

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

BY N. O. NELSON.

WE have had a century of political freedom, and theoretically we have been our own masters. With all its shortcomings, this freedom has led to tremendous personal activity. We have pioneered and settled the frontier, we have ribbed the country with steel rails, we have made ourselves a nation of inventors and manufacturers and even of letters.

The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution took every pains to guard the individual's rights against the aggressions of those in authority. Kings and rulers and even majorities were told to keep hands off. So fearful of power were Jefferson and the fathers, that they hedged it about with the novel political contrivance of three co-ordinate powers, the legislative, the executive and the judicial, neither of which could act without the concurrence of the others. This co-ordinate system and the rigid written Constitution have proved, if not our ruin, a most serious danger. New conditions have developed a rapidly growing population of mixed antecedents, the strictly rural population becoming urban, and agricultural pursuits being overtaken and passed by the industrial occupations. These changes have made the rigid Constitution of 110 years ago an onerous burden. We have been unable to adjust ourselves to the new conditions. The written Constitution gave rise to equally rigid political parties,

thrusting absolute power in the hands of party leaders. In no country in the world is party power so absolute as in the United States. It is long since the fiction was seriously urged, that party management was devoted to the good of the people or that platforms were intended to be carried out. The Republican party was brought into existence by the pressure of the slave power, and its spirit and leadership were anti-slavery. Yet, in the winter of 1860-61, a large number of its leaders in Congress voted for an amendment that should fasten slavery perpetually in the States where it then existed, and prohibit the right of petition or consideration in any manner by Congress. We have seen Mr. Cleveland, who was elected on a bimetallic platform, actually block the wheels of government to resist bimetallic legislation.

In this same period of constitutional party rule, we have built up an industrial power, which far more directly concerns the welfare of the people than the political power or the party power. True freedom cannot exist where masses of men are depending upon masters and wages for the means of living. The old-time independent farmer has divided into two classes. Either he is a petty farmer or he employs hired hands. The small shopkeeper has become the great manufacturer. From being neighbors with those who worked with him, he has come to be a great capitalist, living in a mansion in the West End, or perhaps in a distant city, or in Europe. Large bodies of men work in the factories for the most part ten hours a day, at the same monotonous daily task. All responsibility is taken from the wage-worker's mind; he has no interest in his work, because he makes no complete thing and has no interest in the product.

This century of ours is conspicuous for its devotion to science. The work done by Wallace and Darwin broke the shackles of authority from the human mind, never again to be restored. The startling discoveries of evolution following close upon those of steam and electricity, gave an impetus to scientific investigation

and to the invention of contrivances for utilizing the natural forces that the scientists had discovered. The economy of labor and the increase of productive power have had the effect of placing unlimited material resources within our grasp. The age of invention has compelled organization. The small shop has become the large factory. The individual capitalist with a few hundred dollars has been replaced by the great corporation with its large capital. The former independent workmen and domestic producers have become the wage-earners of highly specialized trades. Labor unions have become spokesmen for rights which would be imperilled were each workman to stand alone. Thus we have consolidated capital on the one hand and great bodies of organized labor on the other. How much of vitality and character has been lost by the merging of the independent man into the stockholder and the hired workman, cannot well be overestimated. The organization of labor has culminated in the formation of local unions into national unions and then federation of the nationals into the American Federation of Labor. Capital has consolidated, first by the merging of individual capital into joint-stock companies, then consolidating into corporations, and finally consolidating into trusts, which aim to control the greater portion of their line of production. The great retail stores, now usually called department stores, have similarly consolidated the retail trade. Thus along the entire line we have organization and federation, until the individual is lost sight of.

Something more than a century ago, the let-alone policy was the favorite one in manufacturing countries. The manufacturers said to the government, "Hands off, let us alone; let there be free trade in buying and selling labor as well as in buying and selling merchandise." It was soon found that this tended to make the workers abject slaves and the employers heartless masters. The system of laws beginning in England and followed by this country, known as the "Factory Acts," throw such limita-

tions around the workman as at least to preserve reasonable safety of life and health. The right to work has never been considered. The let-alone policy proved a blank failure and has been abandoned by all the commercial nations.

We have gone along all these years trying to palliate and alleviate the inevitable outcome of the capitalistic system. When land and capital are owned by private parties and operated for private profit, it cannot be a matter of wonder that work is spasmodic, that there are conflicts over wages and hours, that factories are dismal in appearance. The country has shown its wonderful growth in the magnificence of its city structures and the splendor of its Pullman trains, and yet the city slums have grown more and more picturesque in their squalor. Had a prophet looked ahead from 1799 and seen a vision of the mechanical and labor-saving improvements of the century, he would have said that we could work half as long hours as formerly and everybody have an abundance. So far from this being the result, there is infinitely more real poverty in proportion to population and wealth now than there was a hundred years ago or fifty years ago. The propertyless man who has steady work at union wages is not poorer but richer than a similar workingman was during the first half of the century, but of the wage-earning class there is a much larger proportion who are out of work, and there is a larger proportion of the propertyless to the well-to-do.

Since the pressure of poverty in this land of abundance has forced itself upon the attention of thinkers and leaders, sociology has become a department of scientific study. The duty that lies before the people of this country is to make the coming century one of scientific study of distribution and of life. It behooves us to introduce co-operation in the place of competition. Already public ownership has taken possession of the people's minds. They stand ready in many of the States to take over the municipal public services. In San Francisco, in Chicago, in Detroit, in Des

Moines, in Denver and in Haverhill as well as in Toledo, the city elections have been carried by sweeping majorities on the issue of municipal ownership. This expression has reference to the public utilities necessarily monopolistic only, but it will be a short step from the natural monopolies to the artificial monopolies. Iowa has erected a binder-twine factory because the trust put up the price of twine. May we not expect Illinois to build a steel mill and Ohio a match factory? We are in the midst of an active propaganda for co-operation in public service.

The writings of Ruskin, and Morris, and Bellamy, and Blatchford have not only taught the people, but have awakened a spiritual fervor in the people's hearts that is taking account of suffering humanity as well as property. General education has been one of the chief elements in the progress of the nineteenth century. In the twentieth we must teach our children not only the rules of literature and the laws of science, but we must teach them the rules of life and the laws of ethics. We must tell them, and our teachers must tell them, that property is a means, not an end; that the making of happy and virtuous lives is to be their life-work, and not at all the accumulation of material things. We must enlarge the co-operation which we have already begun.

In England, voluntary co-operation is taking the private business field. The largest and best factories in the realm belong to the co-operative associations. The membership and the capital and the business done have been for fifty years increasing at approximately ten per cent. annually. For twenty-five years the acquisition of municipal monopolies has been going on. Birmingham and Glasgow and Manchester and Huddersfield have all acquired the street-car, the lighting and the water systems, and some of them large areas of city property, which they have either leased or built upon. London has been under Progressive control for about ten years. It seems probable that by the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century, Great Britain will have

taken all the public utilities into public control, and the voluntary co-operative associations will have absorbed all the private business, the nation thus becoming a completely socialized industrial and educational one.

In this country public ownership seems more likely to be the outcome. There is every indication of a rapid expansion in this field. The corrupting influence of the great masses of franchise values, the power of the great consolidations of capital, the resentment of the growing mass of mere wage-earners, all tend to awaken the people and make them ready for a rapid change.

The twentieth century must cultivate peace. War is utterly barbaric, serves no rational purpose, settles no right, and in the Hague Conference we may hope to see the beginning of the end. International arbitration followed by disarmament should take the place of the barbaric armies and navies. From the conflicting interests of the nineteenth century we may hope to find harmony of interests in the twentieth. Reforms do not come at their best from either the top stratum or the bottom stratum of society. The two should be united. It is this virtue that is important in the co-operative movement, that it raises men from common ranks into leadership but retains them as leaders from their own class. The growth in the last part of this century of profit-sharing between private capitalists and their employees has given direction to many employers. A large and growing number of them have been casting about for a better way than the everlasting money-making grind.

The explanation why Mayor Jones is listened to as attentively and welcomed as cordially by many business men as by laboring men, lies in the fact that his out-spoken application of the Golden Rule in his factory meets a response in their innermost feeling. It is not so much the five per cent. in addition to regular wages as it is the distinct message that wages do not settle the account. Still more to the point is the eight-hour day. Sixteen hours or

twelve hours or ten hours a day leave neither time nor inclination for much else than work. Work becomes a tread-mill affair, and life loses all of its fragrance. When Mayor Jones wrote his song, "Divide the Day," and put it into practice in his factory and in the oil field alongside of his neighbors with a ten-hour day and a twelve-hour day, he said in effect, "I will do the right whether my neighbors do or not. An employer can do the right whether his competitors do or not. It may reduce his profits, but it need not break him."

Then, instead of building a new factory alongside of the old, he bought the acre of ground and turned it into a park. Here was an investment of private capital in unproductive property, unproductive in money, but highly productive in life. Here the children of the neighborhood may play at any time. Here the people of the neighborhood meet on Sunday afternoons to hear music and lectures. Here they see and meet the man who preferred to make Golden Rule Park alongside Golden Rule factory, rather than an imposing factory building, to glorify the business success of Jones. It has been truly said that a rich man has no neighbors. Undoubtedly Mayor Jones has neighbors in and about Golden Rule Park.

In a lecture program in Chicago one of the subjects was "The Saloon, the Greatest Enemy to the Cause of Christ and Morality." To this a clergyman, who was invited to deliver a lecture, took exception and took as his text, "The Greatest Enemy to Christ and Morality not the Saloon, but Pharisees." Mayor Jones has been criticised for not making a sufficiently severe war upon the saloons, and I think his explanation or apology would be something in the nature of Rev. Tuckerman's defense. He has said that while we have the profit-making factory where the children and the girls work ten hours a day between dingy walls, while the workingman has no place to go for relief from the daily grind

of the factory, the saloon answers a real social need and that it at least need not be singled out for attacks. I can well understand why Mayor Jones is a friendly supporter of all the churches, though he is strenuously assailed by some of their pastors. He will not voluntarily leave the church. Believing in and practicing Christ's doctrine, he maintains his right to remain. If he goes, he will have to be driven out. In such case, he would not be the first man to be driven out by the incongruity between the preaching from the pulpit and the practice from the pew, between the Sermon on the Mount and the business of the mart. Many of us who have gone out have the kindest of feelings for the individual members of the church, as many of the preachers and laymen are radical reformers, but the church as an institution by no means fulfills its mission.

That Mayor Jones has come to regard profit-making business as a contradiction of our boasted freedom is only a symptom of the times. Numbers of business men feel the injustice of it, suffer from the hardship of it, and wish they had never gotten into it. Taking business at its best, it violates the Golden Rule, it commonly violates even the commercial code, and taken at its worst it is no better than piracy. Business is war, and war is cruelty. Thousands of business concerns go down every year after a prolonged and disastrous struggle with fate. The families and employees are disorganized, involving all sorts of disappointments and hardships. This business mortality is a matter of cold statistics in the commercial reports. The twentieth century sociologists and statesmen will take account of it in its effect on life. We have said all sorts of great and glowing things about equality. We have asserted it as being the first principle of freedom. We have defined it as being equality before the law. This consisted in being tried by the same rules, guarded by the same police officers and confined in the same jail or penitentiary. May it not be a good deal more than this? Is there any of the substance of

equality between the factory girl with her four dollars a week and her home in the slums, and the daughter of the tobacco millionaire with her carriage and servants and mansion in the city and her fifty-thousand-dollar cottage and golf grounds in the mountains? To mean anything, equality must mean equality of conditions, the actual conditions of living.

The right to work is the slogan of the Toledo mayor. It needs to be defined that the worker shall have at least so much as the average product, and that nothing shall be taken out of it for those who do not work. Mazzini put duties before rights. We should make it a duty for every one to work or starve. As mayor, Mr. Jones has had to decide in what spirit he would enforce penalties of the law. During his two-year term, arrests in Toledo have declined about one-third. We need not infer that Mayor Jones has infected the Toledans and made them less disposed to crime and misdemeanor. I think the lessened number is due to the mayor's belief that it is better to send a drunken man to his home than to the jail. It is less expensive to the city and more likely to bring favorable results. That punishment does not prevent crime is well illustrated by the prevalence of crimes which were punished by death less than a century ago in England. There were something over 100 capital offenses, and these offenses were never so prevalent before or since. I once heard Prof. Royce, the Harvard psychologist, say that he had never felt so much like doing a violent thing as when he saw a "Don't" sign up over his grass grounds in Cambridge. Believing really and truly that all the people in Toledo are his brothers, entitled to a brother's kindly interest, Mayor Jones has imbued the police force with the same feeling, the result being much less police force business and less crowding of the jail.

I wonder if I can correctly explain why Mayor Jones has received so hearty a welcome by people of all classes in all sections of the country. When I visited Toledo, I was surprised to find

that a business friend of mine, although a strong partisan in politics, was an ardent supporter of the mayor. At a later date I met another leading business acquaintance who also was for Jones, knowing him to be an honest man. I have heard Jones speak alongside such speakers as Mr. Bryan, Miss Addams and Father McGlynn. In each case the Golden Rule speaker seemed the favored. I think it is because he talks straight, simple morality, something that every individual heart feels. He deals not with methods so much as purpose. The church is a method, the party is a method, while brotherhood and actual equality are substantial elements of life.

Then, simplicity is a marked characteristic of the mayor. He talks good, plain English, easily understood by every one. He has escaped the pitfall that Mr. Ruskin tells us he fell into in his youth, that of trying to write a pretty style. The plainness of speech, plainness of manner and plainness of dress are typical of the faith and practice of the man who feels an individual responsibility for all that he says and all that he does.

The author of this book has made a platform of his own. It is not a new platform in all its parts, nor is he the first public man to announce it. But the man and the platform differ from their predecessors in this respect: they harmonize with each other and with their time and place. Were I called upon to write the platform in broad terms, it would read this way:

“Love is the law of life. Co-operation is the social method of love. Competition is war. Parties are warring armies. Punishment is brutal. You can trust the people. The right to work is inalienable. Art is the expression of pleasure in work.”

My introduction of the man would be like this:

“He knows what he is talking about. He proposes nothing but what he understands clearly and believes sincerely. He loves all living beings, he loves the beautiful, he lives truth, he hates nothing but wrong.”

When the author's ideas are brought to bear on the public questions now before us, he denounces private control of public utilities, long working hours, child labor, riches and poverty, competitive business, war. He believes in municipal ownership, direct employment, an eight-hour day, equality in living, co-operation in business, and international arbitration.

Henry George was an economist possessed of an analytical mind. Land monopoly was illogical, transportation was a public function, free trade was a right. His books are masterpieces of economic reasoning. When Tom Johnson first read "Progress and Poverty," he could hardly believe his senses. He told his lawyer to read the book and point out the flaws. He said there was no flaw, and Johnson became a disciple. But George was also a passionate hater of injustice — with religious fervor he preached the right of all God's children to God's gifts. Mayor Jones is first of all a social crusader. It does not take statistics to prove the viciousness of our system; the evidence obtrudes itself on every hand. Whether the poor are growing poorer is immaterial. If one brother is in want, one sister degraded, one child neglected, that one must be relieved, the cause must be removed. "Does it pay to spend so much money for educating the children of the poor?" said a taxpayer to Horace Mann. "If it were your son, would the price be too high?" answered the educator. I think Ruskin's contempt for political economy was largely because it disclaims any moral purpose and seems to dull men's sympathies.

For the Malthusian doctrine, or the doctrine of Survival, neither George nor Ruskin nor Jones has the slightest forbearance. God's provision is ample for all His children if only men do not play the dog in the manger. Ruskin has been considered reactionary in attacking machinery and factories, for their paralyzing effect on workmen, their desecration of beauty and refinement in art and landscape. Neither Henry George nor Mayor Jones is

suspected of reactionary tendencies, yet this extract from "Social Problems" would as readily be credited to Jones or Ruskin as to George:

The tendency of all the inventions and improvements so wonderfully augmenting productive power is to concentrate enormous wealth in the hands of a few, to make the condition of the many more hopeless; to force into the position of machines for the production of wealth they are not to enjoy, men whose aspirations are being aroused. Without a single exception that I can think of, the effect of all modern industrial improvements is to production upon a large scale, to the minute division of labor, to the giving to the possession of large capital an overpowering advantage. Even such inventions as the telephone and the typewriter tend to the concentration of wealth, by adding to the ease with which large businesses can be managed, and lessening limitations that after a certain point make further extension more difficult.

The tendency of the machine is in everything not merely to place it out of the power of the workman to become his own employer, but to reduce him to the position of a mere attendant or feeder; to dispense with judgment, skill and brains, save in a few overseers; to reduce all others to the monotonous work of automaton, to which there is no future save the same unvarying round.

Under the old system of handicraft, the workman may have toiled hard and long, but in his work he had companionship, variety, the pleasure that comes of the exercise of creative skill, the sense of seeing things growing under his hand to finished form. He worked in his own home or side by side with his employer. Labor was lightened by emulation, by gossip, by laughter, by discussion. As apprentice, he looked forward to becoming a journeyman; as a journeyman, he looked forward to becoming a master and taking an apprentice of his own. With a few tools and a little raw material he was independent. He dealt directly with those who used the finished articles he produced. If he could not find a market for money he could find a market in exchange. That terrible dread — the dread of having the opportunities of livelihood shut off; of finding himself utterly helpless to provide for his family, never cast its shadow over him.

Consider the blacksmith of the industrial era now everywhere passing — or rather the "black and white smith," for the finished workman worked in steel as well. The smithy stood by roadside or street. Through its open doors were caught glimpses of nature; all that was passing could be seen. Wayfarers stopped to inquire, neighbors to tell or hear the news, children to see the hot iron glow and watch the red sparks fly. Now the smith shod a horse; now he

put on a wagon tire; now he forged and tempered a tool; again he welded a broken andiron, or beat out with graceful art a crane for the deep chimney-place, or, when there was nothing else to do, he wrought iron into nails.

Go now into one of those enormous establishments covering acres and acres, in which workmen by the thousand are massed together, and, by the aid of steam and machinery, iron is converted to its uses at a fraction of the cost of the old system. You cannot enter without permission from the office, for over each door you will find the sign "Positively no admittance." If you are permitted to go in, you must not talk to the workmen; but that makes little difference, as amid the din and the clatter, and whirr of belts and wheels, you could not if you would. Here you find men doing over and over the selfsame thing — passing, all day long, bars of iron through great rollers; presenting plates to steel jaws, turning, amid clangor in which you can scarcely "hear yourself think," bits of iron over and back again sixty times a minute, for hour after hour, for day after day, for year after year. In the whole great establishment there will be not a man, save here and there one who got his training under the simpler system now passing away, who can do more than some minute part of what goes to the making of a salable article. The lad learns in a little while how to attend his particular machine. Then his progress stops. He may become gray-headed without learning more. As his children grow, the only way he has of augmenting his income is by setting them to work. As for aspiring to become master of such an establishment, with its millions of capital in machinery and stock, he might as well aspire to be King of England or Pope of Rome. He has no more control over the conditions that give him employment than has the passenger in a railroad car over the motion of the train. Causes which he can neither prevent nor foresee may at any time stop his machine and throw him upon the world, an utterly unskilled laborer, unaccustomed even to swing a pick or handle a spade. When times are good, and his employer is coining money, he can only get an advance by a strike or a threatened strike. At the least symptoms of harder times his wages are scaled down and he can only resist by a strike, which means, for a longer or shorter time, no wages.

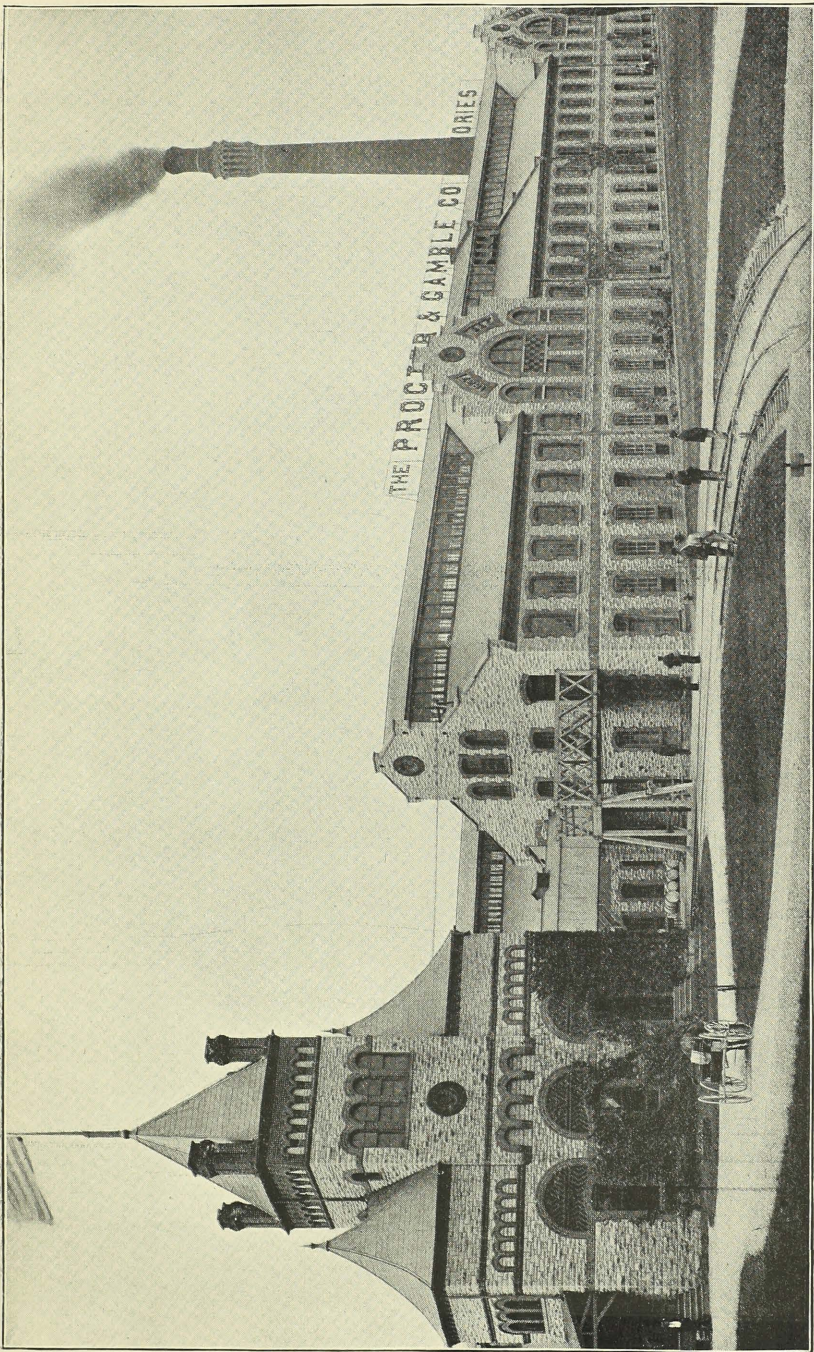
I have spoken of but one trade; but the tendency is the same in all others. This is the form that industrial organization is everywhere assuming, even in agriculture. Great corporations are now stocking immense ranges with cattle, and "bonanza farms" are cultivated by gangs of nomads destitute of anything that can be called home. In all occupations the workman is steadily becoming divorced from the tools and opportunities of labor; everywhere the inequalities of fortune are becoming more glaring. And this at a time when thought is being quickened; when the old forces of conservatism are giving way; when the idea of human equality is growing and spreading.

When between those who work and want and those who live in idle luxury there is so great a gulf fixed that in popular imagination they seem to belong to distinct orders of beings; when, in the name of religion, it is persistently instilled into the masses that all things in this world are ordered by Divine Providence, which appoints to each his place; when children are taught from the earliest infancy that it is to use the words of the Episcopal catechism, their duty toward God and man to "honor and obey the civil authority," to "order themselves lowly and reverently toward their betters, and to do their duty in that state of life in which it has pleased God to call them;" when these counsels of humility and contentment and of self-abasement are enforced by the terrible threat of an eternity of torture, while on the other hand the poor are taught to believe that if they patiently bear their lot here God will after death translate them to a heaven where there is no private property and no poverty, the most glaring inequalities in condition may excite neither envy nor indignation.

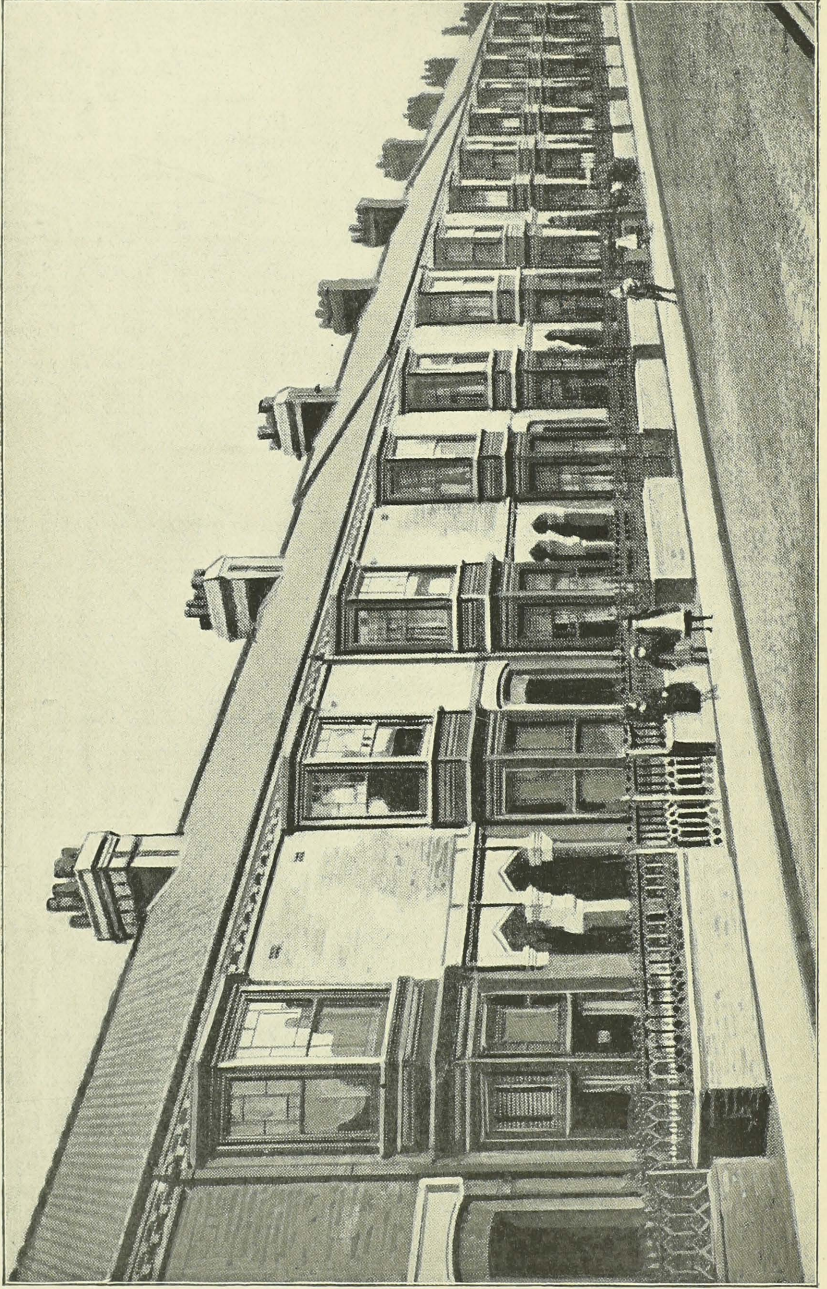
But the ideas that are stirring in the world to-day are different from these.

Near nineteen hundred years ago, when another civilization was developing monstrous inequalities, when the masses everywhere were being ground into hopeless slavery, there arose in a Jewish village an unlearned carpenter, who, scorning the orthodoxies and ritualisms of the time, preached to laborers and fishermen the gospel of the fatherhood of God, of the equality and brotherhood of men, who taught his disciples to pray for the coming of the kingdom of heaven on earth. The college professors sneered at him, the orthodox preachers denounced him. He was reviled as a dreamer, as a disturber, as a "communist," and, finally, organized society took the alarm, and he was crucified between two thieves. But the word went forth, and, spread by fugitives and slaves, made its way against power and against persecution till it revolutionized the world, and out of the rotting old civilization brought the germ of the new. Then the privileged classes rallied again, carved the effigy of the man of the people in the courts and on the tombs of kings, in his name consecrated inequality, and wrested his gospel to the defense of social injustice. But again the same great ideas of a common fatherhood, of a common brotherhood, of a social state in which none shall be overworked and none shall want, begin to quicken in common thought.

Governor Pingree came down from Detroit to speak for Jones just before his re-election campaign. These two men differ very much in the main points of their political aims and methods, but they are as one in wanting to improve the lot of the common



THE PROCTOR & GAMBLE CO., CINCINNATI, OHIO.
(Partly profit-sharing.)



EQUITY ROAD, LEICESTER, ENGLAND.
(Homes owned by co-operative workmen.)

people, and in their opposition to arrogant commercialism. Pingree believes in parties, and Jones doesn't, but there is manifestly a strong impulse of humanity in the Michigan Governor. He made no mistake so far as his own prospects are concerned in giving a lift to the Toledo Socialist. Prof. Herron has spoken at different times in Toledo under Mayor Jones' auspices. Herron and Jones are at the opposite extremes in the manner of expressing themselves, but they are in marked harmony in their social views. Jones gives credit to the Iowa professor for having done much to bring him into the new life. In delicate sensibilities and poetic temperament, these men bear a remarkable resemblance.

There was an amusing illustration of journalism at the close of the re-election campaign. The Saturday before the election, one of the local papers devoted an entire page to exposing the public and personal rascality of the candidate. On the day after the election, the same paper accounted for the enormous majority Jones received by his well-known uprightness, kindness and sincerity. It added that it was all right for people of all classes to express themselves in unequivocal tones for Jones, but they need not have "hollered so loud."

The simple way in which Mayor Jones expresses the largest aims in his speeches and his interviews and papers, seems to fascinate all sorts of people. He talks from the heart and through a face that carries unmistakable evidence of sincerity. In breaking with the party machine, he broke it to pieces, and he also settled his own mind against party organization. For a quarter of a century, he says, neither of the great parties has had any moral issue. They are run as a business, for the profit of a few managers and office-holders. They make war and hate between people who have nothing against each other, and who want only the good of all. By party, Mr. Jones means, of course, the regular party organizations as we know them. It does not include the bringing of people together for a specific purpose. The fact

that they are together in that purpose does not bind them to be together in everything else or anything else.

Golden Rule Park adjoins Golden Rule factory. It is a quarter of a block, with some shade trees, a speaker's stand, and a lot of seats. Here, during the summer, meetings are held, with music and speeches. Distinguished speakers are caught on the wing as they pass between the East and the West, and sometimes they are specially brought out. Mr. Jones is always present as the leading spirit, giving out the songs and making some appropriate remarks.

His sympathies are always with the man who is down. Such a man may always depend on getting a little more help than by the rules of the game he may be entitled to. Applicants for aid are of all sorts, those wanting public appointments, those wanting work, those wanting money, and I saw a letter from a woman who wanted a husband. She described herself in detail and also explained carefully what she wanted. Mr. Jones impresses every one as a man to whom to tell your troubles, and he gives advice or other help as though he likes to do it. His protest is not against individuals, but against the system; against what he calls the rules of the game. Besides being unjust, the game is uninteresting and doesn't pay.