

The Survival of the Fittest is a question of conditions. It can have no great power in the England of to-day. The Survival of the Fittest is another name for Anarchy. Our Society is one bound by law. The unfettered "right of individual enterprise" is anarchy. And it is bad. It is bad because in a state of social warfare, warfare to extermination point, the basest and the vilest have the advantage, for the vile man and the base will fight with less ruth and fewer scruples.

So much for the survival of the fittest. So much for *Laissez Faire*. The man who accepts the *Laissez Faire* doctrine would allow his garden to run wild, so that the roses might fight it out with the weeds and the fittest might survive.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SOCIALISM AND PROGRESS.

Your present system of education is to get a rascal of an architect to order a rascal of a clerk-of-the-works to order a parcel of rascally bricklayers to build you a bestially stupid building in the middle of the town, poisoned with gas, and with an iron floor which will drop you all through it some frosty evening; wherein you will bring a puppet of a cockney lecturer in a dress coat and a white tie, to tell you smugly there's no God, and how many messes he can make of a lump of sugar.—*Ruskin*.

Another stock argument against Socialism is the assertion that it would destroy all intellectual progress. Here is a quotation from an article by the late Charles Bradlaugh:—

I object to Socialism because it would destroy the incentives which have produced, amongst other things, the "clever" men who serve society in various fashions, as doctors, engineers, architects, and teachers. I am inclined to doubt whether, if the enormous army of Socialist officials were rewarded at the like rate with the scavenger and the ploughman, the temptation on them might not be very great to help themselves to extra recompense from the national stores.

The first sentence in this passage displays a singular misconception of human nature; the second a grotesque misconception of Socialism.

We will dispose of the second sentence first. You will observe that Mr. Bradlaugh spoke of "the enormous army of Socialist officials." He seems to have supposed, as so many

suppose, that under Socialism we should be over-run with officials. You will find the same comical blunder in Richter's book.

Now the fact is that under Socialism there would be as few officials, and as many workers, as possible. I don't think you will find the officials in the Post Office more numerous than in any ordinary business house. But the surprising part of it is that a really shrewd man like Mr. Bradlaugh should have failed to notice the enormous number of officials, the useless officials, too, who burden every department of trade under competition.

For what are all the clerks, travellers, agents, canvassers, salesmen, managers, capitalists, and other costly and needless people but an "enormous army" of officials? Just glance back at the chapter on Competition, and then consider whether Socialism, however badly managed, could possibly add to the number of overpaid and unnecessary non-producers.

Then Mr. Bradlaugh was terribly shocked by the idea that a doctor should be paid at the same rate as a scavenger. This is chiefly due to two misconceptions of Mr. Bradlaugh's. First of all, he had been so used to the recognised money standard of honour that he didn't seem able to realise that a man might, under Socialism, be honoured more for what he *was*, or for what he *did*, than for what he *got*. Secondly, he was so used to seeing such men as scavengers overworked, underpaid, and generally despised that it did not occur to him as possible that under Socialism every worker would be treated justly and respected as a man. But turn the idea the other way round, and you can reply to Mr. Bradlaugh's objection that it will be a decidedly good society for the average man where the scavenger or ploughman is as well paid as the doctor or the engineer. However, I shall have more to say about our friend the scavenger in a future chapter.

Another amusing blunder of Mr. Bradlaugh's is the idea that if an official got no more pay than a scavenger he would turn thief and rob the public stores.

That seems to imply that the "clever" men, the men who Mr. Bradlaugh evidently regarded as the salt of the earth, are not, in his opinion, very honest. If an underpaid clerk

in these times, robs his employer he is sent to prison—as a rogue. We hear nothing about the injustice of society, or the folly of competition in paying him no more than a scavenger.

But, observe, once more, that it could only be under Ideal Socialism that the official and the scavenger would be equally paid. Therefore, there would be nothing for the official to steal but food or clothing, and as every man would have as much of those as he needed for the asking, I don't see what an official would gain by stealing more.

No. The error arises, once more, from a misconception of Socialism. The fact is our critics will keep supposing that under Socialism the workers would be as badly treated and as badly rewarded as they are now.

Let us turn, then, to Mr. Bradlaugh's first sentence. Socialism, he says, "would destroy the incentives which have produced the clever men who serve society." This is the old story about the incentive of gain. It comes very curiously from the mouth of Mr. Bradlaugh. Very curiously indeed.

Mr. Bradlaugh was a clever man, and he had worked very hard. Was gain *his* incentive? No one who knows anything of his life will suppose so for a moment. It is a marvellous thing. Here we had a man who had fought a bitter, a terrible, and uphill battle all his life long for *principle*, a man who was faithful unto death, and who died poor and embarrassed, and we find him objecting to Socialism because it would remove the incentive of *gain*.

But there is the statement, and it is a common one. Mr. Morley repeats it. Mr. Morley is convinced that if existence were no longer a sordid struggle for money the genius of the people would die out, and we should sink into barbarism, and retain nothing but the bare necessities of life.

Well, this is what I call comic. Mr. Morley seems satisfied with things as they are. What do his words assume? They assume:—

1. That the greatest and noblest of the race are actuated by avarice. Which is not true.
2. That the greatest and noblest of the race secure the most *wealth*. Which is not true.

3. That the people are at present in the enjoyment of more than the necessaries of life. Which is not true.
4. That the people are at present in the enjoyment of civilisation and refinement. Which is not true.
5. That Socialism would discourage genius and patriotism. Which is not true.
6. That Socialism would encourage idleness. Which is not true.

I will take these six errors in their order, and refute them.

The first is the assertion that if a clever man were not paid higher *wages* than a manual labourer, he would refuse to devote his talents to the service of society.

Now, John, out of their own mouths shall these men be condemned.

Have you ever read any of the speeches and articles on the Payment of Members of Parliament? You have. What is the stock argument used against the payment of members?

It is the argument that to pay members would be to lower the tone and impair the quality of the House of Commons. It is the argument that *men of talent will serve the nation better for honour than for money!*

I think that here I have them on the hip. This argument is used by the same men who tell us that Socialism would degrade the nation by abolishing the incentive of gain.

With how little wisdom is the world governed. What do you think of the morality, what do you think of the intelligence, what do you think of the knowledge of these "practical statesmen," these men you cheer and vote for?

They tell you one day that unless you pay clever men big wages, they will cease to work.

They tell you another day that if you pay clever men at all, they will cease to work.

They declare first of all that it is only the lust after *money* that makes men great.

They declare next that money is such a vile thing that if you pay members of Parliament you will ruin the country, because only greedy adventurers will work for money.

Is the swinish lust for wealth the one motive power of all clever men, *except* our members of Parliament?

What think you is the chief food of genius? Does the prospect of wealth inspire Hamlets or Laocoons, and steam-engines, and printing-presses? The true artist, the man to whom all creative work is due, is mainly inspired, sustained, and rewarded by a love of his art. Milton wrote "Paradise Lost" for £8. Can greed produce a poem like it? Many improvements in machinery are made by workmen. Often they get no profit. Sometimes the master patents the improvement, pays the drudge a few shillings a week for his ideas, and makes thousands. Shall we measure men's brains like corn, or gauge the pressure and the power of fiery passions and quenchless faiths by the horse-power. All the forces of all the kings of the earth cannot make one brave man turn on his heel; all the wealth of the nations cannot buy one pure soul; all the fools in a big city cannot conquer one strong brain; all the drilled and crammed dunces that political economy and hide-bound school systems can band together cannot advance the cause of knowledge or liberty one inch.

Was it greed made Socrates expound philosophy, or Shakespeare write plays? Was it competition made Watt invent the steam-engine, or Davy the safety-lamp, or Wheatstone the telegraph? Was it greed that abolished slavery? Was it greed made Darwin devote his life to science? Was it greed that unfolded the secrets of astronomy, of geology, and of other important facts of nature? Or did greed give us musical notation, the printing press, the pictures of Turner and Raphael, the poems of Spenser, and the liberties of the English Constitution?

The true artist: He to whom all creative work is due is mainly inspired, sustained, and rewarded by a love of his art. He will take money, for he must live. He will take money, for money is the badge of victory. But with or without money, and with or without praise, he will worship the beloved mistress, art. He calls his wealthy patrons Philistines, and in his soul despises them.

This paltry plea about *pay!* Yet, even if we admit that "pay" is the one prize and the one incentive of life, it would seem as though the men of "ability" are not the men who get the most of it. It may seem a sad thing that Darwin should get no more "pay" than the "clod" who

breaks stones. But there are "clods" who break backs and hearts instead of stones, who get paid more than the men of ability in question. For instance, Jay Gould the "financier" got more "pay" and held more wealth than Gladstone, and Carlyle, and Darwin, and Koch, and Galileo, and Columbus, and Cromwell, and Caxton, and Stephenson, and Washington, and Raphael, and Mozart, and Shakespeare, and Socrates, and Jesus Christ ever got amongst them. *So perfect is the present system of "pay."*

Are the best men of to-day the best paid? Are the most useful men the best paid? Are the most industrious men the wealthiest? Do the noblest and the cleverest men work for gain? Do they get rich? Do the great mass of the labouring classes work for gain? Do *they* get rich? Did the love of gain ever make a hero or a martyr? Did it ever win a battle? Will a man do most for love or for money, for honour or for money, for duty or for money? Having no money, does a genius become a fool? Having much money does a fool become a genius? Did any nation, loving money, ever become great; or, gaining riches and luxury, ever remain great? It has been written that:—

Romans in Rome's quarrel
Spared neither land nor gold,
Nor child, nor wife, nor limb, nor life,
In the good days of old.

But it has never been written nor said nor known of any but the vilest and meanest savages that they would sell their country or their wives or their children or their faiths for *money*.

Is there any community as united and as effective as a family? The family is the soundest, the strongest, and the happiest kind of society, and next to that is the tribe of families. And why? Because all the relations of family life are carried on in direct opposition to the principles of political economy and the survival of the fittest. A family is bound by ties of love and mutual helpfulness. The weakly child is not destroyed; it is cherished with extremest tenderness and care. The rule is vested in the parents, and not knocked down to the highest bidder. The brothers do not undersell each other. The women are better

treated than the men, not worse, as in the factories, and each member of the family receives an equal share of the common wealth.

But let us return to the article of Mr. Bradlaugh. Here is another statement:—

To me, I avow, it does seem that Sir James Paget or the editor of a newspaper is more valuable than the street-sweeper, that the effort necessary to become a clever doctor or successful journalist is greater than that necessary for an average stone-breaker. Sir Charles Russell, Mr. Burne-Jones, or Mr. Wm. Black may, it appears to me, have each been required to devote years of preliminary study and ardent application which are not required from the omnibus conductor or letter-carrier.

Here is the same idea, that services and labour can be recompensed by "pay." The same idea that because one man can do more or better than another he should have more *money*; the same unaccountable inability to see that all the money the earth contains can never buy a man more than the necessaries of life, for a man has but one body to clothe, but one stomach to feed, but one head to rest upon a pillow.

Now, if every man had *enough*, would it not be a pitiful spectacle to see the salt of the earth—the men of knowledge and ability—whining for more?

Why should a clever man want more than an average worker? If the workman's pay is enough for his wants—and *that* "ought" to be—why should an artist have more? The workman having enough, should the artist have more than enough? He does not *need* it. He cannot use it. He is already more blessed than the workman, for his talent is a boundless source of pleasure to him, and his work is a gratification and not a task. A really great-souled man would spurn such a guerdon for his victory. In a healthy state of human feeling, to offer a hero money and vain titles would affront him as surely as offering a man a sugar-stick to eat or a baby's rattle to play with. Virtue is its own reward. The artist's reward is his success; his honour is his works. The true hero asks for service, not for pay. "Ich Dien" is the real Prince's motto all the world over. I'll have to look up a list of biographies, so that Smith and Co. may know what a hero is. They are rather scarce now. And it is curious that at a time when the demand for a hero is very pressing, the supply has failed. That now, when

heroes could have more gold and more promotion than were ever showered on them before, they do seem strangely loth to show themselves. I cannot explain this, unless by supposing that heroes are not ruled by the law of supply and demand, and do not much covet riches or places in the House of Peers.

But let us take some homely illustrations of my contention that merit does not depend upon pay.

You know something about cricket. Take the Notts team. You will find that all the professionals are paid at the same rate. But you will not find them all equally good. Shrewsbury is the best bat in the team. He gets no more *pay* than a less expert man. But does that fact prevent any one of us from recognising his superior power? Do you not see that it is the same in all professions? I daresay Mr. Sims makes more money than Shakespeare would make now. But we never make a mistake as to which of the two stands at the head of his art. John L. Sullivan, the boxer, got, I am told, £500 a week for acting. But even if that be more than Mr. Irving would get, it does not follow that any man can believe Sullivan to be the better actor.

Homely illustration No. 2: That a man *will* do his best even when he gets no more pay than another of his trade less clever than himself. Here again we take Shrewsbury as an example. Put him into the Players' eleven. He will get no more money than any other batsman. Yet he is the *best* batsman. But will he, therefore, not try to score? *Ask* him. *See* him. Yes; I know what you will say. If he does not do his best he will be thrown out, and then he will get no money. But Mr. Stoddart tries as hard as Shrewsbury, and he gets *no* money. And you will find in the Gentlemen and Players' matches that the Gentlemen are as keen and as anxious to win as are the Players. And you will *always* find that the man who works or fights for love, or honour, or duty, or fame, will work harder and fight more fiercely and bravely than the man who fights for pay. Because the former has his *heart* in the work and the latter has not.

And notice another very curious thing about Mr. Bradlaugh's paragraph.

He tells us that Sir Charles Russell and Mr. William Black have been required to devote years of preliminary study to their trades. He suggests, therefore, that now they shall be paid extra wages. Why?

Is not all wealth created by labour? How did Messrs. Black and Russell live during their period of education? Who kept them?

They were kept by the workers, and are, therefore, in debt to the workers, and not the workers to them. But of this more anon.

We may now go back to Mr. Morley. Of his six errors, I have answered three. We will take Nos. 3 and 4 together. They imply that the people are at present in the enjoyment of the necessaries of life.

What about the unemployed? What about pauperism? What about sweating? What about the payment of unskilled labour? What about female labour? What about the railway workers, the canal workers, the chemical workers, the costermongers, the dockers, the chain and nail makers, the agricultural labourers? What about the slums? Does Mr Morley ever read any Blue Books? Does he know *anything* about the condition of this country? If he does, he makes very bad use of the knowledge. Talk about a barbarous society in which men should have but the necessaries of life. Just cast your eye over this brief extract from Dr. Russell's pamphlet on life in one room:—

Of the inhabitants of Glasgow, 25 per cent. live in houses of one apartment. . . . No less than 14 per cent. of the one-roomed houses, and 27 per cent. of the two-roomed houses, contain lodgers—strange men and women, mixed up with husbands, and wives, and children, within the four walls of small rooms. . . . There are thousands of these houses which contain five, six, and seven inmates, and hundreds which are inhabited by from eight to thirteen. Of all the children who die in Glasgow before they complete their fifth year, 32 per cent. die in houses of one apartment, and not 2 per cent. in houses of five apartments and upwards. . . . From beginning to rapid ending, the lives of these children are short parts in a wretched tragedy. . . . I can only venture to lift a corner of the curtain which veils the life which is lived in these houses. It is impossible to show you more.

That is official testimony, and Mr. Morley talks about "necessaries" of life. Do you count fresh air, health,

decency, and cleanliness as necessaries? If you do, what say you to the barbarism of Glasgow, of Liverpool, of London, and of Manchester? Come, will you tell me how Socialism is going to ruin Ancoats, or lower the moral standard of Whitechapel, or debase the ideal of Black Country life? It will be time enough for our statesmen to despise the "necessaries of life" when they have made it possible for the people to get them.

Error No. 6, that Socialism would encourage laziness, I shall deal with in a future chapter.

CHAPTER XIX.

SOCIALISM AND SLAVERY.

Then let us be thankful to Jules
 And Bil for the way they behaved,
 For though wages be small
 There's *employment* for all,
 And "the freedom of contract" is saved.

Thus free competition remains,
 A blessing to England and France;
 And the Communist schemes
 Are rejected as dreams,
 So that every rogue has a chance.

—*The Clarion.*

The common misconceptions of Socialism are most perverse and foolish. Mr. Herbert Spencer wrote an article called "The Coming Slavery." I think he is responsible for the much-quoted opinion that Socialism would result in a more odious form of slavery than any the world has yet known.

Clearly there are two things which Mr. Herbert Spencer, like most of our critics, has failed to understand. One of these things is Socialism; the other is the condition of existing society.

I deny that Socialism would result in any form of slavery at all; and I assert that a most odious form of slavery exists at present in this so-called free country. Let us see.

First as to Socialism. Mr. Spencer's idea appears to be that under Socialism the State would compel men to work against their will, or to work at occupations uncongenial to them.