

the relative newness of man's mastery over nature. For ages man's life was dull, arduous, joyless and painful, not because of lack of time or physical energy, which he possessed in abundance, but because of incompetence to utilize the material resources of nature to release him from the burdens of a purely animal existence.

When within the last few hundred years men succeeded in multiplying their control of natural forces beyond all previous dreams, it is not surprising that they were carried away upon the wave of their new powers and cast adrift upon a sea of materialism without chart or compass to guide them to any desirable haven. The nineteenth century, as we have already seen, was an epoch of natural striving and rivalry for the development of the means of wealth production and the control of both the means and the product. It was natural that man should be hypnotized by the advantages and possibilities of material wealth and that he should fall into the error of assuming that wealth itself constitutes happiness and that the more wealth produced, the greater the amount of happiness.

The second reason for the failure of orthodox economics to accord adequate treatment to the consumption of wealth is that the laws of consumption are more psychological in character than those of production and less capable or at least more difficult of systematic analysis. The resulting partial or one-sided treatment illustrates the dangers of attempting to treat any one of the social sciences as a thing by itself and emphasizes the importance of recognizing the close relationship between the so-called separate sciences of economics, sociology, psychology and so forth.

The task of the twentieth century in the field of social science is to supplement our knowledge of the laws and

technical processes of wealth production with a similarly exact and practical mastery of the laws of wealth consumption. In this Text, which aims to present only the generally accepted points of social theory, there is little to do except confess our present inadequate knowledge of this great field.

8. Equitable Distribution.—Certain points are obvious. Assuming the validity of the utilitarian theory, namely, that the goal of social effort is the achievement of the greatest happiness of the greatest number, it seems to be beyond question that modern civilization has fallen pitifully short of this goal. It needs but little acquaintance with the conditions of life among our working classes, or with the statistics of the distribution of wealth and income, or with the monotony, strain and discomfort of modern industrial processes to convince one that the amount of happiness experienced by a great percentage of our population is exceedingly small in proportion to the amount of material wealth produced by society and available for its members. The conclusion inevitably arises that one great fault at least in our great economic system is not in the production of wealth but in its distribution.

It is sometimes claimed that the strict application of the utilitarian theory concerns itself with the greatest total amount of happiness, not with its distribution. However this may be theoretically, there can be little doubt that practically the maximum total amount of happiness is possible only when its distribution is relatively equal. While it is probably incapable of demonstration, nevertheless, the law of diminishing utility strongly suggests that as far as material wealth is concerned, the total amount of happiness increases
