

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### **Individual Self-Service the Primary Impulse of Social Service.**

What is the primary impulse of social service? why do we habitually serve one another by swapping individual services? That is our riddle, isn't it, Doctor?

I have already told you that the answer is as easy as wanting to eat, and so it is. We serve one another because it is the easiest way of serving ourselves. That is the primary impulse, the natural law. Social service originates in individual desires for easy self-service. Aye, and mind you, its continuance as well as its origin depends upon those desires. Banish from human nature the individual desire for easy self-service, and social service would be at an end. We serve others in order to get easy money with which to hire others to serve us.

Sounds pretty sordid, doesn't it?—pretty disgustingly selfish. But no, it is neither sordid nor selfish in its "healthological" aspects, although it becomes an expression of both in pathological conditions. But I am not going to encourage your professional instinct for the pathological,—not very much for the present anyhow. We must understand the normal before we try to figure out the pathological; and I shouldn't say anything at all about the pathological now, if it were not for your question regarding hospitality and charity as proof of altruism in social service.

Yes, indeed, the myriads of instances of perso-

nal hospitality, and the records of our magnificent charities, do go to prove that men are altruistic. But they do not go to prove that those habitual interchanges of service of which you and I have been talking and which constitute social service in normal as distinguished from pathological conditions—I say that hospitality and charity do not go to prove that these interchanges originate in and depend upon altruistic impulses. Society could not subsist upon charity. Though hospitality and charity were never so altruistic as to their impulses—and that isn't invariable, you know, Doctor, don't you?—yet neither the one nor the other would be the kind of social service that keeps the world a-going.

Oh, I beg of you, don't misunderstand me. I am not assailing either hospitality or charity. True hospitality is wholesome always. This world would be a desert indeed without it. Even of charities I would say only the kindest words. Useful? To be sure charities are useful, just as your medicines are useful—useful in disease. But in a healthy state of the social body, charities would be like poultices on a healthy physical body—a “demned damp disagreeable” impertinence. Whenever your boastful enthusiasm warms up over our magnificent charities, Doctor, you had better cool it off a little with reflections upon what it is that our magnificent charities imply. Don't you see that we shouldn't have any magnificent charities unless we had a whole lot of mighty un-magnificent poverty? We shouldn't provide magnificently for ameliorating the condition of the worthy poor, should we, unless there were hosts of worthy poor whose condition needs amelioration? Our magnificent charities for their relief prove something much less exhilarating than that human nature is altruistic. They prove a deplorable pathological condition of hu-

man society—a condition withal which is not without persistent hints of a possible relation as of effect to cause between worthy poor and unworthy rich. A cynical friend of ours used to say repeatedly—you must have heard him; he borrowed it from a book I reckon—he used to say that “charity is oftentimes a form of self-righteousness which inspires us to give to others a part of what already belongs to them.” That is rather extreme, perhaps; but suggestive, Doctor, suggestive. Whenever I hear of the charitable donations of certain classes of rich people in aid of poor people, an old nursery rhyme flutters through my memory, don’t you know, in spite of all my efforts to shoo it out. I’ll have to give it the right-of-way now, I guess, and get rid of it, or I shant be able to rally my thoughts:

There was once a considerate crocodile,  
Which lay on a bank of the river Nile;  
He swallowed a fish with a face of woe,  
While his tears flowed fast to the stream below:  
“I am mourning,” said he, “the untimely fate  
Of the poor little fish which I just now ate.”

Oh, granted! granted! All you say about charity’s pulling unfortunates out of quagmires is granted. “Victims” would be a more definite term than “unfortunates,” though, and quite as true, don’t you think? But never mind that distinction now. Granting what you say in behalf of charities, much of which I approve very cordially, and granting what you say so convincingly of the influence of hospitality in keeping up a brotherly human spirit, to all of which I respond “Amen!” from my heart,—yet I again insist, and you cannot deny, that it is neither hospitality nor charity that keeps normal social service a-going.

“If all men are beggars, from whom shall men beg?” Did you never read that? It’s from the “Mendicant,” by George Francis Savage Arm-

strong; and he hit the mark plumb in the center when he wrote it. Bear with me again for a moment, Doctor:

Sakya-Muni, Gautama Buddha, what dost thou proffer of hope or of mirth?

"What shall I do to be saved" from the sorrow, passion and terror, and madness of earth?

What is thy gospel, O prophet of India? What hast thou left to me, child of the sun?

What is the balm for my pain thou hast promised me? What is the crown when the race hath been run?

"What shall I do to be saved?" Thou hast answered it: "Labor not forever, but beg for thy bread; Live as a mendicant; marry not; mortify flesh; let a life of Nirvana be led.

So shalt thou find in the depth of thy passions, growth of thy spirit, composure and rest, Passing through indolent days of humanity on to intangible joys of the blest."

Sakya-Muni, Gautama Buddha, bending I heed thee, but find in thy law

Something that baffles me, doubtful consistency—lo, in the weft of thy wisdom a flaw--

Look to it, Gautama, Sakya-Muni, sweet is the bulbul, but hollow her egg.

How shall thy gospel suffice for the many? If all men are beggars, from whom shall men beg?

Can't we make Armstrong's wholesome question apply to our little confab? If all men are givers but not getters, what withal shall they give? Ah, it is neither giving alone nor getting alone, but mutuality of giving and getting, that distinguishes normal social life. It is the ceaseless interchanges of individual services of which we have already talked so much, that constitute the life current of social service. And those ceaseless interchanges are generated and maintained, not by charity, which is a pathological symptom, not by hospitality, which is a delightful effect of social service but not the vital cause, not by altruistic impulses of any sort however

noble. They are generated and maintained by the simple, matter-of-fact, work-a-day, self-serving impulse of each individual to satisfy his own desires as easily as possible. We engage in social service habitually because, to recur to the vernacular, we want easy money.

True enough, the money we get in this way may not be such all-fired easy money either; but it buys us more of the things we want, and better ones, than we could get with equal exertion by making them ourselves. The self-serving impulse does indeed lead on to all manner of oppression, from vulgar robbery to respectable graft, from plundering laws to grinding institutions. But this comes from a perverted desire for easy money, springing out of pathological social conditions. In normal social conditions the tendency of the self-serving impulse is toward heights of altruism of which the mere giver can never know.

Don't you remember how Henry George in his Introduction to "Progress and Poverty"—ah, yes, I recall; you've never read "Progress and Poverty." Well, as I've often told you, I envy you the intellectual banquet you have in store. When you read it, do me a favor, won't you? Don't stumble through it as its critics have done, I beg of you, but read it, really and truly read it. Now, in the Introduction to that book you will find that what I have been saying to you on this point is formulated into a fundamental law or axiom of political economy. So far as I know, George was the first political economist to recognize the great importance of this law. He certainly was the first to emphasize it. Yet it is the key to the science of social service. The reason that professional economists touch it so gingerly is, I suspect, because they fear that any thinker who uses it as accurately and fearlessly as George did, would open the same door that he opened; and that would be so

much the worse for folks who live in the sweat of other folks' faces. Here's a copy of "Progress and Poverty" which you may take with you if you wish, but I'll read the paragraph about self service now: "Political economy is not a set of dogmas. It is the explanation of a certain set of facts. It is the science which, in the sequence of certain phenomena, seeks to trace mutual relations and to identify cause and effect, just as the physical sciences seek to do in other sets of phenomena. It lays its foundations upon firm ground. The premises from which it makes its deductions are truths which have the highest sanction; axioms which we all recognize; upon which we safely base the reasoning and actions of every-day life, and which may be reduced to the metaphysical expression of the physical law that motion seeks the line of least resistance—viz., that men seek to gratify their desires with the least exertion."

Not morally right, Doctor, for men to do this! Why, how can you say of anything that it's not morally right, when you are constantly arguing that there is no such thing as right and wrong, but only facts? I guess it's a fact all right, isn't it? I wish I had George's "Science of Political Economy" here, for in that book he deals with his sociological axiom more elaborately. Although the book fell from his hand unfinished at his death, he had so far completed it as to outline the natural foundations of political economy. In many particulars he had finished his work. But in other respects it is left for after hands to do; and one of these days, when political economy—which, by the way, is only another name for the science of social service—shall have emerged from the bewildering maze in which it is floundering now, some of its accredited professors may worthily complete the work that George began.

In this book George explains, what should have

needed no explanation, that his sociological axiom, "men seek to gratify their desires with the least exertion," is not an excuse for selfishness and oppression. It is simply a law of human energy, operative alike with the just and the unjust, the altruistic and the selfish. Precisely as the analogous law of physical energy causes the Mississippi to bend and turn along the line of least physical resistance, whether it ruins a planter by sweeping away his plantation, or accommodates him by floating boats up to his private wharf, so this law of human energy causes men to gratify their individual desires along the line of least individual irksomeness, whether their desires be selfishly to rob their fellows or altruistically to co-operate with them. Why, old Simon D. Sampson doesn't obey this fundamental law of human nature in his sordidly selfish career any more closely than Jane Addams does in her altruistic settlement work. And Edison is a very type of its influence in intensifying co-operation through invention.

Can you think, Doctor, of anything in this Georgian law of social service to controvert? Isn't it too plain for dispute, that whatever our desires may be we seek to gratify them with the least exertion? Isn't it a genuine natural law? What's that you say? Oh, your old notion that there's no such thing as natural law outside the realm of the physical. Well, that depends upon how narrow you make your term "natural." But I am not going to be diverted into any philosophical "rag-chewing." Haven't I made it clear that what I mean by calling George's axiom a natural law is that it describes a characteristic tendency of human nature? Within the sphere of human nature, which your physical scientists have hardly explored but which is easily within the realm of human observation and experience, the Georgian axiom is as universal and invariable, if

our perceptions are of any use to us at all, as the physical law of the line of least resistance or the physical law of gravitation. I don't believe you will deny that.

No instance really out of gear with this law of human dynamics has ever come to my attention, and I reckon I am safe in saying the same for you. Whenever a man's exertion is apparently unnecessary, he is nevertheless as responsive to George's law as if it were necessary. He may be seeking the effort itself instead of something beyond, as when you find him walking laboriously although he might ride easily. Or, he may find that the effort in preparing an easy device outweighs the effort saved by the device, as if he should carry a load of corn in a wagon though it could be so much more easily and swiftly carried by railway if the exertion of building the railway would not exceed the economy of its use for an occasional load of corn. Or, he might go a mile or more up the creek for a ford, and back again on the other side, because the shorter way across would necessitate great preliminary exertion in building a bridge. But the apparent exceptions that most readily mislead are probably those that spring from ignorance of the easiest way of doing a thing, as if we gathered grain with a sickle instead of a reaper; or ignorance of the easiest way coupled with a lively apprehension of the dangers it may involve, as if we go to farming in the year of our Lord 1620 on the rock-bound coast of New England, though empires of rich prairie lie fallow in the distant Mississippi Valley with warlike tribes between. But no such instances discredit the law. The object desired is in each case accomplished in the easiest way, all things considered.

Within the range of our knowledge and the circumstances of our situation, we invariably seek



to gratify our desires with the least effort, the least exertion, at the cost of the least irksomeness to ourselves individually. Whether our desires are straight or crooked, human or brutal, angelic or devilish, social or anti-social, co-operative or disruptive, industrial or recreative, we seek their gratification as the river seeks the sea—along the line of least resistance.

See those boys playing ball over there in Sampson's vacant lot. Old codgers like you and me may think their violent exertion needless—all of it; but that is because we don't want to play ball and they do. Or we may think some of it needless; but that is because we are not in the game and they are. If you suppose they make any needless exertion for the end they seek, ask them, and I think they will tell you that you are mistaken. Should you want a test, fool them into searching in the wrong place for a lost ball and make a note of the compliments you get for your trick.

If we turn from play to crime, still the law holds good. That burglar who got into your house last winter—he might more easily have gone to the roof and come down through the scuttle, but he didn't know that you had left the scuttle unlocked. He could have broken in your door or smashed a window, but that would have made a noise and might have led to his capture, which wasn't one of the desires he was seeking to gratify. What he did, so you told me, was to cut a piece carefully out of one of your windows, put his arm through, release the catch, and then noiselessly raise the sash. It was not in fact the easiest way to get into your house, but it was the easiest way of which he knew to gratify his desire for your watch and spoons and unbanked money.

And, Doctor, don't imagine that the Georgian law in its application to crime relates to physical

obstacles only. It relates also to mental and moral obstacles. Physical force seeks its line of least resistance along the weaker coherences of matter, as when a cartridge is discharged from a rifle. Animal force seeks its line of least resistance along the easier path with reference to mental and bodily effort, as in the case of a brute after prey. But human force seeks its line of least resistance with reference not only to physical obstructions and mental and bodily effort, but also to moral considerations. We can easily see that your burglar would have stayed out of your house if his desire for your loose valuables had been outbalanced by his appreciation of the physical difficulties and dangers of getting them. But isn't it just as probable that he would have stayed out if his desire for the valuables had been outbalanced by mental fear of detection, or moral repugnance to invading your privacy and divesting you of your property? In considering what constitutes the line of resistance to criminal conduct, we must take into account, don't you see? not only the physical difficulties, but also mental and moral sensibilities, and weigh them all in the balance against the object desired. When we have done this, we shall probably suspect that the worst criminals are not in jail, and we may prudently conclude that we wouldn't like to be searched ourselves.

There is that stable boy you had a year or two ago—the one you humiliated by making him wear a uniform which advertised him as your own private property. You discharged him for petty stealing, and you think of him yet as a thief, while you think of his successor as an honest boy. It happens, now, that I know something about both of those boys of which you are ignorant. Never mind how I came to know, but I do know that both wanted to pilfer from you. Or,

rather—and this is the better way of putting it—each of them wanted more money for his work than you paid him. They both felt that they couldn't buy as much service of other people with their wages as they gave to you. Of course, this was a wicked feeling, I admit you that; a contract is a contract, and you always did pay extra wages for extra work. But I am not making a plea for the boys, I am only stating facts.

Well, the first boy didn't want to do extra work for the extra pay. You know yourself he was a bilious sort of boy; we called him lazy, for epithets are cheap. Yet he did want the extra pay. So he shirked the extra work and took the extra pay unbeknownst to you. One factor in this deplorable result was the boy's bodily sluggishness; another was the easy opportunity he had for pilfering; another was a mental haziness corresponding to his bodily sluggishness, which made him think he could "get away with the goods;" and another was defective moral training and a comatose moral sense. In these circumstances his desire for easier money sought gratification in theft instead of honest work.

But the other boy, who is not bilious and we call him industrious—he doesn't steal. It is not because he may not want to. I have reason to believe he does, and that he would if that seemed to him the line of least resistance to easy money as it did to the first boy. His moral sense also is comatose. But don't worry. Your petty cash is as safe with this boy as in the Bank of Montreal. He won't steal small sums. No, nor large ones either in any unlawful way. His opportunity for pilfering from you is just as good as that of the first boy, and so you might say that the physical line of resistance is the same. But you must not forget that the first boy was temperamentally lazy and the second is not, and that

these are considerations in determining the relative line of physical resistance. As to mental resistance, the second boy is bright enough to know that he will get caught, and self-respecting enough—so self-respecting that the sturdy little democrat wouldn't demean himself by wearing your proprietary uniform,—he is self-respecting enough, I say, to have a horror of the possibility of getting into jail. Besides that, his moral training as we call it, has not been so much neglected as the other boy's was. He has been fed at school and Sunday school upon skim-milk morality—"honesty is the best policy," and all that sort of thing, you know, which works well enough superficially,—and you can depend upon him to do nothing in the way of dishonesty which is bad in the way of policy. Under these circumstances, pilfering is not the line of least resistance with this boy, as under the circumstances of the other it was with him; so, whereas the other boy took your extra wages without doing extra work, this boy gives you extra work for your extra wages.

There is great promise in him of a prosperous man—what is called a successful man. He has the right balance for it, including his comatose moral sense. Unless that sense awakens in him, he may rise even to lofty heights in affairs. For he appreciates the sentiment of the old English rhyme—

A little stealing is a dangerous part;  
 But stealing largely is a noble art.  
 'Tis mean to rob a henroost or a hen;  
 But stealing millions makes us gentlemen.

A powerful financier, plundering mercilessly but strictly in accordance with the ethical rules of the big business game; a great lawyer upon whom predatory corporations depend to pilot them safely into an easy-money port; a popular ecclesiastic dispensing moral privileges to those who get much

easy money and have it in abundance to give for eleemosynary purposes not interruptive of the game,—all these are possibilities with that boy. But they will slip from him if his moral sense awakens. An awakened moral sense is the worst of all obstacles to getting easy money in any other than the natural way, the way that necessitates the giving of service for service.

But bless me, what have I been doing? Here I am in the very middle of the pathology of social service, and I didn't intend to talk much about that yet. You must pardon me, Doctor; I was drawn into it by the necessity of contrasting the divergent directions of human action under the social service law of the line of least resistance. What I wished to impress upon you was this, that it is in conformity to this same law of human nature which I have distinguished as George's law, that one man gratifies his own wants by preying upon his fellows, while another does it by contributing to their comfort; that one is socially disruptive while another is socially co-operative. Pathological social conditions, rather than individual wickedness, seem to me to be most at fault for the tendency to prey and disrupt, because, as I see it, the natural tendency of mankind under the influence of George's law is not to crime, but to invention.

The same desire to secure the most money with the least effort—which means, of course, the highest degree of gratification with the least work; for money, as you have agreed, is only a certificate of title to the gratifications we crave—this very desire which in pathological social conditions may prompt to theft, or maintain slavery, or foster monopolies, leads naturally as a rule to the invention of labor-saving methods of service. By increasing the aggregate of wealth-producing power—that is to say, by increasing the service-ren-

dering power of each individual through co-operation with others, invention emancipates mankind more and more from the drudgery of satisfying primary bodily needs. And as it does this, there come demands for higher satisfactions, which in turn are made possible by further invention. So the human race develops as a co-operative whole, and we have an expanding civilization in which, while self-service is the continuous impulse, social service is the continuous result.

Did you ever consider how tremendously effective self-service has been in promoting social service, notwithstanding the obstacles that deep-seated pathological conditions actually interpose? In spite of these adverse conditions the desire for self-service has strengthened the tendencies that make for social service much more, relatively, than those that make for its disruption.

Behold the intricate and beneficent co-operation of the social service market to which I called your attention in our first talk. This springs from invention, which springs from co-operation, which springs from the natural desire for self-service, the natural craving for easy money. Consider our railroads, our telegraphs and telephones, our factories and our farm machinery,—oh, what's the use of enumerating? Give your imagination play and you can see that this world has been repeatedly metamorphosed into what a little while before each change would have been thought of as fairy land. Think of it intensely, as it is at this moment, and honestly don't you seem to be in fairy land? Marvelous? Marvelous is no word for it.

You say it is machinery that does it? Yes, so long as men continue to make and to operate the machinery. But back of the machinery is invention; and back of invention is human co-

operation; and back of all is the self-serving impulse. No, not back in point of time, but in point of natural order. The desire to get in the easiest way the service of others,—this is what prompts co-operation, which produces and utilizes invention, which makes the civilization in which we find ourselves today.

The more you think of it, Doctor, and the more critically you test it, the surer you will be that the primary impulse of social service is expressed in the law that "men seek to gratify their desires with the least exertion." It is a sound sociological principle, a true perception of a primary law of human conduct.

Yes, I supposed it was a commonplace to you—this idea that men seek to serve themselves in the easiest way. I wasn't expecting to startle you with news. What I have been trying to do is to get you to think about what you already know. I want you to give a little vitality to your commonplaces. What difference does it make how commonplace this bit of psychology is to you if it doesn't affect your thinking?

And what a wonderful commonplace it is, isn't it? It is all a-thrill with vitality, and big with meaning. It explains the interchanges of individual services which constitute social service; and if you give it half a show, Doctor, it will explain the baffling problem of our time—the problem of why it is that those who render the most service to others get the least service in return.

Don't believe there is such a problem? Well, we'll talk about that at another time; it's pathological. Of course you believe it was so in the past, and you see the reason for it then. Under despotic institutions those who gave much service for little were forced to it; and those who got much service for little or none, were privileged by the despot to do so. Arbitrary power is the explanation

there. But in a country like ours, where there is no despotism, how shall we account for a similar unbalanced state of the interchanges of services—for surely you will admit that there isn't exactly a square deal in the matter,—how shall we account for it, I ask, in these free conditions of ours?

The key to the problem is the law of human nature we have been talking about, and I will try to help you out with it some time if you don't discover the solution for yourself. Meanwhile let's go on with our talk on the normal or "healthological" effects of that law of human nature in causing co-operation.

No, Doctor, I mean something entirely different from what is in your mind. We have had co-operative societies galore, and I have no quarrel with this narrow use of the word. If a lot of people who organize a partnership want to call it a co-operative society, and to speak largely and vaguely about it as "co-operation," why let them do so, of course. I haven't any copyright on the word "co-operation," nor on any definition of it. But I guess I've as good a right to use the word to indicate this universal and spontaneous partnership in which the whole civilized world is engaged, as a coterie of dilettante reformers have to monopolize it for such uses as small partnerships in the cracker bakery or grocery store line. So, mind you, when I say "co-operation" I don't allude to profit-sharing experiments, but to the great system of social service which springs naturally and universally from individual desires for easy self-service—that comprehensive partnership of humanity in which all of us, except as we prey upon it, are necessarily and naturally partners.

Imagination will hardly let us think of a time when in some form however crude and to some



extent however slight, this co-operation had no existence; that is to say, when there was no specialization, for specialization is indispensable to co-operation. You often speak of specializing, Doctor, but I suspect that you seldom if ever think of the thing except as a tendency in your own profession. Isn't it true that when you use the word, your thought centers upon the custom among physicians of devoting themselves to this or that pathological specialty? or, at the widest, of students taking up particular branches of scientific inquiry? I thought so. But in the science of social service those are only some of the directions of specialization. The term itself is vastly more comprehensive. A ditch digger or a street sweeper, you must know, is a specialist as truly as a surgeon or a botanist. Specialization is only another term for what business men call "division of labor."

This term of the business man—and political economists have adopted it—is not very indicative, not very accurate. It doesn't quite express what is involved in co-operative specialization; for this implies not only a sort of division of service but also a combination of service. By combination of service, we unite our respective specialties so as to produce and use those gigantic structures that defy our powers as individuals. Think of the co-operative union of specialized knowledge and effort necessary to construct an ocean greyhound or a thirty story building, a railroad, a farmer's barn, or even a modest cottage. But by division of service we separate our respective specialties, so as to accomplish results equally gigantic in the aggregate but minute in their separable units, as when the letter carrier, the peddler or the storekeeper gathers and carries for us. We unite in order to do one big thing which none of us could do alone; we separate, as it were, in

order to do many little things which it would be wasteful of time and energy for each to do for himself. In the one case we turn ourselves into a sort of social "giant;" in the other we each divide ourselves into many social "pigmies." But don't fail to observe that in both cases we co-operate for the gratification of our individual desires. Whether many of us combine in order to make or move an object of magnitude, or separate in order to make or carry small objects in abundance, we act in obedience to our respective impulses to satisfy our own wants in the easiest way. Serving one another in order to serve ourselves the easier, we generate that co-operation which in the broadest, truest, and only enduring sense is social service.

Don't you see it? Think a bit. When you and I were camping one Summer, we wanted to mail letters home at the post office two miles east of our camp. You recall it, don't you? We also wanted some of that live-bait from Spencer's brook two miles west. At first we intended, you know, to walk together to the post office and then to Spencer's. The companionship would have been agreeable, and if there had been no other consideration that is doubtless what we should have done. But we had a special reason, don't you remember, one not worth recalling now, for wanting to do both of those errands in the shortest time and with the least bodily exertion. So we agreed to dispense for a spell with our mutually agreeable companionship in order to accomplish what for the hour we both regarded as more desirable. Each of us divided his labor "pigmy" fashion. I went to the post office with your letters as well as my own, for two sets of letters didn't burden me any more than one. So I became, don't you see, like two pigmy servants—one for you and one for me. On the other hand you brought my live-bait as well as

yours from Spencer's, for the two little pails were as easy to carry as one would have been; at least you said so, and I saw no reason to object, being a little rheumatically in one arm. So you also became like two pigmy servants, one for me and one for you. What was the result? Don't you see now how it illustrates the effectiveness of division of effort in social service? Why, I walked only four miles to and from the post office—two miles each way,—and you walked only the same distance to and from Spencer's brook, and we were gone from camp only an hour and a half; but the letters of both were mailed, and the live-bait for both was got, just as satisfactorily, weren't they?—as if each of us had mailed his own letters and got his own bait at a total expenditure in time of three hours instead of one-and-a-half, and in walking of eight miles each instead of four. We accomplished these economies of time and energy by specializing.

The only difference between this incident and the steady flow of business energy in the social service market of the great big world, is that you and I were bent on pleasure, and but for the special reason I have alluded to, might have preferred to take more time and to walk farther for the sake of companionship. But when men are engaged in business instead of pleasure—that is, when they are bent on getting social service for themselves, or what will amount to the same thing in the end, are bent on "making money," as they call it,—the element of choice companionship drops out. They do small services in this way habitually, such services as one person can do in considerable number at once as easily as one at a time.

Of course the resulting economy is vastly greater than in our post office and live-bait experience, although the principle is the same. Certainly you

must realize that the economy of time and energy would be much more than doubled when hundreds of thousands divide their labor in the way that you and I did. Even in our camp, if there had been half a dozen of us I could as easily have mailed all our letters, and you could as easily—not quite, perhaps, but pretty near—have brought live-bait for us all; and that would have left the other four free to spend the hour-and-a-half of our absence in getting dinner for us all. Our effectiveness in that case would have been multiplied six times instead of two times. For if each of six of us had mailed his own letters and got his own live-bait, the time expended would have been three hours each, or eighteen for the six, and the walking done would have been eight miles each, or forty-eight in all. But by division, two of us would have done it all just as well with an aggregate expenditure of only three hours in time, or one-and-a-half each, and eight miles in walking, or four miles each.

Reflect upon this a little and you will get a glimpse of the effectiveness of co-operative service in economizing time and energy in business pursuits, and thereby creating abundance for all concerned. Don't you see clearly now how this co-operation, these habitual interchanges of services, this social service market as it were,—don't you see how its marvelous effectiveness may account for the vast gulf that lies between savagery, where co-operation is simple and within narrow bounds, and civilization, where it is complex and world-wide? Geometrical progression isn't in it with economic co-operation for producing marvelous results.

Yes, the idea of community of goods does arise when we think of the intricacy of co-operation. It seems as though everybody engaged in productive co-operation must share in the results of the

common effort, if justice be done. And so they must, so they must. But not arbitrarily. The same natural laws that enhance individual powers when co-operatively expended, provide for augmenting individual incomes in proportion to the expenditure of individual effort. An "equal divide" is not natural, and is by no means necessary. But more of this after a while. For the present let's consider co-operation by combining individual efforts instead of dividing them—by becoming parts of a social service "giant," instead of turning ourselves individually into many social service "pigmies."

Didn't you and I illustrate the "giant" method pretty well when we first went camping and wanted a comfortable camping cabin instead of putting up with a little shelter tent? I could have made a kind of cabin, and so could you; but neither of us unaided could have made as good a one as we did make. To speak of nothing else, didn't we have to use logs that neither of us alone could have handled? But by uniting our strength, by making of ourselves a social service "giant" whose power was more than double the solitary power of either of us, we managed to produce a result otherwise impossible to us.

In this case we shared the result as communists, using in common the one cabin of our co-operative making. But that sort of thing isn't necessary. Such results can be shared individually with equal if not more perfect justice whenever the co-operators desire it. You know what Perry Lawson and Silas Wilson did on the other lake last Summer. They couldn't share a cabin in common as you and I did, for they had their wives with them. But they combined their building energies just as you and I did. Of course they had to work about twice as long, for they had to have two cabins instead of one; but don't forget as we go

on that if their work was doubled so was the result. They had twice as many cabins as we had. Now, how were they to enjoy the benefit of each other's work in building those cabins—how without communism?

Why, Doctor, you know that Lawson and Wilson don't know what communism is. They have never heard of it except as a verbal brickbat for pelting reformers with indiscriminately. They didn't try to avoid it, for they never thought of it. But they did avoid it. They avoided it unconsciously. In the most natural way, each of them got the benefit individually and fairly of their co-operative work which had produced two cabins, both alike and each better and bigger than either Lawson or Wilson could have built alone. What they did was to swap cabins.

Lawson said: "Here, Silas, give me your undivided half interest in one of those cabins, and I'll give you my undivided half interest in the other." "That's all right, Perry," said Silas. So there they were, each with a cabin he couldn't have built alone, yet each as justly and truly the individual owner of that cabin as if he alone had built it.

You may not have noticed it in the case of our own experience in swapping letter-carrying service for live-bait service, but the principle was the same as in the case of the Lawson and Wilson cabins. I carried your letters as compensation for your bringing my live-bait, and when it was all over, that live-bait was just as fairly my individual property as if I had got it myself and you had carried your own letters.

Now, just this sort of thing is taking place all the time in the business world, only on a vastly larger scale, more systematically and with prodigious complexity. And here is where money and the terms of money come in. When you and I

exchanged bait-carrying for letter-carrying, we didn't need money. That is because our swap was in so narrow a compass and so extremely simple and complete in itself. The same thing was true of Lawson and Wilson in their cabin swap. But when the swapping is so intricate that no one person's service fairly offsets another's, and so many persons are involved that but few of them know each other, a mode of measurement and a language of measurement become necessary. Yet this only makes a difference in form and not in essence.

Something that Perry Lawson did with his cabin the other day illustrates it. I guess you don't know that Lawson has sold his cabin? Well, he has, and this is the way of it. He had told Wilson that a long absence from the country would prevent his camping for several years. "I'm sorry, Perry," said Wilson, "but as you can't be with us I wish you would sell your cabin to me, so that I can sell it to some agreeable fellow." The generous thing for Lawson would have been, I suppose, to give his cabin to Mrs. Wilson; but if he had done that my illustration would have been spoiled, and for a fact he did sell it to his friend Silas. But Silas hadn't anything to offer in pay in the way of his own service which Perry wanted, so they fixed a price in money. It was satisfactory to both—ten dollars, I think it was—and Wilson paid it.

Now what does that mean? Why, simply that Silas Wilson gave to Perry Lawson a token whereby he can get anybody's service, anywhere, whenever he wants to, and in any quantity and variety he pleases, up to ten dollars' worth; and that Silas Wilson has either given his own service to one or more persons to the same value, or will do so, or else that he will, somehow or other, legally or illegally, reputably or disreputably,

screw some other person or persons out of their service to that value.

Multiply that transaction, then, by millions, and divide it intricately into all sorts of fractional parts, and you will have an indication of what is going on all the time in the business world. Partly by means of the actual use of money tokens, but chiefly by means of book accounts, and of checks, drafts and notes, individual titles to shares in social services are being transferred from one of us to another all over the world, in principle precisely the same as Lawson transferred to Wilson the title to his cabin.

It is this transference of title to social service that makes co-operation possible. Moved by his own desires for the most service with the least effort, each individual voluntarily exerts his own energy to aid in satisfying in some degree the desires of others. In exchange for what he does he receives money, or credit in terms of money, which puts him in position to gratify the desires that moved him. He works at his own specialty, doing over and over again the same thing, for whom he knows not, a thing as useless in itself it may be as a shoe sole or a shirt button; and through a myriad exchanges accomplished by means of money or in the language of money, some of the service that he renders comes in some form to you or me, let us say, in exchange for some service that we render. Our individual services, yours or mine, may never reach him at all, though his reach you or me; but somebody else's will reach him, in exchange for yours or mine, if things work out normally—that is if there is nothing pathological in our social conditions,—and directly and indirectly, somewhere and somehow in the labyrinths of the social service market, my services or yours will square accounts with his.



In the grand round-up of social service every fellow in the world who pays his way, squares accounts in services of his own with every other fellow whose services he enjoys. Farmers work to supply the social service market with grain, millers with flour, bakers with bread; and each is helped by the work of railroad men, of storekeepers, of truckmen, of coal miners, of machinists, of builders, and so on,—an interminable catalogue. They are all making bread. Then, again, a vast variety of workers in like manner supply the social service market with clothing, and another with dwellings, while others work professionally or otherwise in rendering direct service without making commodities—such as doctors, lawyers, teachers, actors, household servants and clergymen. Each person works at one kind of employment in which he acquires special skill, or it may be in only one department or subdivision of employment. He may repeatedly make only the smallest part of a complete thing, such as a shoe-sole. But be his particular work what it may be, he trades it—possibly through a bewildering maze of exchanges which his mind does not and cannot follow—for the work of other social servitors.

One man, for instance, makes shoe-soles, nothing but shoe-soles, from week's end to week's end, thereby helping to satisfy individual desires for shoes. He does it on condition that somehow and some way, other social servitors shall satisfy his desire for food and clothing and shelter and luxuries and so on, including shoes. At pay day he says to his boss: "Here, give me the money you agreed upon, and I relinquish my undivided interest in those shoe-soles to you." Getting the money, this maker of shoe-soles may pay an installment on a suit of clothes, or a house, or machinery of some kind; or he may buy in whole or part something else that he couldn't possibly have

made himself. Yet the thing he buys with that money is as truly his as if he had made it himself. All the original makers have sold their undivided interests in it for other services, until the complete title comes to our shoe-sole maker in exchange for his work at cutting shoe-soles. The transaction is precisely like the Lawson and Wilson affair.

What is that you say? The sole-maker doesn't get as much money as he ought to get, can't buy as much clothing or house or machine as he has earned at making shoe-soles? That may be so, and I guess it is; anyhow I won't dispute you. But if it is so, the reason is that there is something wrong in the social service market—something that prevents its working normally; and that is a consideration that belongs to the pathology of the subject. But if the social service market is not deranged, that sole-maker will get what his work is worth. He wouldn't sell his interest in the soles for less than it was worth if there were no coercion and he were free to swap or not, as every one must be when the social service market is normal.

What I want to get at now, however, is the fact that the clothing, the machine, the house or what not which the sole-maker buys with the money he gets for shoe-soles, is just as truly his own clothing, house or machine, or what you will, as if he had done the impossible thing of making it from start to finish all by himself. It is just as truly his own as that live-bait you fetched for me in consideration of my carrying those letters for you, was my live-bait; just as truly his own as those two cabins which Lawson and Wilson made were Wilson's and Lawson's individual property respectively, after each had swapped his undivided interest in one for his companion's undivided interest in the other.

Individual distribution of results, fairly in proportion to service, is part of the process of co-operation—a necessary part,—of the co-operation, I mean, that constitutes human society. This co-operation has the two modes I have illustrated—“pigmy” co-operation through the doing by the individual of many things within his own powers, and “giant” co-operation through contributions by him to the doing of things beyond his own powers. Although distinguishable in principle, these two modes merge in practice on a large scale. The “pigmy” mode then utilizes the “giant” mode, as, for instance, letter-carriers utilize the railroad and the steamship. Without these modes of co-operation we should not be able with all our numbers to do more than a naked savage solitary upon an island could do. But with them, the power of each individual is incalculably multiplied, his knowledge extended, his wants increased, his ideals exalted. Thus is civilized society, fraternal and altruistic society, maintained and promoted. But don't forget that co-operation requires for its perfect work in this respect, a fair distribution of results among individuals in proportion to individual service.

“Society in its most highly developed form is an elaboration of society in its rudest beginnings.” That is what George says, and don't you see he is right? If he seems to be mistaken, it is only, as he says, “that principles obvious in the simplest relations of men are merely disguised and not abrogated or severed by the more intimate relations that result from the division of labor and the use of complex tools and methods.” Don't you see with him that “the steam grist mill, with its complicated machinery exhibiting every diversity of motion, is simply what the rude stone mortar dug up from an ancient river bed was in its day—an instrument for grinding corn;” and that “every

man engaged in it, whether tossing wood into the furnace, running the engine, dressing stones, printing labels or keeping books, is really devoting his labor to the same purpose that the prehistoric savage did when he used his mortar—the preparation of grain for human food”? And isn’t it as true of the mechanics who make the machinery, of the miners and lumbermen who produce the material for the machinery, of the miners and lumbermen who produce the material with which the machinery for making that machinery is made, and of the mechanics who make it, and of all the transporters and storekeepers and book-keepers and engineers and draftsmen and other workers? Aren’t they all co-operating to turn the farmer’s grain into flour for the baker’s oven? —aren’t they all co-operating to make bread? And isn’t each doing his part of this co-operation for the purpose of securing the satisfaction of his own desires in the easiest way?

What other motive could there be? What conceivable motive but this would keep armies of men at work in the exchanging of social service every day and all through life? With the money each gets for his work—tokens of the value of the work he has done—he buys the things he wants, the things he really worked for. To the extent that he buys bread, it was for bread that he worked. To the extent that he buys other things, it was for them that he worked. His motive doesn’t differ essentially from that of his ancestors who dug clams for themselves on the shores of the sea.

But through combination and division of effort, which enormously multiply human power, not alone by the economies of time and energy that result immediately, but also from the labor-saving machinery and methods which co-operation increasingly demands and human inventiveness increasingly supplies, the self-serving motive of the

primitive clam-digger has developed an intricate labyrinth of self-serving motives which vitalize the world of social service and give us civilization. Human society is in truth a complex social-service mart. Here we trade services with one another by means of money or in the terms of money. Through this trading, productive power is multiplied, and knowledge and skill are acquired, and thereby each person, with no more exertion than would yield the savage a coarse meal, may enjoy the comforts of civilized life.

But don't forget, my dear Doctor, that the social service mart is no arbitrary or prearranged device. Society doesn't artificially organize co-operation; on the contrary, this co-operative force naturally organizes society. It makes society like an organism. Consequently society is a natural evolution.

The desire to economize effort being natural to individual men, the economizing instinct of trade is also natural to them, and this is to society what the life principle is to the individual. It endows society with its character of an organic combination, instead of leaving it a loose aggregation of individual units. It is something that develops society, not through conscious organization but by unconscious growth. To eradicate it from human nature, if that were possible, would be to destroy society; and in analogy with all other kinds of organic growth, to interfere with its full expression is to generate social disease. But to protect it from conditions inimical to its normal processes, to guard exchanges of social service from obstruction and diversion, is to clear the way for society to attain almost to supernal heights of civilization.

Do you understand now what I meant by insisting that individual desires to get the most service with the least effort—the universal desire

for easy money—promotes civilization? I noticed that you shook your head when I said it. But isn't it true? Normally, I mean; normally. Not pathologically, of course. I have to recur often to the pathology of the subject because we are so prone to confuse pathological with normal conditions in our thinking, forgetting that it is health and not disease that is natural.

In diseased conditions of the social organism, the desire to get the most service with the least effort, has for its correlative the desire to make others get along with the least service for the most effort. It is one thing for us to get most service for least service, and a very different thing to get most service with least effort.

Note the difference. The criminal, and the grafter whether criminal or not—they seek the most service from others for the least service to others. In their case the self-serving impulse is unsocial. It tends to disrupt co-operation. But—well, take the inventor for an illustration,—his moving desire is to discover ways of obtaining the most service with the least effort. That is social, that is co-operative. If the self-serving impulses lead, without personal criminality, to the actual extortion of much service for little or no service, we are apprised of pathological social symptoms. Perhaps we shall catch glimpses of something of the sort if we conclude to talk about the mechanism of business. But to the extent that the self-serving impulse leads to the utilization of methods for enabling all to get more social service for less individual effort—of enabling all, mind you,—to that extent we are in the stream of progress through the development of natural co-operation.