

Utopian point of view—at 2½d. for 800; because, you see, it may be necessary to *add* a few items to the cost of production which are *not* charged for in the retail price. As thus:—

Item.—100 women done to death by labour before their time.

Item.—200 children killed by preventable diseases in the slums.

Item.—Say, 10 boys driven into a career of crime by hunger and neglect.

Item.—Say, six girls driven to a life of shame by similar causes.

Item.—The cost of keeping several broken old male and female paupers.

Item.—Pauper graves for the same.

Item.—Cost of fat beadle kept to superintend the above old wrecks.

Item.—An increase of rates for police and prison officials.

Item.—The parish doctor, the dealer in adulterated gin, the scripture reader, the coffin maker, and a fraction of the Cabinet Minister's time spent in proving that "you cannot interfere with the freedom of contract" nor "tamper with the economic balance between producer and consumer."

Add all these items on to the match bill, Mr. Smith, and tell me if you call those matches cheap.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### SOCIALISM!

One thing ought to be aimed at by all men; that the interest of each individually, and of all collectively, should be the same; for if each should grasp at his individual interest, all human society will be dissolved.—*Cicero*.

When I balance all these things in my thoughts, I grow more favourable to Plato, and do not wonder that he resolved not to make any laws for such as would not submit to a community of all things; for so wise a man could not but foresee that the setting all upon a level was the only way to make a nation happy, which cannot be obtained so long as there is property; for when every man draws to himself all that he can compass by one title or another, it must needs follow that how plentiful soever a nation may be, yet a few dividing the wealth of it among themselves, the rest must fall into indigence. So that there will be two sorts of people among them who deserve that their fortunes should be interchanged, the former useless, but wicked and ravenous, and the latter, who by their constant industry serve the public more than themselves, sincere and modest men. From whence I am persuaded that till property is taken away there can be no equitable or just distribution of things, nor can the world be happily governed; for so long as that is maintained the greatest and the far best part of mankind will be still oppressed with a load of cares and anxieties.—*Sir Thos. More*.

John Smith, do you know what Socialism is? You have heard it denounced many a time, and it is said that you do not believe in it; but do you know what it is?

Good or bad, wise or foolish, it is all I have to offer as a remedy for the many evils of which I have been complaining.

Good or bad, wise or foolish, Socialism is the only remedy in sight. None of its opponents, none of your friends, the members of Parliament, old trade union leaders, Tory and Liberal editors, parsons, priests, lawyers, and men of substance have any remedy to offer at all.

Some of them are sorry or profess to be sorry, that there is so much misery in the land; some of them offer a little mild charity, some a little feeble legislation, but there is no great radical cure to be heard of except Socialism.

What is Socialism? I am going to tell you, and I ask you to listen patiently, and to judge fairly. You have heard Socialism reviled by speakers and writers. You know that the Pope has denounced it, and that the Bishop of Manchester has denounced it. You know that men like Herbert Spencer, Charles Bradlaugh, and John Morley have written and spoken against it, and doubtless you have got an idea that it is as unworthy, as unwise, and as unworkable as such men say it is. Now I will describe it for you and you shall draw your own conclusions.

But before I tell you what Socialism is, I must tell you what Socialism is not. For half our time as champions of Socialism is wasted in denials of false descriptions of Socialism; and to a large extent the anger, the ridicule, and the argument of the opponents of Socialism are hurled against a Socialism which has no existence except in their own heated minds.

Socialism does not consist in violently seizing upon the property of the rich and sharing it out amongst the poor.

Socialists do not propose by a single Act of Parliament, or by a sudden revolution, to put all men on an equality, and compel them to remain so. Socialism is not a wild dream of a happy land where the apples will drop off the trees into our open mouths, the fish come out of the rivers and fry themselves for dinner, and the looms turn out ready-made suits of velvet with golden buttons without the trouble of coaling the engine. Neither is it a dream of a nation of stained-glass angels, who never say damn, who always love their neighbours better than themselves, and who never need to work unless they wish to.

No, Socialism is none of those things. It is a scientific scheme of national Government, entirely wise, just, and *practical*. And now let us see.

For convenience sake, Socialism is generally divided into two kinds. These are called—

1. Practical Socialism.
2. Ideal Socialism.

Really they are only part of one whole; Practical Socialism being a kind of preliminary step towards Ideal Socialism, so that we might with more reason call them Elementary and Advanced Socialism.

I am an Ideal Socialist, and desire to have the whole Socialistic programme carried out.

Practical Socialism is so simple that a child may understand it. It is a kind of national scheme of co-operation, managed by the State. Its programme consists, essentially, of one demand, that the land and other instruments of production shall be the common property of the people, and shall be used and governed by the people for the people.

Make the land and all the instruments of production State property; put all farms, mines, mills, ships, railways, and shops under State control, as you have already put the postal and telegraphic services under State control, and Practical Socialism is accomplished.

The postal and telegraphic service is the standing proof of the capacity of the State to manage the public business with economy and success.

That which has been done with the post-offices may be done with mines, trams, railways, and factories.

The difference between Socialism and the state of things now in existence will now be plain to you.

At present the land—that is, England—does not belong to the people—to the English—but to a few rich men. The mines, mills, ships, shops, canals, railways, houses, docks, harbours, and machinery do not belong to the people, but to a few rich men.

Therefore the land, the factories, the railways, ships, and machinery are not used for the general good of the people, but are used to make wealth for the few rich men who own them.

Socialists say that this arrangement is unjust and un-

wise, that it entails waste as well as misery, and that it would be better for all, even for the rich, that the land and other instruments of production should become the property of the State, just as the post-office and the telegraphs have become the property of the State.

Socialists demand that the State shall manage the railways and the mines and the mills just as it now manages the post-offices and the telegraphs.

Socialists declare that if it is wicked and foolish and impossible for the State to manage the factories, mines, and railways, then it is wicked and foolish and impossible for the State to manage the telegraphs.

Socialists declare that as the State carries the people's letters and telegrams more cheaply and more efficiently than they were carried by private enterprise, so it could grow corn and weave cloth and work the railway systems more cheaply and more efficiently than they are now worked by private enterprise.

Socialists declare that as our Government now makes food and clothing and arms and accoutrements for the army and navy and police, so it could make them for the people.

Socialists declare that as many corporations make gas, provide and manage the water-supply, look after the paving and lighting and cleansing of the streets, and often do a good deal of building and farming, so there is no reason why they should not get coal, and spin yarn, and make boots, and bread, and beer for the people.

Socialists point out that if all the industries of the nation were put under State control, all the profit, which now goes into the hands of a few idle men, would go into the coffers of the State—which means that the people would enjoy the benefits of all the wealth they create.

This, then, is the basis of Socialism, that England should be owned by the English, and managed for the benefit of the English, instead of being owned by a few rich idlers, and mismanaged by them for the benefit of themselves.

But Socialism means more than the mere transference of the wealth of the nation to the nation.

Socialism would not endure competition. Where it found two factories engaged in under-cutting each other at the price of long hours and low wages to the workers, it

would step in and fuse the two concerns into one, save an immense sum in cost of working, and finally produce more goods and better goods at a lower figure than were produced before.

But Practical Socialism would do more than that. It would educate the people. It would provide cheap and pure food. It would extend and elevate the means of study and amusement. It would foster literature and science and art. It would encourage and reward genius and industry. It would abolish sweating and jerry work. It would demolish the slums and erect good and handsome dwellings. It would compel all men to do some kind of useful work. It would recreate and nourish the craftsman's pride in his craft. It would protect women and children. It would raise the standard of health and morality; and it would take the sting out of pauperism by paying pensions to honest workers no longer able to work.

Why nationalise the land and instruments of production? To save waste; to save panics; to avert trade depressions, famines, strikes, and congestion of industrial centres; and to prevent greedy and unscrupulous sharpers from enriching themselves at the cost of the national health and prosperity. In short, to replace anarchy and war by law and order. To keep the wolves out of the fold, to tend and fertilise the field of labour instead of allowing the wheat to be strangled by the tares, and to regulate wisely the distribution of the seed-corn of industry so that it might no longer be scattered broadcast—some falling on rocks, and some being eaten up by the birds of the air.

I will now give you one example of the difference between Socialism and the existing system.

You remember my chapter on Salt and Waste. Under existing conditions what was the state of the salt trade?

The mines and manufacture owned and carried on by a number of firms, each of which competes against all the rest.

Result: Most of the small firms ruined; most of the large firms on the verge of ruin. Salt-boilers, the workmen, working twelve hours a day for 3s., and the public wasting more salt than they use.

Put this trade under State control. They will cease to

make salt to waste; they will establish a six-hours day, and they will raise the wages of the men to, say, two pounds a week.

To pay these extra wages they will abolish all the unnecessary middlemen and go-betweens. The whole industry will be placed under one management. A vast number of clerks, agents, travellers, canvassers, and advertisers will be dispensed with, the salaries of the managers will be almost entirely saved, and the cost of distribution will be cut down by fully seventy-five per cent.

The same system would be pursued with other industries.

Take the soap trade. There is one firm which spends over £100,000 a year in advertisement, and the head of that firm makes £100,000 a year in profits. Socialism would save all that advertisement, and would pay a manager a reasonable salary and produce the soap at less than its present cost, whilst paying the workers good wages for shorter hours than they now work.

You will observe that under Practical Socialism there would be wages paid; and, probably, the wages of managers would be higher than the wages of workmen; and the wages of artists, doctors, and other clever and highly-trained men would be higher than those of weavers or navvies.

Under Ideal Socialism there would be no money at all, and no wages. The industry of the country would be organised and managed by the State, much as the post-office now is; goods of all kinds would be produced and distributed for use, and not for sale, in such quantities as were needed, hours of labour would be fixed, and every citizen would take what he or she desired from the common stock. Food, clothing, lodging, fuel, transit, amusements, and all other things would be absolutely free, and the only difference between a prime minister and a collier would be the difference of rank and occupation.

I have now given you a clear idea of what Socialism is. If I wrote another hundred pages I could tell you no more. But two important tasks remain for me to do.

First, to give you some idea of the means by which I think Socialism could be established.

Second, to answer the chief arguments commonly used against Socialism by its opponents.

What we have to find out is, can Socialism be established, and how?

And is Socialism just and desirable; and practicable if we can succeed in getting it?

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### WHAT ARE WE TO DO?

The place where a great city stands is not the place of stretched wharves, docks, manufactures, deposits of produce merely.

For the place of ceaseless salute of new-comers, or the anchor-lifters of the departing,

Nor the place of the tallest and costliest buildings, or shops, selling goods from the rest of the earth,

Nor the place of the best libraries and schools, nor the place where money is plentiest, . . . . .

Where the city stands with the brawniest breed of orators and bards,

Where the city stands that is beloved by these, and loves them in return and understands them,

Where no monuments exist to heroes but in the common words and deeds,

Where thrift is in its place, and prudence is in its place, . . . . .

Where the city of the faithfulest friends stands,

Where the city of the cleanliness of the sexes stands,

Where the city of the healthiest father stands,

Where the city of the best-bodied mothers stands.

There the great city stands.—*Walt Whitman.*

The question is, how can Socialism be accomplished? I confess that I approach this question with great reluctance. The establishment and organisation of a Socialistic State are the two branches of the work to which I have given least attention. Hitherto I have devoted my efforts to teaching the principles of Socialism, and to disproving the arguments brought against it. But I will do my best, merely observing that I can lay claim to no special knowledge, nor to any special aptitude for such a task. I have no "system" ready cut and dried. I don't think any sensible Socialist would offer such a system. Socialists are practical people in these days, and know that coats must be cut according to cloth.

But on one point I am quite certain, and that is that the first thing to do is to educate the people in Socialism. Let us once get the people to understand and desire Socialism, and I am sure we may very safely leave them to secure it.