

## CHAPTER IX

### SOME COMMON OBJECTIONS TO SOCIALISM

#### § 1.

In the preceding eight chapters I have sought to give as plain and full an account of the great generalizations of Socialism as I can, and to make it clear exactly what these generalizations convey, and how far they go in this direction and that. Before we go on to a brief historical and anticipatory account of the actual Socialist movement, it may be worth while to take up and consider compactly the chief objections that are urged against the general propositions of Socialism in popular discussion.

Now a very large proportion of these arise out of the commonest vice of the human mind, its disposition to see everything as "yes" or "no," as "black" or "white," its impatience, its incapacity for a fine discrimination of intermediate shades.[14] The queer old scholastic logic still prevails remarkably in our modern world; you find Mr. Mallock, for example, going about arranging his syllogisms, extracting his opponent's "self-contradictions," and disposing of Socialism with stupendous self-satisfaction in all the magazines. He disposes of Socialism quite in the spirit of the young mediæval scholar returning home to prove beyond dispute that "my cat has ten tails" and, given a

yard's start, that a tortoise can always keep ahead of a running man. The essential fallacy is always to declare that either a thing is A or it is not A; either a thing is green or it is not green; either a thing is heavy or it is not heavy. Unthinking people, and some who ought to know better, fall into that trap. They dismiss from their minds the fact that there is a tinge of green in nearly every object in the world, and that there is no such thing as pure green, unless it be just one line or so in the long series of the spectrum; they forget that the lightest thing has weight and that the heaviest thing can be lifted. The rest of the process is simple and has no relation whatever to the realities of life. They agree to some hard and fast impossible definition of Socialism, permit the exponent to extract absurdities therefrom as a conjurer gets rabbits from a hat, and retire with a conviction that on the whole it is well to have had this disturbing matter settled once for all.

[14] See "Scepticism of the Instrument," the Appendix to A  
Modern Utopia. (Chapman & Hall.)

For example, the Anti-Socialist declares that Socialism "abolishes property." He makes believe there is a hard absolute thing called "property" which must either be or not be, which is now, and which will not be under Socialism. To any person with a philosophical education this is a ridiculous mental process, but it seems perfectly rational to an untrained mind--and that is the usual case with the Anti-Socialist. Having achieved this initial absurdity, he then asks

in a tone of bitter protest whether a man may not sleep in his own bed, and is he to do nothing if he finds a coal-heaver already in possession when he retires? This is the method of Mr. G. R. Sims, that delightful writer, who from altitudes of exhaustive misunderstanding tells the working-man that under Socialism he will have--I forget his exact formula, but it is a sort of refrain--no money of his own, no home of his own, no wife of his own, no hair of his own! It is effective nonsense in its way--but nonsense nevertheless. In my preceding chapters I hope I have made it clear that "property" even to-day is a very qualified and uncertain thing, a natural vague instinct capable of perversion and morbid exaggeration and needing control, and that Socialism seeks simply to give it a sharper, juster and rationally limited form in relation to the common-weal.

Or again, the opponent has it that Socialism "abolishes the family"--and with it, of course, "every sacred and tender association," etc., etc. To that also I have given a chapter.

I do not think much Anti-Socialism is dishonest in these matters. The tricks of deliberate falsification, forgery and falsehood that discredit a few Conservative candidates and speakers in the north of England and smirch the reputations of one or two London papers, are due to a quite exceptional streak of baseness in what is on the whole a straightforward opposition to Socialism. Anti-Socialism, as its name implies, is no alternative doctrine; it is a mental resistance, not a mental force. For the most part one is dealing with sheer intellectual

incapacity; with people, muddle-headed perhaps, but quite well-meaning, who are really unable to grasp the quantitative element in things. They think with a simple flat certitude that if, for example, a doctor says quinine is good for a case it means that he wishes to put every ounce of quinine that can be procured into his patient, to focus all the quinine in the world upon him; or that if a woman says she likes dancing, that thereby she declares her intention to dance until she drops. They are dear lumpish souls who like things "straightforward" as they say--all or nothing. They think qualifications or any quantitative treatment "quibbling," to be loudly scorned, bawled down and set aside.

In controversy the temptations for a hot and generous temperament, eager for victory, to misstate and overstate the antagonist's position are enormous, and the sensible Socialist must allow for them unless he is to find discussion intolerable. The reader of the preceding chapters should know exactly how Socialism stands to the family relations, the things it urges, the things it regards with impartiality or patient toleration, the things it leaves alone. The preceding chapters merely summarize a literature that has been accessible for years. Yet it is extraordinary how few antagonists of Socialism seem able even to approach these questions in a rational manner. One admirably typical critic of a pamphlet in which I propounded exactly the same opinions as are here set out in the third chapter, found great comfort in the expression "brood mares." He took hold of my phrase, "State family," and ran wild with it. He declared

it to be my intention that women were no longer to be wives but "brood mares" for the State. Nothing would convince him that this was a glaring untruth. His mind was essentially equestrian; "human stud farm" was another of his expressions.[15] Ridicule and argument failed to touch him; I believe he would have gone to the stake to justify his faith that Socialists want to put woman in the Government haras. His thick-headedness had, indeed, a touch of the heroic.

[15] What makes the expression particularly inappropriate in my case is the fact that in my *Mankind in the Making* there is a clearly-reasoned chapter (Ch. II.) which has never been answered, in which I discuss and, I think, conclusively dispose of Mr. Francis Galton's ideas of Eugenics and deliberate stirpiculture.

Then a certain Father Phelan of St. Louis, no doubt in a state of mental exaltation as honest as it was indiscriminating, told the world through the columns of an American magazine that I wanted to tear the babe from the mother's breast and thrust it into an "Institution." He said worse things than that--but I set them aside as pulpit eloquence. Some readers, no doubt, knew better and laughed, but many were quite sincerely shocked, and resolved after that to give Socialism a very wide berth indeed. *Honi soit qui mal y pense*; the revolting ideas that disgusted them were not mine, they came from some hot dark reservoir of evil thoughts that years of chastity and discipline seem to have left intact in Father Phelan's soul.

The error in all these cases is the error of overstatement, of getting into a condition of confused intellectual excitement, and because a critic declares your window curtains too blue, saying, therefore, and usually with passion, that he wants the whole universe, sky and sea included, painted bright orange. The inquirer into the question of Socialism will find that an almost incurable disease of these controversies. Again and again he will meet with it. If after that critic's little proposition about your window curtains he chances to say that on the whole he thinks an orange sky would be unpleasant, the common practice is to accuse him of not "sticking to his guns."

My friends, Mr. G. K. Chesterton and Mr. Max Beerbohm, those brilliant ornaments of our age, when they chance to write about Socialism, confess this universal failing--albeit in a very different quality and measure. They are not, it is true, distressed by that unwashed coal-heaver who haunts the now private bed of the common Anti-Socialist, nor have they any horrid vision of the fathers of the community being approved by a select committee of the County Council--no doubt wrapped in horse-cloths and led out by their grooms--such as troubles the spurred and quivering soul of that equestrian--I forget his name--the "brood-mare" gentleman who denounced me in the Pall Mall Gazette; but their souls fly out in a passion of protest against the hints of discipline and order the advancement of Socialism reveals. Mr. G. K. Chesterton mocks valiantly and passionately, I know, against an oppressive and obstinately

recurrent anticipation of himself in Socialist hands, hair clipped, meals of a strictly hygienic description at regular hours, a fine for laughing--not that he would want to laugh--and austere exercises in several of the more metallic virtues daily. Mr. Max Beerbohm's conception is rather in the nature of a nightmare, a hopeless, horrid, frozen flight from the pursuit of Mr. Sidney Webb and myself, both of us short, inelegant men indeed, but for all that terribly resolute, indefatigable, incessant, to capture him, to drag him off to a mechanical Utopia and there to take his thumb-mark and his name, number him distinctly in indelible ink, dress him in an unbecoming uniform, and let him loose (under inspection) in a world of neat round lakes of blue lime water and vistas of white sanitary tiling....

The method of reasoning in all these cases is the same; it is to assume that whatever the Socialist postulates as desirable is wanted without limit or qualification, to imagine whatever proposal is chosen for the controversy is to be carried out by uncontrolled monomaniacs, and so to make a picture of the Socialist dream. This picture is presented to the simple-minded person in doubt with "This is Socialism. Surely! SURELY! you don't want this!"

And occasionally the poor, simple-minded person really is overcome by these imagined terrors. He turns back to our dingy realities again, to the good old grimy world he knows, thanking God beyond measure that he will never live to see the hateful day when one baby out of every four ceases to die in our manufacturing towns, when lives of sordid care

are banished altogether from the earth, and when the "sense of humour" and the cult of Mark Tapley which flourishes so among these things will be in danger of perishing from disuse....

But the reader sees now what Socialism is in its essentials, the tempered magnificence of the constructive scheme to which it asks him to devote his life. It is a laborious, immense project to make the world a world of social justice, of opportunity and full living, to abolish waste, to abolish the lavish unpremeditated cruelty of our present social order. Do not let the wit or perversity of the adversary or, what is often a far worse influence, the zeal and overstatement of the headlong advocate, do not let the manifest personal deficiencies of this spokesman or that, distract you from the living heart in Socialism, its broad generosity of conception, its immense claim in kinship and direction upon your Good Will.

§ 2.

For the convenience of those readers who are in the position of inquirers, I had designed at this point a section which was to contain a list of the chief objections to Socialism--other than mere misrepresentations--which are current now-a-days. I had meant at first to answer each one fully and gravely, to clear them all up exhaustively and finally before proceeding. But I find now upon jotting them down, that they are for the most part already anticipated



by the preceding chapters, and so I will note them here, very compactly indeed, and make but the briefest comment upon each.

There is first the assertion, which effectually bars a great number of people from further inquiry into Socialist teaching, that Socialism is contrary to Christianity. I would urge that this is the absolute inversion of the truth. Christianity involves, I am convinced, a practical Socialism if it is honestly carried out. This is not only my conviction, but the reader, if he is a Nonconformist, can find it set out at length by Dr. Clifford in a Fabian tract, *Socialism and the Teaching of Christ*; and, if a Churchman, by the Rev. Stewart Headlam in another, *Christian Socialism*. He will find a longer and fuller discussion of this question in the Rev. R. J. Campbell's *Christianity and Social Order*. In the list of members of such a Socialist Society as the Fabian Society will be found the names of clergy of the principal Christian denominations, excepting only the Roman Catholic Church. It is said, indeed, that a good Catholic of the Roman Communion cannot also be any sort of Socialist. Even this very general persuasion may not be correct. I believe the papal prohibition was originally aimed entirely at a specific form of Socialism, the Socialism of Marx, Engels and Bebel, which is, I must admit, unfortunately strongly anti-Christian in tone, as is the Socialism of the British Social Democratic Federation to this day. It is true that many leaders of the Socialist party have also been Secularists, and that they have mingled their theological prejudices with their political work. This is the case not only in Germany and America, but

in Great Britain, where Mr. Robert Blatchford of the Clarion, for example, has also carried on a campaign against doctrinal Christianity. But this association of Secularism and Socialism is only the inevitable throwing together of two sets of ideas because they have this in common, that they run counter to generally received opinions; there is no other connection. Many prominent Secularists, like Charles Bradlaugh and Mr. J. M. Robertson, are as emphatically anti-Socialist as the Pope. Secularists and Socialists get thrown together and classed together just as early Christians and criminals and rebels against the Emperor were no doubt thrown together in the Roman gaols. They had this much in common, that they were in conflict with what most people considered to be right. It is a confusion that needs constant explaining away. It is to me a most lamentable association of two entirely separate thought processes, one constructive socially and the other destructive intellectually, and I have already, in Chapter VI., § 4, done my best to disavow it.

Socialism is pure Materialism, it seeks only physical well-being,--just as much as nursing lepers for pity and the love of God is pure materialism that seeks only physical well-being.

Socialism advocates Free Love. This objection I have also disposed of in Chapter VI., §§ 2 and 4.

Socialism renders love impossible, and reduces humanity to the condition of a stud farm. This, too, has been already dealt with; see

Chapter III., §§ 2 and 5, and Chapter VI., §§ 2, 3, and 4. These two objections generally occur together in the same anti-Socialist speech or tract.

Socialism would destroy parental responsibility. This absurd perversion is altogether disposed of in Chapter VI., § 3. It is a direct inversion of current Socialist teaching.

§ 3.

Socialism would open the way to vast public corruption. This is flatly opposed to the experience of America, where local administration has been as little Socialistic and as corrupt as anywhere in the world. Obviously in order that a public official should be bribed, there must be some wealthy person outside the system to bribe him and with an interest in bribing him. When you have a weak administration with feeble powers and resources and strong unscrupulous private corporations seeking to override the law and public welfare, the possibilities of bribing are at the highest point. In a community given over to the pursuit of gain, powerful private enterprises will resort to corruption to get and protract franchises, to evade penalties, to postpone expropriation, and they will do it systematically and successfully. And even where there is partial public enterprise and a competition among contractors, there will certainly be, at least, attempts at corruption to get contracts. But

where the whole process is in public hands, where can the bribery creep in; who is going to find the money for the bribes, and why?

It is urged that in another direction there is likely to be a corruption of public life due to the organized voting of the employés in this branch of the public service or that, seeking some advantage for their own service. This is Lord Avebury's bogey.[16] Frankly, such voting by services is highly probable. The tramway men or the milk-service men may think they are getting too long hours or too low pay in comparison with the teachers or men on the ocean liners, and the thing may affect elections. That is only human nature, and the point to bear in mind is that this sort of thing goes on to-day, and goes on with a vigour out of all proportion to the mild possibilities of a Socialist régime. The landowners of Great Britain, for example, are organized in the most formidable manner against the general interests of the community, and constantly subordinate the interests of the common-weal to their conception of justice to their class; the big railways are equally potent, and so are the legal profession and the brewers. But to-day these political interventions of great organized services athwart the path of statesmanship are sustained by enormous financial resources. The State employés under Socialism will be in the position of employing one another and paying one another; the teacher, for example, will be educating the sons of the tramway men up to the requirements of the public paymaster, and travelling in the trams to and from his work; there will be close mutual observation and criticism, therefore, and a

strong community of spirit, and that will put very definite limits indeed upon the possibly evil influence of class and service interests in politics.

[16] On Municipal and National Trading, by Lord Avebury.  
(Macmillan & Co., 1907.)

Socialism would destroy Incentive and Efficiency. This is dealt with in Chapter V. on the Spirit of Gain and the Spirit of Service.

Socialism is economically unsound. The student of Socialism who studies--and every student of Socialism should study very carefully--the literature directed against Socialism, will encounter a number of rather confused and frequently very confusing arguments running upon "business" or "economic" lines. In nearly all of these the root error is a misconception of the nature and aim of Socialist claims. Sometimes this misconception is stated and manifest, often it is subtly implied, and then it presents the greatest difficulties to the inexpert dialectician. I find, for instance, Mr. W. H. Lever, in an article on Socialism and Business in the Magazine of Commerce for October 1907, assuming that there will be no increase in the total wealth of the community under Socialism, whereas, as my fourth chapter shows, Socialist proposals in the matter of property aim directly at the cessation of the waste occasioned by competition through the duplication and multiplication of material and organizations (see for example the quotation from Elihu, p. 69), and at the removal of the

obstructive claims of private ownership (see p. 65) from the path of production. If Socialism does not increase the total wealth of the community, Socialism is impossible.

Having made this assumption, however, Mr. Lever next assumes that all contemporary business is productive of honest, needed commodities, and that its public utility and its profitable conduct measure one another. But this ignores the manifest fact that success in business now-a-days is far more often won by the mere salesmanship of mediocre or inferior or short-weight goods than it is by producing exceptional value, and the Kentish railways, for example, are a standing contrast of the conflict between public service and private profit-seeking. But having committed himself to these two entirely unsound assumptions, it is easy for Mr. Lever to show that since Socialism will give no more wealth, and since what he calls Labour, Capital and the Employer (i.e. Labour, Plant and Management) are necessary to production and must be maintained out of the total product, there will be little more, practically, for the Labourer under Socialist conditions than under the existing régime. Going on further to assume that the Owner is always enterprising and intelligent and public-spirited, and the State stupid (which is a quite unjustifiable assumption), he shows their share may even be less. But the whole case for the Socialist proposals, the student must bear in mind, rests upon the recognition that private management of our collective concerns means chaotic and socially wasteful management--however efficient it may be in individual cases for competitive purposes--and that the systematic

abolition of the parasitic Owner from our economic process implies the replacement of confusion by order and an immense increase in the efficiency of that economic process. Socialism is economy. If the student of Socialism does not bear this in mind, if once he allows the assumption to creep in that Socialism is not so much a proposal to change, concentrate and organize the economic process, as one to distribute the existing wealth of the country in some new manner, he will find there is a bad case for Socialism.

It is an amusing and I think a fair comment on the arguments of Mr. Lever that a year or so ago he was actually concerned--no doubt in the interests of the public as well as his own--in organizing the production and distribution of soap so as to economize the waste and avoid the public disservice due to the extreme competition of the soap dealers. He wanted to do in the soap industry just exactly what Socialism wants to do in the case of all public services, that is to say he wanted to give it the economic advantages of a Great Combine. In some directions the saving to the soap interest would have been immense; all the vast expenditure upon newspaper advertisements, for example, all the waste upon competing travellers would have been saved. Whether the public would have benefited greatly or not is beside the present question; Mr. Lever and other great soap proprietors would certainly have benefited enormously. They would have benefited by working as a collective interest instead of as independent private owners. But in this little experiment in what was really a sort of voluntary Socialism for particular ends, Mr. Lever

reckoned without another great system of private adventurers, the halfpenny newspaper proprietors, who had hitherto been drawing large sums from soap advertisement, and who had in fact been so far parasitic on the public soap supply. One group of these papers at once began a campaign against the "Soap Trust," a campaign almost as noisy and untruthful as the anti-Socialist campaign. They accused Mr. Lever of nearly every sort of cheating that can be done by a soap seller, and anticipated every sort of oppression a private monopolist can practise. In the end they paid unprecedented damages for libel, but they stopped Mr. Lever's intelligent and desirable endeavours to replace the waste and disorder of our existing soap supply by a simple and more efficient organization. Mr. Lever cannot have forgotten these facts; they were surely in the back of his mind when he wrote his "Socialism and Business" paper, and it is a curious instance of the unconscious limitations one may encounter in a mind of exceptional ability that he could not bring them forward and apply them to the problem in hand.

Socialism is unbusinesslike. See Chapter VIII., §§ 2 and 3.

§ 4.

Socialism would destroy freedom. This is a more considerable difficulty. To begin with it may be necessary to remind the reader that absolute freedom is an impossibility. As I have written in my



## Modern Utopia:--

"The idea of individual liberty is one that has grown in importance and grows with every development of modern thought. To the classical Utopists freedom was relatively trivial. Clearly they considered virtue and happiness as entirely separable from liberty, and as being altogether more important things. But the modern view, with its deepening insistence upon individuality and upon the significance of its uniqueness, steadily intensifies the value of freedom, until at last we begin to see liberty as the very substance of life, that indeed it is life, and that only the dead things, the choiceless things live in absolute obedience to law. To have free play for one's individuality is, in the modern view, the subjective triumph of existence, as survival in creative work and offspring is its objective triumph. But for all men, since man is a social creature, the play of will must fall short of absolute freedom. Perfect human liberty is possible only to a despot who is absolutely and universally obeyed. Then to will would be to command and achieve, and within the limits of natural law we could at any moment do exactly as it pleased us to do. All other liberty is a compromise between our own freedom of will and the wills of those with whom we come in contact. In an organized state each one of us has a more or less elaborate code of what he may do to others and to himself, and what others may do to him. He limits others by

his rights and is limited by the rights of others, and by considerations affecting the welfare of the community as a whole.

"Individual liberty in a community is not, as mathematicians would say, always of the same sign. To ignore this is the essential fallacy of the cult called Individualism. But in truth, a general prohibition in a State may increase the sum of liberty, and a general permission may diminish it. It does not follow, as these people would have us believe, that a man is more free where there is least law, and more restricted where there is most law. A socialism or a communism is not necessarily a slavery, and there is no freedom under anarchy....

"It follows, therefore, in a modern Utopia, which finds the final hope of the world in the evolving interplay of unique individualities, that the State will have effectually chipped away just all those spendthrift liberties that waste liberty, and not one liberty more, and so have attained the maximum general freedom."...

That is the gist of the Socialist's answer to this accusation. He asks what freedom is there to-day for the vast majority of mankind? They are free to do nothing but work for a bare subsistence all their lives, they may not go freely about the earth even, but are prosecuted

for trespassing upon the health-giving breast of our universal mother. Consider the clerks and girls who hurry to their work of a morning across Brooklyn Bridge in New York, or Hungerford Bridge in London; go and see them, study their faces. They are free, with a freedom Socialism would destroy. Consider the poor painted girls who pursue bread with nameless indignities through our streets at night. They are free by the current standard. And the poor half-starved wretches struggling with the impossible stint of oakum in a casual ward, they too are free! The nimble footman is free, the crushed porter between the trucks is free, the woman in the mill, the child in the mine. Ask them! They will tell you how free they are. They have happened to choose these ways of living--that is all. No doubt the piquancy of the life attracts them in many such cases.

Let us be frank; a form of Socialism might conceivably exist without much freedom, with hardly more freedom than that of a British worker to-day. A State Socialism tyrannized over by officials who might be almost as bad at times as uncontrolled small employers, is so far possible that in Germany it is practically half-existent now. A bureaucratic Socialism might conceivably be a state of affairs scarcely less detestable than our own. I will not deny there is a clear necessity of certain addenda to the wider formulæ of Socialism if we are to be safeguarded effectually from the official. We need free speech, free discussion, free publication, as essentials for a wholesome Socialist State. How they may be maintained I shall discuss in a later chapter. But these admissions do not justify the present

system. Socialism, though it failed to give us freedom, would not destroy anything that we have in this way. We want freedom now, and we have it not. We speak of freedom of speech, but to-day, in innumerable positions, Socialist employés who declared their opinions openly would be dismissed. Then again in religious questions there is an immense amount of intolerance and suppression of social and religious discussion to-day, especially in our English villages. As for freedom of action, most of us, from fourteen to the grave, are chased from even the leisure to require freedom by the necessity of earning a living....

Socialism, as I have stated it thus far, and as it is commonly stated, would give economic liberty to men and women alike, it would save them from the cruel urgency of need, and so far it would enormously enlarge freedom, but it does not guarantee them political or intellectual liberty. That I frankly admit, and accept as one of the incompletenesses of contemporary Socialism. I conceive, therefore, as I shall explain at length in a later chapter, that it is necessary to supplement such Socialism as is currently received by certain new propositions. But to admit that Socialism does not guarantee freedom, is not to admit that Socialism will destroy it. It is possible, given certain conditions, for men to be nearly absolutely free in speech, in movement, in conduct; enormously free, that is, as compared with our present conditions, in a Socialist State established upon the two great propositions I have formulated in Chapters III. and IV. So that the statement that Socialism will destroy freedom is a baseless one of

no value as a general argument against the Socialist idea.

§ 5.

Socialism would reduce life to one monotonous dead level! This in a world in which the majority of people live in cheap cottages, villa residences and tenement houses, read halfpenny newspapers and wear ready-made clothes!

Socialism would destroy Art, Invention and Literature. I do not know why this objection is made, unless it be that the objectors suppose that artists will not create, inventors will not think, and no one write or sing except to please a wealthy patron. Without his opulent smile, where would they be? Well, do not let us be ungrateful; the arts owe much to patronage. Go to Venice, go to Florence, and you will find a glorious harvest of pictures and architecture, sown and reaped by a mercantile plutocracy. But then in Rome, in Athens, you will find an equal accumulation made under very different conditions. Reach a certain phase of civilization, a certain leisure and wealth, and art will out, however the wealth may be distributed. In certain sumptuous directions art flourishes now, and would certainly flourish less in a Socialist State; in the gear of ostentatious luxury, in private furniture of all sorts, in palace building, in the exquisite confections of costly feminine adornment, in the luxurious binding of books, in the cooking of larks, in the distinguished portraiture of

undistinguished persons, in the various refinements of prostitution, in the subtle accommodations of mystic theology, in jewellery. It is quite conceivable that in such departments Socialism will discourage and limit æsthetic and intellectual effort. But no mercantile plutocracy could ever have produced a Gothic cathedral, a folk-lore, a gracious natural type of cottage or beautiful clothing for the common people, and no mercantile plutocracy will ever tolerate a literature of power. If the coming of Socialism destroys arts, it will also create arts; the architecture of private palaces will give place to an architecture of beautiful common homes, cottages and colleges, and to a splendid development of public buildings, the Sargents of Socialism will paint famous people instead of millionaires' wives, poetry and popular romantic literature will revive. For my own part I have no doubt where the balance of advantage lies.

It seems reasonable to look to the literary and artistic people themselves for a little guidance in this matter. Well, we had in the nineteenth century an absolute revolt of artists against Individualism. The proportion of open and declared Socialists among the great writers, artists, playwrights, critics, of the Victorian period was out of all proportion to the number of Socialists in the general population. Wilde in his *Soul of Man under Socialism*, Ruskin in many volumes of imperishable prose, Morris in all his later life, have witnessed to the unending protest of the artistic spirit against the rule of gain. Some of these writers are not, perhaps, to be regarded as orthodox Socialists in the modern sense, but their disgust

with and contempt for Individualist competition is entirely in the vein of our teaching.

Even this Individualistic country of ours, after the shameful shock of the Great Exhibition of 1851, decided that it could no longer leave art to private enterprise, and organized that systematic government Art Teaching that has, in spite of its many defects, revolutionized the æsthetic quality of this country. And so far as research and invention go, one may very reasonably appeal to such an authority on the other side, as the late Mr. Beit, of Wernher Beit & Co. The outcome of his experience as an individualist financier was to convince him that the only way to raise the standard of technical science in England, and therewith of economic enterprise, was by the endowment of public teaching, and the huge "London Charlottenburg" rises--out of his conviction. Even Messrs. Rockefeller and Carnegie admit the failure of Individualism in this matter by pouring money into public universities and public libraries. All these heads of the commercial process confess by such acts just exactly what this objection of the inexperienced denies, that is to say the power of the State to develop art, invention and knowledge; the necessity that this duty should be done if not by, then at any rate through, the State.

Socialism may very seriously change the direction of intellectual and æsthetic endeavour; that one admits. But there is no reason whatever for supposing it will not, and there are countless reasons for supposing that it will, enormously increase the opportunities and

encouragements for æsthetic and intellectual endeavour.

§ 6.

Socialism would arrest the survival of the Fittest. Here is an objection from quite a new quarter. It is the stock objection of the science student. Hitherto we have considered religious and æsthetic difficulties, but this is the difficulty of the mind that realizes clearly the nature of the biological process, the secular change in every species under the influence of its environment, and is most concerned with that. Species, it is said, change--and the student of the elements of science is too apt to conclude that this change is always ascent in the scale of being--by the killing off of the individuals out of harmony with the circumstances under which the species is living. This is not quite true. The truer statement is that species change because, allowing for chance and individual exceptions, only those individuals survive to reproduce themselves who are fairly well adjusted to the conditions of life; so that in each generation there is only a small proportion of births out of harmony with these conditions. This sounds very like the previous proposition, but it differs in this that the accent is shifted from the "killing" to the suppression of births, that is the really important fact. In any case, then, the believer in evolution holds that the qualities encouraged by the environment increase in the species and the qualities discouraged diminish. The qualities that have survival value are not always what



we human beings consider admirable--that is a consideration many science students fail to grasp. The remarkable habits of all the degenerating crustacea, for example, the appetite of the vulture, the unpleasing personality of the common hyæna, all that less charming side of Mother Nature that her scandalized children may read of in Cobbold's Human Parasites, are the result of survival under the pressure of environment, just as much as the human eye or the wing of an eagle. Let the objector therefore ask himself what sort of "fittest" are surviving now.

The plain answer is that under our present conditions the Breeding-Getter wins, the man who can hold and keep and reproduce his kind. People with the instinct of owning stronger than any other instinct float out upon the top of our seething mass, and flourish there. Aggressive, intensely acquisitive, reproductive people--the ignoble sort of Jew is the very type of it--are the people who will prevail in a social system based on private property and mercantile competition. No creative power, no nobility, no courage can battle against them. And below--in the slums and factories, what will be going on? The survival of a race of stunted toilers, with great resisting power to infection, contagion and fatigue, omnivorous as rats....

Don't imagine that the high infantile death rate of our manufacturing centres spares the fine big children. It does not. Here is the effectual answer to that. It is taken from the Report of the Education

Committee of the London County Council for the year 1905, and it is part of an account of an inquiry conducted by the headmaster of one school in a poor neighbourhood.

"The object of the inquiry was to discover the causes of variation in the physical condition of children within the limits of this single school. Each of the 405 boys was carefully weighed and measured without boots, a note was made of the condition of the teeth, and a general estimate of the personal cleanliness and sufficiency of clothing as a basis for determining the home conditions of neglect or otherwise from external evidence. The teacher of each class added an estimate of mental capacity." (Here follow tabular arrangements of results, and height and weight charts.)

"... It may be noted in the heights and weights for each age that the curve is not a continuous line of growth, but that at some ages it springs nearer to, and at others sinks further from, the normal. The greatest effect upon the life capital of the population is produced by the infantile mortality, which in some years actually kills off during the first year one in five of all children born; the question naturally arises what is its effect upon the survivors--do the weakly ones get killed off and only the strong muddle through, or does the adverse environment which slaughters one in five have a maiming effect upon those left?... When the infantile

mortality for the parish in which the school is situate was charted above the physique curve, an absolute correspondence is to be observed. The children born in a year when infantile mortality is low show an increased physique, rising nearest to the normal in the extraordinary good year 1892; and those born in the years of high mortality show a decreased physique.... It appears certain, therefore, that in years of high infantile mortality the conditions, to which one in five or six of the children born are sacrificed, have a maiming effect upon the other four or five."

The fine big children are born in periods of low infantile mortality, that is the essential point.

So that anyhow, since the fittest under present conditions is manifestly the ratlike, the survival of the fittest that is going on now is one that it is highly desirable to stop as soon as possible, and so far Socialism will arrest the survival of the fittest. But that does not mean that it will stop the development of the species altogether. It will merely shift the incident of selection and rejection to a new set of qualities. I think I have already hinted (Chapter VI., § 2) that a State that undertakes to sustain all the children born into it will do its best to secure good births. That implies a distinct bar to the marriage and reproduction of the halt and the blind, the bearers of transmissible diseases and the like. And women being economically independent will have a far freer choice in

wedlock than they have now. Now they must in practice marry men who can more or less keep them, they must subordinate every other consideration to that. Under Socialism they will certainly look less to a man's means and acquisitive gifts, and more to the finer qualities of his personality. They will prefer prominent men, able men, fine, vigorous and attractive persons. There will, indeed, be far more freedom of choice on either side than under the sordid conditions of the present time. I submit that such a free choice is far more likely to produce a secular increase in the beauty, the intellectual and physical activity and the capacity of the race, than our present haphazard mercenariness.

The science student will be interested to read in this connection *The Ethic of Free Thought* (A. & C. Black, 1888), *Socialism in Theory and Practice* (1884), and *The Chances of Death, and other Studies in Evolution* (Arnold, 1897), by Karl Pearson. Professor Pearson is not in all respects to be taken as an authoritative exponent of Modern Socialism, and he is associated with no Socialist organization, but his treatment of the biological aspect is that of a specialist and a master.

§ 7.

Socialism is against Human Nature. This objection I have left until last because, firstly, it is absolutely true, and secondly, it leads

naturally to the newer ideas that have already peeped out once or twice in my earlier chapters and which will now ride up to a predominance in what follows, and particularly the idea that an educational process and a moral discipline are not only a necessary part, but the most fundamental part of any complete Socialist scheme. Socialism is against Human Nature. That is true, and it is equally true of everything else; capitalism is against human nature, competition is against human nature, cruelty, kindness, religion and doubt, monogamy, polygamy, celibacy, decency, indecency, piety and sin are all against human nature. The present system in particular is against human nature, or what is the policeman for, the soldier, the debt-collector, the judge, the hangman? What means the glass along my neighbour's wall? Human nature is against human nature. For human nature is in a perpetual conflict; it is the Ishmael of the universe, against everything, and with everything against it; and within, no more and no less than a perpetual battleground of passion, desire, cowardice, indolence and good will. So that our initial proposition as it stands at the head of this section, is, as an argument against Socialism, just worth nothing at all.

None the less valuable is it as a reminder of the essential constructive task of which the two primary generalizations of Socialism we have so far been developing are but the outward and visible forms. There is no untutored naturalness in Socialism, no uneducated blind force on our side. Socialism is made of struggling Good Will, made out of a conflict of wills. I have tried to let it

become apparent that while I do firmly believe not only in the splendour and nobility of the Socialist dream but in its ultimate practicality, I do also recognize quite clearly that with people just as they are now, with their prejudices, their ignorances, their misapprehensions, their unchecked vanities and greeds and jealousies, their crude and misguided instincts, their irrational traditions, no Socialist State can exist, no better State can exist, than the one we have now with all its squalor and cruelty. Every change in human institutions must happen concurrently with a change of ideas. Upon this plastic, uncertain, teachable thing Human Nature, within us and without, we have, if we really contemplate Socialism as our achievement, to impose guiding ideas and guiding habits, we have to co-ordinate all the Good Will that is active or latent in our world in one constructive plan. To-day the spirit of humanity is lost to itself, divided, dispersed and hidden in little narrow distorted circles of thought. These divided, misshapen circles of thought are not "human nature," but human nature has fallen into these forms and has to be released. Our fundamental business is to develop the human spirit. It is in the enlargement and enrichment of the average circle of thought that the essential work and method of Socialism is to be found.