesome footing than they are at the present time? We demand too much from the parent, and this being recognized, clearly there are only two courses open to us. The first is to relieve the parents by lowering the standard of our demand; the second is to relieve them by supplementing their efforts.

The first course, the Socialist holds, is not only cruel and unjust to the innocent child, but an entirely barbaric and retrogressive thing to do. It is a frank abandonment of all ideas of progress and world betterment. He puts it aside, therefore, and turns to the alternative. In doing that he comes at once into harmony with all the developmental tendencies of the last hundred years. For a hundred years there has been going on a process of supplementing and controlling parental effort.

A hundred years or so ago, the parent was the supreme authority in a child's destiny--short only of direct murder. Parents were held responsible for their children's rearing to God alone; should they fail, individual good-hearted people might, if they thought proper, step in, give food, give help--provided the parents consented, that

is, but it was not admitted that the community as a whole was concerned in the matter. Parents (and guardians in the absence of parents) were allowed to starve their children, leave them naked, prey upon their children by making them work in factories or as chimney-sweeps and the like; the law was silent, the State acquiesced. Good-hearted parents, on the other hand, who were unsuccessful in the world's affairs, had the torment of seeing their children go short of food and garments, grow up ignorant and feeble, their only hope of help the chancy kindliness of their more prosperous neighbours and the ill-organized charities left by the benevolent dead.

Through all the nineteenth century the irresistible logic of necessity has been forcing people out of the belief in that state of affairs, has been making them see the impossibility of leaving things so absolutely to parental discretion and conscience, has been forcing them towards a constructive and organizing, that is to say towards a Socialist attitude. Essentially the Socialist attitude is this, an insistence that parentage can no longer be regarded as an isolated private matter; that the welfare of the children is of universal importance, and must, therefore, be finally a matter of collective concern. The State, which a hundred years ago was utterly careless of children, is now every year becoming more and more their Guardian, their Over-Parent.

To-day the power of the parents is limited in ways that would have seemed incredible a hundred years ago. In the first place they must no

longer unrestrictedly use their very young children to earn money for them in toil and suffering. A great mass of labour legislation forbids them. In the next place their right to inflict punishment or to hurt wantonly has been limited in many ways. The private enterprises of charitable organizations for the prevention of cruelty and neglect has led to a growing system of law in this direction also. Nor may a parent now prevent a child getting some rudiments of an education.

Between the parent and Heaven now, in addition to the more or less legalized voluntary interference of well-disposed private people, there do appear certain rare functionaries who--while they interfere not at all between good and competent parents and their children, do, in certain instances, save a parental default from its complete fruition. There are the school attendance officer and the sanitary inspector. Then there are--in the London County Council area--the "Ringworm" nurses, who examine the children systematically and by means of certain white and red cards of remonstrance and warning intimidate the parent into good behaviour or pave the way for a prosecution. Everywhere there is the factory inspector--and in certain cases the police. All these functionaries and "accessory consciences" have been thrust in between the supremacy of the parent and the child within the century.

So much the Socialist regards as all to the good, as all in the direction of that great constructive plan of organized human welfare at which he aims. And they all amount to a destruction, so much with

this and so much with that, of the independence of the family, an invasion of the old moral isolation of parent and child.

But while a number of people (who haven't read the Edinburgh Charity Organization Society's Report) are content to regard these interventions as "going far enough," the Socialist considers these things as only the beginning of the organization of the welfare of the nation's children. You will notice that all these laws and regulations at which we have glanced are in the nature of prohibitions or compulsions; few have any element of aid. By virtue of them we have diminished the power of the inferior sort of parents to do evil by their child, but we have done little or nothing to increase and stimulate their powers to do good. We may prevent them doing some sorts of evil things to the child; they may not give it poisonous things, or let it live in morally or physically contagious places, but we do not insure that they shall give it wholesome things--better than they had themselves. We must, if our work is ever to reach effectual fruition, go on to the logical completion of that process of supplementing the parent that the nineteenth century began.

Consider, for instance, the circumstances of parentage among the large section of the working classes whose girls and women engage in factory labour. In many cases the earnings of the woman are vitally necessary to the solvency of the family budget, the father's wages do not nearly cover the common expenditure. In some cases the women are unmarried, or the man is an invalid or out of work. Consider such a woman on the

verge of motherhood. Either she must work in a factory right up to the birth of her child--and so damage its health through her strain and fatigue,[2] or she must give up her work, lose money and go short of food and necessities and so damage the coming citizen. Moreover, after the child is born, either she must feed it artificially and return to work (and prosperity) soon, with a very great risk indeed that the child will die, or she must stay at home to nourish and tend it--until her landlord sells her furniture and turns her out!

[2] The facts of the case are put very clearly, and quite invincibly, by Miss Margaret Macmillan in Infant Mortality. See also The Babies' Tribute to the Modern Moloch, by F. Victor Fisher. (Twentieth Century Press, 1d.) These are small polemical tracts. The case is treated fully, authoritatively and without bias in Infant Mortality by Dr. G. Newman.

Now it does not need that you should be a Socialist to see how cruel and ridiculous it is to have mothers in such a dilemma. But while people who are not Socialists have no remedy to suggest, or only immediate and partial remedies, such, for example, as the forbidding of factory work to women who are about to be or have recently been mothers--an expedient which is bound to produce a plentiful crop of "concealment of birth" and infanticide convictions--the Socialist does proffer a general principle to guide the community in dealing not only with this particular hardship, but with all the kindred hardships

which form a system with it. He declares that we are here in the presence of an unsound and harmful way of regarding parentage; that we treat it as a private affair, that we are still disposed to assume that people's children are almost as much their private concern as their cats, and as little entitled to public protection and assistance. The right view, he maintains, is altogether opposed to this; parentage is a public service and a public duty; a good mother is the most precious type of common individual a community can have, and to let a woman on the one hand earn a living as we do, by sewing tennis-balls or making cardboard boxes or calico, and on the other, not simply not to pay her, but to impoverish her because she bears and makes sacrifices to rear children, is the most irrational aspect of all the evolved and chancy ideas and institutions that make up the modern State. It is as if we believed our civilization existed to make cheap cotton and tennis-balls instead of fine human lives.

The Socialist takes all that the nineteenth century has done in remedial legislation as a mere earnest of all that it has still to do. He works for a consistent application of the principle that England, for example, tacitly admitted when she opened her public elementary schools and compelled the children to come in; the principle that the Community as a whole is the general Over-Parent of all its children; that the parents must be made answerable to the community for the welfare of their children, for their clear minds and clean bodies, their eyesight and weight and training; and that, on the other hand, the parents who do their duty well are as much entitled to collective

provision for their needs and economic security as a soldier, a judge or any other sort of public servant.

§ 3.

Now do not imagine the case for the State being regarded as the Over-Parent, and for the financial support of parents is based simply upon the consideration of neglected, underfed, undereducated and poverty-blighted children. No doubt in every one of the great civilized countries of the world at the present time such children are to be counted by the hundred thousand--by the million; but there is a much stronger case to be stated in regard to that possibly greater multitude of parents who are not in default, those common people, the mass of our huge populations, the wives of the moderately skilled workers or the reasonably comfortable employees, of the middling sort of people, the two, three and four hundred pounds a year families who toil and deny themselves for love of their children, and do contrive to rear them cleanly, passably well grown, decent minded, taught and intelligent to serve the future. Consider the enormous unfairness with which we treat them, the way in which the modern State, such as it is, trades upon their instincts, their affections, their sense of duty and self-respect, to get from them for nothing the greatest social service in the world.

For while the least fortunate sort of children have at any rate the

protection of the police and school inspectors, and the baser sort of parent has all sorts of public and quasi-public helps and doles, the families that make the middle mass of our population are still in the position of the families of a hundred years ago, and have no help under heaven against the world. It matters not how well the home of the skilled artisan's wife or the small business man's wife has been managed--she may have educated her children marvellously, they may be clean, strong, courteous, intelligent--if the husband gets out of work or suffers from business ill-luck or trade depression, or chances to be killed uninsured, down they all go to want. Such insurance as they are able to make, and it needs a tremendously heavy premium to secure an insurance that will not mean a heavy fall of income with the bread-winner's death--must needs be in a private insurance office, and there is no effectual guarantee for either honesty or solvency in that. In most of the petty insurance business the thrifty poor are enormously overcharged and overreached. Rumour has been busy, and I fear only too justly, with the financial outlook of some of the Friendly Societies upon which the scanty security of so many working-class families depends. Such investments as the lower and middle-class father makes of surplus profits and savings must be made in ignorance of the manœuvres of the big and often quite ruthless financiers who control the world of prices. If he builds or trades, he does so as a small investor, at the highest cost and lowest profit. Half the big businesses in the world have been made out of the lost savings of the small investor; a point to which I shall return later. People talk as though Socialism proposed to rob the thrifty

industrious man of his savings. He could not be more systematically robbed of his savings than he is at the present time. Nowhere beyond the limit of the Post Office Savings' Bank is there security--not even in the gilt-edged respectability of Consols, which in the last ten years have fallen from 114 to under 82. Consider the adventure of the thrifty well-meaning citizen who used his savings-bank hoard to buy Consols at the former price, and now finds himself the poorer for not having buried his savings in his garden. The middling sort of man saves for the sake of wife and child; our State not only fails to protect him from the adventures of the manipulating financier, but it deliberately avoids competition with banker, insurance agent and promoter. In no way can the middle-class or artisan parent escape the financier's power and get real security for his home or his children's upbringing.

Not only is every parent of any but the richest classes worried and discouraged by the universal insecurity of outlook in this private adventure world, but at every turn his efforts to do his best for his children are discouraged. If he has no children, he will have all his income to spend on his own pleasures; he need only live in a little house, he pays nothing for school, less for doctor, less for all the needs of life, and he is taxed less; his income tax is the same, no bigger; his rent, his rates, his household bills are all less....

The State will not even help him to a tolerable home, to wholesome food, to needed fuel for the new citizens he is training for it. The

State now-a-days in its slow awakening does show a certain concern in the housing of the lowest classes, a concern alike stimulated and supplemented by such fine charities as Peabody's for example, but no one stands between the two-hundred-a-year man and his landlord in the pitiless struggle to get. For every need of his children whom he toils to make into good men and women, he must pay a toll of owner's profits, he must trust to the anything but intelligent greed of private enterprise.

The State will not even insist that a sufficiency of comfortable, sanitary homes shall be built for his class; if he wants the elementary convenience of a bathroom, he must pay extra toll to the water shareholder; his gas is as cheap in quality and dear in price as it can be; his bread and milk, under the laws of supply and demand, are at the legal minimum of wholesomeness; the coal trade cheerfully raises his coal in mid-winter to ruinous prices. He buys clothes of shoddy and boots of brown paper. To get any other is nearly impossible for a man with three hundred pounds a year. His newspapers, which are supported by advertisers and financiers, in order to hide the obvious injustice of this one-man-fight against the allied forces of property, din in his ears that his one grievance is local taxation, his one remedy "to keep down the rates"--the "rates" which do at least repair his roadway, police his streets, give him open spaces for his babies and help to educate his children, and which, moreover, constitute a burthen he might by a little intelligent political action shift quite easily from his own shoulders to the broad support of capital and

land.

If the children of the decent skilled artisan and middle-class suffer less obviously than the poorer sort of children, assuredly the parents in wearing anxiety, in toil and limitation and disappointment, suffer more. And in less intense and dramatic, but perhaps even more melancholy ways, the children of this class do suffer. They do not die so abundantly in infancy, but they grow up, too many of them, to shabby and limited lives; in Britain they are still, as a class, extraordinarily ill educated--many of them still go to incompetent, understaffed and ill-equipped private adventure schools--they are sent into business prematurely, often at fourteen or fifteen, they become mechanical "respectable" drudges in processes they do not understand. They may escape want and squalor for a while, perhaps, but they cannot escape narrowness and limitation and a cramped and anxious life. If they get to anything better than that, it is chiefly through almost heroic parental effort and sacrifice.

The plain fact is that the better middle-class parents serve the State in this matter of child-rearing, the less is their reward, the less is their security, the greater their toil and anxiety. Is it any wonder then that throughout this more comfortable but more refined and exacting class, the skilled artisan and middle-class, there goes on something even more disastrous, from the point of view of the State, than the squalor, despair and neglect of the lower levels, and that is a very evident strike against parentage? While the very poor continue

to have many children who die or grow up undersized, crippled or half-civilized, the middle mass, which can contrive with a struggle and sacrifice to rear fairly well-grown and well-equipped offspring, which has a conscience for the well-being and happiness of the young, manifests a diminishing spirit for parentage, its families fall to four, to three, to two--and in an increasing number of instances there are no children at all.

With regard to the struggling middle-class and skilled artisan class parent, even more than to the lower poor, does the Socialist insist upon the plain need, if only that our State and nation should continue, of endowment and help. He deems it not simply unreasonable but ridiculous that in a world of limitless resources, of vast expenditure, of unparalleled luxury, in which two-million-pound battleships and multi-millionaires are common objects, the supremely important business of rearing the bulk of the next generation of the middling sort of people should be left almost entirely to the unaided, unguided efforts of impoverished and struggling women and men. It seems to him almost beyond sanity to suppose that so things must or can continue.

§ 4.

And what I have said of the middle-class parent is true with certain modifications of all the classes above it, except that in a monarchy

you reach at last one State-subsidized family--in the case of Britain a very healthy and active group, the Royal family--which is not only State supported, but also beyond the requirements of any modern Socialist, State bred. There are enormous handicaps at every other social level upon efficient parentage, and upon the training of children for any public and generous end. Parentage is treated as a private foible, and those who undertake its solemn responsibilities are put at every sort of disadvantage against those who lead sterile lives, who give all their strength and resources to vanity and socially harmful personal indulgence. These latter, with an ampler leisure and ampler means, determine the forms of pleasure and social usage, they "set the fashion" and bar pride, distinction or relaxation to the devoted parent. The typical British aristocrat is not parent bred, but class bred, a person with a lively sense of social influences and no social ideas. The one class that is economically capable of making all that can be made of its children is demoralized by the very irresponsibility of the wealth that creates this opportunity. This is still more apparent in the American plutocracy, where perhaps half the women appear to be artificially sterilized spenders of money upon frivolous things.

No doubt there is in the richer strata of the community a certain proportion of families with a real tradition of upbringing and service; such English families as the Cecils, Balfours and Trevelyans, for example, produce, generation after generation, public-spirited and highly competent men. But the family tradition in these cases is an

excess of virtue rather than any necessary consequence of a social advantage; it is a defiance rather than a necessity of our economic system. It is natural that such men as Lord Hugh and Lord Robert Cecil, highly trained, highly capable, but without that gift of sympathetic imagination which releases a man from the subtle mental habituations of his upbringing, should idealize every family in the world to the likeness of their own--and find the Socialist's Over-Parent of the State not simply a needless but a mischievous and wicked innovation. They think--they will, I fear, continue to think--of England as a world of happy Hatfields, cottage Hatfields, villa Hatfields, Hatfields over the shop, and Hatfields behind the farmyard--wickedly and wantonly assailed and interfered with by a band of weirdly discontented men. It is a dream that the reader must not share. Even in the case of the rich and really prosperous it is an illusion. In no class at the present time is there a real inducement to the effectual rearing of trained and educated citizens; in every class are difficulties and discouragements.

This state of affairs, says the Socialist, is chaotic or indifferent to a sea of wretchedness and failure, in health, vigour, order and beauty. Such pleasure as it permits is a gaudy indulgence filched from children and duty; such beauty--a hectic beauty stained with injustice; such happiness--a happiness that can only continue so long as it remains blind or indifferent to a sea of wretchedness and failure. Our present system of isolated and unsupported families keeps the mass of the world beyond all necessity painful, ugly and squalid.

It stands condemned, and it must end.

§ 5.

Let me summarize what has been said in this chapter in a compact proposition, and so complete the statement of the First Main Generalization of Socialism.

The ideas of the private individual rights of the parent and of his isolated responsibility for his children are harmfully exaggerated in the contemporary world. We do not sufficiently protect children from negligent, incompetent, selfish or wicked parents, and we do not sufficiently aid and encourage good parents; parentage is too much a matter of private adventure, and the individual family is too irresponsible. As a consequence there is a huge amount of avoidable privation, suffering and sorrow, and a large proportion of the generation that grows up, grows up stunted, limited, badly educated and incompetent in comparison with the strength, training and beauty with which a better social organization could endow it.

The Socialist holds that the community as a whole should be responsible, and every individual in the community, married or single, parent or childless, should be responsible for the welfare and upbringing of every child born into that community. This responsibility may be entrusted in whole or in part to parent, teacher

or other guardian--but it is not simply the right but the duty of the State--that is to say of the organized power and intelligence of the community--to direct, to inquire, and to intervene in any default for the child's welfare.

Parentage rightly undertaken is a service as well as a duty to the world, carrying with it not only obligations but a claim, the strongest of claims, upon the whole community. It must be provided for like any other public service; in any completely civilized State it must be sustained, rewarded and controlled. And this is to be done not to supersede the love, pride and conscience of the parent, but to supplement, encourage and maintain it.

§ 6.

This is the first of the twin generalizations upon which the whole edifice of modern Socialism rests. Its fellow generalization we must consider in the chapter immediately to follow.

But at this point the reader unaccustomed to social questions will experience a difficulty. He will naturally think of this much of change we have broached, as if it was to happen in a world that otherwise was to remain just as the world is now, with merchants, landowners, rich and poor and all the rest of it. You are proposing, he may say, what is no doubt a highly desirable but which is also a

quite impossible thing. You propose practically to educate all the young of the country and to pay at least sufficient to support them and their mothers in decency--out of what? Where will you get the money?

That is a perfectly legitimate question and one that must be answered fully if our whole project is not to fall to the ground.

So we come to the discussion of material means, of the wherewithal, that is to say to the "Economics" of Socialism. The reader will see very speedily that this great social revolution we propose necessarily involves a revolution in business and industry that will be equally far reaching. The two revolutions are indeed inseparable, two sides of one wheel, and it is scarcely possible that one could happen without the other.

Of course the community supports all its children now--the only point is that it does not support them in its collective character as a State "as a whole." All the children in the world are supported by all the people in the world, but very unfairly and irregularly, through the intervention of that great multitude of small private proprietors, the parents. When the parents fail, Charity and the Parish step in. If the reader will refer to those ten cases from Edinburgh I have already quoted in Chapter III., § 1, he will note that in eight out of the ten there comes in the eleemosynary element; in the seventh case especially he will get an inkling of its waste. A change in the system

that diminished (though it by no means abolished) this separate dependence of children upon parents, each child depending upon those "pieces" from its particular parental feast, need not necessarily diminish the amount of wheat, or leather, or milk in the world; the children would still get the bread and milk and boots, but through different channels and in a different spirit. They might even get more. The method of making and distribution will evidently have to be a different one and run counter to currently accepted notions; that is all. Not only is it true that a change of system need not diminish the amount of food in the world; it might even increase it. The Socialist declares that his system would increase it. He proposes a method of making and distribution, a change in industrial conditions and in the conventions of property, that he declares will not only not diminish but greatly increase the production of the world, and changes in the administration that he is equally convinced will insure a far juster and better use of all that is produced.

This side of his proposals we will proceed to consider in our next chapter.