

## BOOK IX

### EFFECTS OF THE REMEDY

CHAPTER I.—OF THE EFFECT UPON THE PRODUCTION OF WEALTH

CHAPTER II.—OF THE EFFECT UPON DISTRIBUTION AND THENCE UPON PRODUCTION

CHAPTER III.—OF THE EFFECT UPON INDIVIDUALS AND CLASSES

CHAPTER IV.—OF THE CHANGES THAT WOULD BE WROUGHT IN SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND SOCIAL LIFE

I cannot play upon any stringed instrument; but I can tell you how of a little village to make a great and glorious city.—  
*Themistocles.*

---

Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree.

And they shall build houses and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat.—  
*Isaiah.*

## CHAPTER I

### OF THE EFFECT UPON THE PRODUCTION OF WEALTH

The elder Mirabeau, we are told, ranked the proposition of Quesnay, to substitute one single tax on rent (the *impôt unique*) for all other taxes, as a discovery equal in utility to the invention of writing or the substitution of the use of money for barter.

To whomsoever will think over the matter, this saying will appear an evidence of penetration rather than of extravagance. The advantages which would be gained by substituting for the numerous taxes by which the public revenues are now raised, a single tax levied upon the value of land, will appear more and more important the more they are considered. This is the secret which would transform the little village into the great city. With all the burdens removed which now oppress industry and hamper exchange, the production of wealth would go on with a rapidity now undreamed of. This, in its turn, would lead to an increase in the value of land—a new surplus which society might take for general purposes. And released from the difficulties which attend the collection of revenue in a way that begets corruption and renders legislation the tool of special interests, society could assume functions which the increasing complexity of life makes it desirable to assume, but which the prospect of political demoralization under the present system now leads thoughtful men to shrink from.

Consider the effect upon the production of wealth.

To abolish the taxation which, acting and reacting, now hampers every wheel of exchange and presses upon every form of industry, would be like removing an immense weight from a powerful spring. Imbued with fresh energy, production would start into new life, and trade would receive a stimulus which would be felt to the remotest arteries. The present method of taxation operates upon exchange like artificial deserts and mountains; it costs more to get goods through a custom house than it does to carry them around the world. It operates upon energy, and industry, and skill, and thrift, like a fine upon those qualities. If I have worked harder and built myself a good house while you have been contented to live in a hovel, the tax-gatherer now comes annually to make me pay a penalty for my energy and industry, by taxing me more than you. If I have saved while you wasted, I am mulct, while you are exempt. If a man build a ship we make him pay for his temerity, as though he had done an injury to the state; if a railroad be opened, down comes the tax-collector upon it, as though it were a public nuisance; if a manufactory be erected we levy upon it an annual sum which would go far toward making a handsome profit. We say we want capital, but if any one accumulate it, or bring it among us, we charge him for it as though we were giving him a privilege. We punish with a tax the man who covers barren fields with ripening grain, we fine him who puts up machinery, and him who drains a swamp. How heavily these taxes burden production only those realize who have attempted to follow our system of taxation through its ramifications, for, as I have before said, the heaviest part of taxation is that which falls in increased prices. But manifestly these taxes are in their nature akin to the Egyptian Pasha's tax upon date-trees. If they do not cause the trees to be cut down, they at least discourage the planting.

To abolish these taxes would be to lift the whole enormous weight of taxation from productive industry. The needle of the seamstress and the great manufactory; the cart-horse and the locomotive; the fishing boat and the steamship; the farmer's plow and the merchant's stock, would be alike untaxed. All would be free to make or to save, to buy or to sell, unfinned by taxes, unannoyed by the tax-gatherer. Instead of saying to the producer, as it does now, "The more you add to the general wealth the more shall you be taxed!" the state would say to the producer, "Be as industrious, as thrifty, as enterprising as you choose, you shall have your full reward! You shall not be fined for making two blades of grass grow where one grew before; you shall not be taxed for adding to the aggregate wealth."

And will not the community gain by thus refusing to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs; by thus refraining from muzzling the ox that treadeth out the corn; by thus leaving to industry, and thrift, and skill, their natural reward, full and unimpaired? For there is to the community also a natural reward. The law of society is, each for all, as well as all for each. No one can keep to himself the good he may do, any more than he can keep the bad. Every productive enterprise, besides its return to those who undertake it, yields collateral advantages to others. If a man plant a fruit-tree, his gain is that he gathers the fruit in its time and season. But in addition to his gain, there is a gain to the whole community. Others than the owner are benefited by the increased supply of fruit; the birds which it shelters fly far and wide; the rain which it helps to attract falls not alone on his field; and, even to the eye which rests upon it from a distance, it brings a sense of beauty. And so with everything else. The building of a house, a factory, a ship, or a railroad, benefits others besides those who get the direct profits. Na-

ture laughs at a miser. He is like the squirrel who buries his nuts and refrains from digging them up again. Lo! they sprout and grow into trees. In fine linen, steeped in costly spices, the mummy is laid away. Thousands and thousands of years thereafter, the Bedouin cooks his food by a fire of its encasings, it generates the steam by which the traveler is whirled on his way, or it passes into far-off lands to gratify the curiosity of another race. The bee fills the hollow tree with honey, and along comes the bear or the man.

Well may the community leave to the individual producer all that prompts him to exertion; well may it let the laborer have the full reward of his labor, and the capitalist the full return of his capital. For the more that labor and capital produce, the greater grows the common wealth in which all may share. And in the value or rent of land is this general gain expressed in a definite and concrete form. Here is a fund which the state may take while leaving to labor and capital their full reward. With increased activity of production this would commensurately increase.

And to shift the burden of taxation from production and exchange to the value or rent of land would not merely be to give new stimulus to the production of wealth; it would be to open new opportunities. For under this system no one would care to hold land unless to use it, and land now withheld from use would everywhere be thrown open to improvement.

The selling price of land would fall; land speculation would receive its death blow; land monopolization would no longer pay. Millions and millions of acres from which settlers are now shut out by high prices would be abandoned by their present owners or sold to settlers upon nominal terms. And this not merely on the frontiers, but within what are now considered well settled districts. Within a hundred miles of San Francisco

would be thus thrown open land enough to support, even with present modes of cultivation, an agricultural population equal to that now scattered from the Oregon boundary to the Mexican line—a distance of 800 miles. In the same degree would this be true of most of the Western States, and in a great degree of the older Eastern States, for even in New York and Pennsylvania is population yet sparse as compared with the capacity of the land. And even in densely populated England would such a policy throw open to cultivation many hundreds of thousands of acres now held as private parks, deer preserves, and shooting grounds.

For this simple device of placing all taxes on the value of land would be in effect putting up the land at auction to whomsoever would pay the highest rent to the state. The demand for land fixes its value, and hence, if taxes were placed so as very nearly to consume that value, the man who wished to hold land without using it would have to pay very nearly what it would be worth to any one who wanted to use it.

And it must be remembered that this would apply, not merely to agricultural land, but to all land. Mineral land would be thrown open to use, just as agricultural land; and in the heart of a city no one could afford to keep land from its most profitable use, or on the outskirts to demand more for it than the use to which it could at the time be put would warrant. Everywhere that land had attained a value, taxation, instead of operating, as now, as a fine upon improvement, would operate to force improvement. Whoever planted an orchard, or sowed a field, or built a house, or erected a manufactory, no matter how costly, would have no more to pay in taxes than if he kept so much land idle. The monopolist of agricultural land would be taxed as much as though his land were covered with houses and barns, with crops and with stock. The owner of a vacant city

lot would have to pay as much for the privilege of keeping other people off of it until he wanted to use it, as his neighbor who has a fine house upon his lot. It would cost as much to keep a row of tumble-down shanties upon valuable land as though it were covered with a grand hotel or a pile of great warehouses filled with costly goods.

Thus, the bonus that wherever labor is most productive must now be paid before labor can be exerted would disappear. The farmer would not have to pay out half his means, or mortgage his labor for years, in order to obtain land to cultivate; the builder of a city homestead would not have to lay out as much for a small lot as for the house he puts upon it; the company that proposed to erect a manufactory would not have to expend a great part of their capital for a site. And what would be paid from year to year to the state would be in lieu of all the taxes now levied upon improvements, machinery, and stock.

Consider the effect of such a change upon the labor market. Competition would no longer be one-sided, as now. Instead of laborers competing with each other for employment, and in their competition cutting down wages to the point of bare subsistence, employers would everywhere be competing for laborers, and wages would rise to the fair earnings of labor. For into the labor market would have entered the greatest of all competitors for the employment of labor, a competitor whose demand cannot be satisfied until want is satisfied—the demand of labor itself. The employers of labor would not have merely to bid against other employers, all feeling the stimulus of greater trade and increased profits, but against the ability of laborers to become their own employers upon the natural opportunities freely opened to them by the tax which prevented monopolization.

With natural opportunities thus free to labor; with



capital and improvements exempt from tax, and exchange released from restrictions, the spectacle of willing men unable to turn their labor into the things they are suffering for would become impossible; the recurring paroxysms which paralyze industry would cease; every wheel of production would be set in motion; demand would keep pace with supply, and supply with demand; trade would increase in every direction, and wealth augment on every hand.

## CHAPTER II

### OF THE EFFECT UPON DISTRIBUTION AND THENCE UPON PRODUCTION

But great as they thus appear, the advantages of a transference of all public burdens to a tax upon the value of land cannot be fully appreciated until we consider the effect upon the distribution of wealth.

Tracing out the cause of the unequal distribution of wealth which appears in all civilized countries, with a constant tendency to greater and greater inequality as material progress goes on, we have found it in the fact that, as civilization advances, the ownership of land, now in private hands, gives a greater and greater power of appropriating the wealth produced by labor and capital.

Thus, to relieve labor and capital from all taxation, direct and indirect, and to throw the burden upon rent, would be, as far as it went, to counteract this tendency to inequality, and, if it went so far as to take in taxation the whole of rent, the cause of inequality would be totally destroyed. Rent, instead of causing inequality, as now, would then promote equality. Labor and capital would then receive the whole produce, minus that portion taken by the state in the taxation of land values, which, being applied to public purposes, would be equally distributed in public benefits.

That is to say, the wealth produced in every community would be divided into two portions. One part would be distributed in wages and interest between in-

dividual producers, according to the part each had taken in the work of production; the other part would go to the community as a whole, to be distributed in public benefits to all its members. In this all would share equally—the weak with the strong, young children and decrepit old men, the maimed, the halt, and the blind, as well as the vigorous. And justly so—for while one part represents the result of individual effort in production, the other represents the increased power with which the community as a whole aids the individual.

Thus, as material progress tends to increase rent, were rent taken by the community for common purposes the very cause which now tends to produce inequality as material progress goes on would then tend to produce greater and greater equality. Fully to understand this effect, let us revert to principles previously worked out.

We have seen that wages and interest must everywhere be fixed by the rent line or margin of cultivation—that is to say, by the reward which labor and capital can secure on land for which no rent is paid; that the aggregate amount of wealth, which the aggregate of labor and capital employed in production will receive, will be the amount of wealth produced (or rather, when we consider taxes, the net amount), minus what is taken as rent.

We have seen that with material progress, as it is at present going on, there is a twofold tendency to the advance of rent. Both are to the increase of the proportion of the wealth produced which goes as rent, and to the decrease of the proportion which goes as wages and interest. But the first, or natural tendency, which results from the laws of social development, is to the increase of rent as a quantity, without the reduction of wages and interest as quantities, or even with their quantitative increase. The other tendency, which results from the unnatural appropriation of land to pri-

vate ownership, is to the increase of rent as a quantity by the reduction of wages and interest as quantities.

Now, it is evident that to take rent in taxation for public purposes, which virtually abolishes private ownership in land, would be to destroy the tendency to an absolute decrease in wages and interest, by destroying the speculative monopolization of land and the speculative increase in rent. It would be very largely to increase wages and interest, by throwing open natural opportunities now monopolized and reducing the price of land. Labor and capital would thus not merely gain what is now taken from them in taxation, but would gain by the positive decline in rent caused by the decrease in speculative land values. A new equilibrium would be established, at which the common rate of wages and interest would be much higher than now.

But this new equilibrium established, further advances in productive power, and the tendency in this direction would be greatly accelerated, would result in still increasing rent, not at the expense of wages and interest, but by new gains in production, which, as rent would be taken by the community for public uses, would accrue to the advantage of every member of the community. Thus, as material progress went on, the condition of the masses would constantly improve. Not merely one class would become richer, but all would become richer; not merely one class would have more of the necessaries, conveniences, and elegancies of life, but all would have more. For, the increasing power of production, which comes with increasing population, with every new discovery in the productive arts, with every labor-saving invention, with every extension and facilitation of exchanges, could be monopolized by none. That part of the benefit which did not go directly to increase the reward of labor and capital would go to the state—that is to say, to the whole community. With

all the enormous advantages, material and mental, of a dense population, would be united the freedom and equality that can now be found only in new and sparsely settled districts.

And, then, consider how equalization in the distribution of wealth would react upon production, everywhere preventing waste, everywhere increasing power.

If it were possible to express in figures the direct pecuniary loss which society suffers from the social maladjustments which condemn large classes to poverty and vice, the estimate would be appalling. England maintains over a million paupers on official charity; the city of New York alone spends over seven million dollars a year in a similar way. But what is spent from public funds, what is spent by charitable societies and what is spent in individual charity, would, if aggregated, be but the first and smallest item in the account. The potential earnings of the labor thus going to waste, the cost of the reckless, improvident and idle habits thus generated; the pecuniary loss, to consider nothing more, suggested by the appalling statistics of mortality, and especially infant mortality, among the poorer classes; the waste indicated by the gin palaces or low grogeries which increase as poverty deepens; the damage done by the vermin of society that are bred of poverty and destitution—the thieves, prostitutes, beggars, and tramps; the cost of guarding society against them, are all items in the sum which the present unjust and unequal distribution of wealth takes from the aggregate which, with present means of production, society might enjoy. Nor yet shall we have completed the account. The ignorance and vice, the recklessness and immorality engendered by the inequality in the distribution of wealth show themselves in the imbecility and corruption of government; and the waste of public revenues, and the still greater waste involved in the ignorant and corrupt abuse of pub-

lic powers and functions, are their legitimate consequences.

But the increase in wages, and the opening of new avenues of employment which would result from the appropriation of rent to public purposes, would not merely stop these wastes and relieve society of these enormous losses; new power would be added to labor. It is but a truism that labor is most productive where its wages are largest. Poorly paid labor is inefficient labor, the world over.

What is remarked between the efficiency of labor in the agricultural districts of England where different rates of wages prevail; what Brassey noticed as between the work done by his better paid English navvies and that done by the worse paid labor of the continent; what was evident in the United States as between slave labor and free labor; what is seen by the astonishing number of mechanics or servants required in India or China to get anything done, is universally true. The efficiency of labor always increases with the habitual wages of labor—for high wages mean increased self-respect, intelligence, hope, and energy. Man is not a machine, that will do so much and no more; he is not an animal, whose powers may reach thus far and no further. It is mind, not muscle, which is the great agent of production. The physical power evolved in the human frame is one of the weakest of forces, but for the human intelligence the resistless currents of nature flow, and matter becomes plastic to the human will. To increase the comforts, and leisure, and independence of the masses is to increase their intelligence; it is to bring the brain to the aid of the hand; it is to engage in the common work of life the faculty which measures the animalcule and traces the orbits of the stars!

Who can say to what infinite powers the wealth-producing capacity of labor may not be raised by social

adjustments which will give to the producers of wealth their fair proportion of its advantages and enjoyments! With present processes the gain would be simply incalculable, but just as wages are high, so do the invention and utilization of improved processes and machinery go on with greater rapidity and ease. That the wheat crops of Southern Russia are still reaped with the scythe and beaten out with the flail is simply because wages are there so low. American invention, American aptitude for labor-saving processes and machinery are the result of the comparatively high wages that have prevailed in the United States. Had our producers been condemned to the low reward of the Egyptian fellah or Chinese coolie, we would be drawing water by hand and transporting goods on the shoulders of men. The increase in the reward of labor and capital would still further stimulate invention and hasten the adoption of improved processes, and these would truly appear, what in themselves they really are—an unmixed good. The injurious effects of labor-saving machinery upon the working classes, that are now so often apparent, and that, in spite of all argument, make so many people regard machinery as an evil instead of a blessing, would disappear. Every new power engaged in the service of man would improve the condition of all. And from the general intelligence and mental activity springing from this general improvement of condition would come new developments of power of which we as yet cannot dream.

But I shall not deny, and do not wish to lose sight of the fact, that while thus preventing waste and thus adding to the efficiency of labor, the equalization in the distribution of wealth that would result from the simple plan of taxation that I propose, must lessen the intensity with which wealth is pursued. It seems to me that in a condition of society in which no one need fear

poverty, no one would desire great wealth—at least, no one would take the trouble to strive and to strain for it as men do now. For, certainly, the spectacle of men who have only a few years to live, slaving away their time for the sake of dying rich, is in itself so unnatural and absurd, that in a state of society where the abolition of the fear of want had dissipated the envious admiration with which the masses of men now regard the possession of great riches, whoever would toil to acquire more than he cared to use would be looked upon as we would now look on a man who would thatch his head with half a dozen hats, or walk around in the hot sun with an overcoat on. When every one is sure of being able to get enough, no one will care to make a pack-horse of himself.

And though this incentive to production be withdrawn, can we not spare it? Whatever may have been its office in an earlier stage of development, it is not needed now. The dangers that menace our civilization do not come from the weakness of the springs of production. What it suffers from, and what, if a remedy be not applied, it must die from, is unequal distribution!

Nor would the removal of this incentive, regarded only from the standpoint of production, be an unmixed loss. For, that the aggregate of production is greatly reduced by the greed with which riches are pursued, is one of the most obtrusive facts of modern society. While, were this insane desire to get rich at any cost lessened, mental activities now devoted to scraping together riches would be translated into far higher spheres of usefulness.



## CHAPTER III

### OF THE EFFECT UPON INDIVIDUALS AND CLASSES

When it is first proposed to put all taxes upon the value of land, and thus confiscate rent, all land holders are likely to take the alarm, and there will not be wanting appeals to the fears of small farm and homestead owners, who will be told that this is a proposition to rob them of their hard-earned property. But a moment's reflection will show that this proposition should commend itself to all whose interests as land holders do not largely exceed their interests as laborers or capitalists, or both. And further consideration will show that though the large land holders may lose relatively, yet even in their case there will be an absolute gain. For, the increase in production will be so great that labor and capital will gain very much more than will be lost to private land ownership, while in these gains, and in the greater ones involved in a more healthy social condition, the whole community, including the land owners themselves, will share.

In a preceding chapter I have gone over the question of what is due to the present land holders, and have shown that they have no claim to compensation. But there is still another ground on which we may dismiss all idea of compensation. They will not really be injured.

It is manifest, of course, that the change I propose will greatly benefit all those who live by wages, whether of hand or of head—laborers, operatives, mechanics, clerks, professional men of all sorts. It is manifest,

also, that it will benefit all those who live partly by wages and partly by the earnings of their capital—storekeepers, merchants, manufacturers, employing or undertaking producers and exchangers of all sorts—from the peddler or drayman to the railroad or steamship owner—and it is likewise manifest that it will increase the incomes of those whose incomes are drawn from the earnings of capital, or from investments other than in lands, save perhaps the holders of government bonds or other securities bearing fixed rates of interest, which will probably depreciate in selling value, owing to the rise in the general rate of interest, though the income from them will remain the same.

Take, now, the case of the homestead owner—the mechanic, storekeeper, or professional man who has secured himself a house and lot, where he lives, and which he contemplates with satisfaction as a place from which his family cannot be ejected in case of his death. He will not be injured; on the contrary, he will be the gainer. The selling value of his lot will diminish—theoretically it will entirely disappear. But its usefulness to him will not disappear. It will serve his purpose as well as ever. While, as the value of all other lots will diminish or disappear in the same ratio, he retains the same security of always having a lot that he had before. That is to say, he is a loser only as the man who has bought himself a pair of boots may be said to be a loser by a subsequent fall in the price of boots. His boots will be just as useful to him, and the next pair of boots he can get cheaper. So, to the homestead owner, his lot will be as useful, and should he look forward to getting a larger lot, or having his children, as they grow up, get homesteads of their own, he will, even in the matter of lots, be the gainer. And in the present, other things considered, he will be much the gainer. For though he will have more taxes to pay

upon his land, he will be released from taxes upon his house and improvements, upon his furniture and personal property, upon all that he and his family eat, drink and wear, while his earnings will be largely increased by the rise of wages, the constant employment, and the increased briskness of trade. His only loss will be, if he wants to sell his lot without getting another, and this will be a small loss compared with the great gain.

And so with the farmer. I speak not now of the farmers who never touch the handles of a plow, who cultivate thousands of acres and enjoy incomes like those of the rich Southern planters before the war; but of the working farmers who constitute such a large class in the United States—men who own small farms, which they cultivate with the aid of their boys, and perhaps some hired help, and who in Europe would be called peasant proprietors. Paradoxical as it may appear to these men until they understand the full bearings of the proposition, of all classes above that of the mere laborer they have most to gain by placing all taxes upon the value of land. That they do not now get as good a living as their hard work ought to give them, they generally feel, though they may not be able to trace the cause. The fact is that taxation, as now levied, falls on them with peculiar severity. They are taxed on all their improvements—houses, barns, fences, crops, stock. The personal property which they have cannot be as readily concealed or undervalued as can the more valuable kinds which are concentrated in the cities. They are not only taxed on personal property and improvements, which the owners of unused land escape, but their land is generally taxed at a higher rate than land held on speculation, simply because it is improved. But further than this, all taxes imposed on commodities, and especially the taxes which, like our protective duties, are imposed with a view of raising the prices of commodities, fall

on the farmer without mitigation. For in a country like the United States, which exports agricultural produce, the farmer cannot be protected. Whoever gains, he must lose. Some years ago the Free Trade League of New York published a broadside containing cuts of various articles of necessity marked with the duties imposed by the tariff, and which read something in this wise: "The farmer rises in the morning and draws on his pantaloons taxed 40 per cent. and his boots taxed 30 per cent., striking a light with a match taxed 200 per cent.," and so on, following him through the day and through life, until, killed by taxation, he is lowered into the grave with a rope taxed 45 per cent. This is but a graphic illustration of the manner in which such taxes ultimately fall. The farmer would be a great gainer by the substitution of a single tax upon the value of land for all these taxes, for the taxation of land values would fall with greatest weight, not upon the agricultural districts, where land values are comparatively small, but upon the towns and cities where land values are high; whereas taxes upon personal property and improvements fall as heavily in the country as in the city. And in sparsely settled districts there would be hardly any taxes at all for the farmer to pay. For taxes, being levied upon the value of the bare land, would fall as heavily upon unimproved as upon improved land. Acre for acre, the improved and cultivated farm, with its buildings, fences, orchard, crops, and stock, could be taxed no more than unused land of equal quality. The result would be that speculative values would be kept down, and that cultivated and improved farms would have no taxes to pay until the country around them had been well settled. In fact, paradoxical as it may at first seem to them, the effect of putting all taxation upon the value of land would be to relieve the harder working farmers of all taxation.

But the great gain of the working farmer can be seen only when the effect upon the distribution of population is considered. The destruction of speculative land values would tend to diffuse population where it is too dense and to concentrate it where it is too sparse; to substitute for the tenement house, homes surrounded by gardens, and fully to settle agricultural districts before people were driven far from neighbors to look for land. The people of the cities would thus get more of the pure air and sunshine of the country, the people of the country more of the economies and social life of the city. If, as is doubtless the case, the application of machinery tends to large fields, agricultural population will assume the primitive form and cluster in villages. The life of the average farmer is now unnecessarily dreary. He is not only compelled to work early and late, but he is cut off by the sparseness of population from the conveniences, and amusements, the educational facilities, and the social and intellectual opportunities that come with the closer contact of man with man. He would be far better off in all these respects, and his labor would be far more productive, if he and those around him held no more land than they wanted to use.\* While his children, as they grew up, would neither be so impelled to seek the excitement of a city nor would they be driven so far away to seek farms of their own. Their means of living would be in their own hands, and at home.

In short, the working farmer is both a laborer and a capitalist, as well as a land owner, and it is by his

---

\* Besides the enormous increase in the productive power of labor which would result from the better distribution of population there would be also a similar economy in the productive power of land. The concentration of population in cities fed by the exhaustive cultivation of large, sparsely populated areas, results in a literal draining into the sea of the elements of fertility. How enormous this waste is may be seen from the

labor and capital that his living is made. His loss would be nominal; his gain would be real and great.

In varying degrees is this true of all land holders. Many land holders are laborers of one sort or another. And it would be hard to find a land owner not a laborer, who is not also a capitalist—while the general rule is, that the larger the land owner the greater the capitalist. So true is this that in common thought the characters are confounded. Thus to put all taxes on the value of land, while it would be largely to reduce all great fortunes, would in no case leave the rich man peniless. The Duke of Westminster, who owns a considerable part of the site of London, is probably the richest land owner in the world. To take all his ground rents by taxation would largely reduce his enormous income, but would still leave him his buildings and all the income from them, and doubtless much personal property in various other shapes. He would still have all he could by any possibility enjoy, and a much better state of society in which to enjoy it.

So would the Astors of New York remain very rich. And so, I think, it will be seen throughout—this measure would make no one poorer but such as could be made a great deal poorer without being really hurt. It would cut down great fortunes, but it would impoverish no one.

Wealth would not only be enormously increased; it would be equally distributed. I do not mean that each individual would get the same amount of wealth. That would not be equal distribution, so long as different individuals have different powers and different desires. But I mean that wealth would be distributed

---

calculations that have been made as to the sewage of our cities, and its practical result is to be seen in the diminishing productiveness of agriculture in large sections. In a great part of the United States we are steadily exhausting our lands.

in accordance with the degree in which the industry, skill, knowledge, or prudence of each contributed to the common stock. The great cause which concentrates wealth in the hands of those who do not produce, and takes it from the hands of those who do, would be gone. The inequalities that continued to exist would be those of nature, not the artificial inequalities produced by the denial of natural law. The non-producer would no longer roll in luxury while the producer got but the barest necessities of animal existence.

The monopoly of the land gone, there need be no fear of large fortunes. For then the riches of any individual must consist of wealth, properly so-called—of wealth, which is the product of labor, and which constantly tends to dissipation, for national debts, I imagine, would not long survive the abolition of the system from which they spring. All fear of great fortunes might be dismissed, for when every one gets what he fairly earns, no one can get more than he fairly earns. How many men are there who fairly earn a million dollars?

## CHAPTER IV

### OF THE CHANGES THAT WOULD BE WROUGHT IN SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND SOCIAL LIFE

We are dealing only with general principles. There are some matters of detail—such as those arising from the division of revenues between local and general governments—which upon application of these principles would come up, but these it is not necessary here to discuss. When once principles are settled, details will be readily adjusted.

Nor without too much elaboration is it possible to notice all the changes which would be wrought, or would become possible, by a change which would readjust the very foundation of society, but to some main features let me call attention.

Noticeable among these is the great simplicity which would become possible in government. To collect taxes, to prevent and punish evasions, to check and counter-check revenues drawn from so many distinct sources, now make up probably three-fourths, perhaps seven-eighths of the business of government, outside of the preservation of order, the maintenance of the military arm, and the administration of justice. An immense and complicated network of governmental machinery would thus be dispensed with.

In the administration of justice there would be a like saving of strain. Much of the civil business of our courts arises from disputes as to ownership of land. These would cease when the state was virtually acknowl-



edged as the sole owner of land, and all occupiers became practically rent-paying tenants. The growth of morality consequent upon the cessation of want would tend to a like diminution in other civil business of the courts, which could be hastened by the adoption of the common sense proposition of Bentham to abolish all laws for the collection of debts and the enforcement of private contracts. The rise of wages, the opening of opportunities for all to make an easy and comfortable living, would at once lessen and would soon eliminate from society the thieves, swindlers, and other classes of criminals who spring from the unequal distribution of wealth. Thus the administration of the criminal law, with all its paraphernalia of policemen, detectives, prisons, and penitentiaries, would, like the administration of the civil law, cease to make such a drain upon the vital force and attention of society. We should get rid not only of many judges, bailiffs, clerks, and prison keepers, but of the great host of lawyers who are now maintained at the expense of producers; and talent now wasted in legal subtleties would be turned to higher pursuits.

The legislative, judicial, and executive functions of government would in this way be vastly simplified. Nor can I think that the public debts and the standing armies, which are historically the outgrowth of the change from feudal to allodial tenures, would long remain after the reversion to the old idea that the land of a country is the common right of the people of the country. The former could readily be paid off by a tax that would not lessen the wages of labor nor check production, and the latter the growth of intelligence and independence among the masses, aided, perhaps, by the progress of invention, which is revolutionizing the military art, must soon cause to disappear.

Society would thus approach the ideal of Jeffersonian democracy, the promised land of Herbert Spencer, the

abolition of government. But of government only as a directing and repressive power. It would at the same time, and in the same degree, become possible for it to realize the dream of socialism. All this simplification and abrogation of the present functions of government would make possible the assumption of certain other functions which are now pressing for recognition. Government could take upon itself the transmission of messages by telegraph, as well as by mail; of building and operating railroads, as well as of opening and maintaining common roads. With present functions so simplified and reduced, functions such as these could be assumed without danger or strain, and would be under the supervision of public attention, which is now distracted. There would be a great and increasing surplus revenue from the taxation of land values, for material progress, which would go on with greatly accelerated rapidity, would tend constantly to increase rent. This revenue arising from the common property could be applied to the common benefit, as were the revenues of Sparta. We might not establish public tables—they would be unnecessary; but we could establish public baths, museums, libraries, gardens, lecture rooms, music and dancing halls, theaters, universities, technical schools, shooting galleries, play grounds, gymnasiums, etc. Heat, light, and motive power, as well as water, might be conducted through our streets at public expense; our roads be lined with fruit trees; discoverers and inventors rewarded, scientific investigations supported; and in a thousand ways the public revenues made to foster efforts for the public benefit. We should reach the ideal of the socialist, but not through government repression. Government would change its character, and would become the administration of a great co-operative society. It would become merely the agency by which the

common property was administered for the common benefit.

Does this seem impracticable? Consider for a moment the vast changes that would be wrought in social life by a change which would assure to labor its full reward; which would banish want and the fear of want; and give to the humblest freedom to develop in natural symmetry.

In thinking of the possibilities of social organization, we are apt to assume that greed is the strongest of human motives, and that systems of administration can be safely based only upon the idea that the fear of punishment is necessary to keep men honest—that selfish interests are always stronger than general interests. Nothing could be further from the truth.

From whence springs this lust for gain, to gratify which men tread everything pure and noble under their feet; to which they sacrifice all the higher possibilities of life; which converts civility into a hollow pretense, patriotism into a sham, and religion into hypocrisy; which makes so much of civilized existence an Ishmaelitish warfare, of which the weapons are cunning and fraud?

Does it not spring from the existence of want? Carlyle somewhere says that poverty is the hell of which the modern Englishman is most afraid. And he is right. Poverty is the open-mouthed, relentless hell which yawns beneath civilized society. And it is hell enough. The Vedas declare no truer thing than when the wise crow Bushanda tells the eagle-bearer of Vishnu that the keenest pain is in poverty. For poverty is not merely deprivation; it means shame, degradation; the searing of the most sensitive parts of our moral and mental nature as with hot irons; the denial of the strongest impulses and the sweetest affections; the wrenching of the most vital nerves. You love your wife, you love your

children; but would it not be easier to see them die than to see them reduced to the pinch of want in which large classes in every highly civilized community live? The strongest of animal passions is that with which we cling to life, but it is an everyday occurrence in civilized societies for men to put poison to their mouths or pistols to their heads from fear of poverty, and for one who does this there are probably a hundred who have the desire, but are restrained by instinctive shrinking, by religious considerations, or by family ties.

From this hell of poverty, it is but natural that men should make every effort to escape. With the impulse to self-preservation and self-gratification combine nobler feelings, and love as well as fear urges in the struggle. Many a man does a mean thing, a dishonest thing, a greedy and grasping and unjust thing, in the effort to place above want, or the fear of want, mother or wife or children.

And out of this condition of things arises a public opinion which enlists, as an impelling power in the struggle to grasp and to keep, one of the strongest—perhaps with many men the very strongest—springs of human action. The desire for approbation, the feeling that urges us to win the respect, admiration, or sympathy of our fellows, is instinctive and universal. Distorted sometimes into the most abnormal manifestations, it may yet be everywhere perceived. It is potent with the veriest savage, as with the most highly cultivated member of the most polished society; it shows itself with the first gleam of intelligence, and persists to the last breath. It triumphs over the love of ease, over the sense of pain, over the dread of death. It dictates the most trivial and the most important actions.

The child just beginning to toddle or to talk will make new efforts as its cunning little tricks excite attention and laughter; the dying master of the world gathers his

robes around him, that he may pass away as becomes a king; Chinese mothers will deform their daughters' feet by cruel stocks, European women will sacrifice their own comfort and the comfort of their families to similar dictates of fashion; the Polynesian, that he may excite admiration by his beautiful tattoo, will hold himself still while his flesh is torn by sharks' teeth; the North American Indian, tied to the stake, will bear the most fiendish tortures without a moan, and, that he may be respected and admired as a great brave, will taunt his tormentors to new cruelties. It is this that leads the forlorn hope; it is this that trims the lamp of the pale student; it is this that impels men to strive, to strain, to toil, and to die. It is this that raised the pyramids and that fired the Ephesian dome.

Now, men admire what they desire. How sweet to the storm-stricken seems the safe harbor; food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, warmth to the shivering, rest to the weary, power to the weak, knowledge to him in whom the intellectual yearnings of the soul have been aroused. And thus the sting of want and the fear of want make men admire above all things the possession of riches, and to become wealthy is to become respected, and admired, and influential. Get money—honestly, if you can, but at any rate get money! This is the lesson that society is daily and hourly dinning in the ears of its members. Men instinctively admire virtue and truth, but the sting of want and the fear of want make them even more strongly admire the rich and sympathize with the fortunate. It is well to be honest and just, and men will commend it; but he who by fraud and injustice gets him a million dollars will have more respect, and admiration, and influence, more eye service and lip service, if not heart service, than he who refuses it. The one may have his reward in the future; he may know that his name is writ in the Book of Life, and that for him is

the white robe and the palm branch of the victor against temptation; but the other has his reward in the present. His name is writ in the list of "our substantial citizens;" he has the courtship of men and the flattery of women; the best pew in the church and the personal regard of the eloquent clergyman who in the name of Christ preaches the Gospel of Dives, and tones down into a meaningless flower of Eastern speech the stern metaphor of the camel and the needle's eye. He may be a patron of arts, a Mæcenas to men of letters; may profit by the converse of the intelligent, and be polished by the attrition of the refined. His alms may feed the poor, and help the struggling, and bring sunshine into desolate places; and noble public institutions commemorate, after he is gone, his name and his fame. It is not in the guise of a hideous monster, with horns and tail, that Satan tempts the children of men, but as an angel of light. His promises are not alone of the kingdoms of the world, but of mental and moral principalities and powers. He appeals not only to the animal appetites, but to the cravings that stir in man because he is more than an animal.

Take the case of those miserable "men with muck-rakes," who are to be seen in every community as plainly as Bunyan saw their type in his vision—who, long after they have accumulated wealth enough to satisfy every desire, go on working, scheming, striving to add riches to riches. It was the desire "to be something;" nay, in many cases, the desire to do noble and generous deeds, that started them on a career of money getting. And what compels them to it long after every possible need is satisfied, what urges them still with unsatisfied and ravenous greed, is not merely the force of tyrannous habit, but the subtler gratifications which the possession of riches gives—the sense of power and influence, the sense of being looked up to and respected, the sense that

their wealth not merely raises them above want, but makes them men of mark in the community in which they live. It is this that makes the rich man so loath to part with his money, so anxious to get more.

Against temptations that thus appeal to the strongest impulses of our nature, the sanctions of law and the precepts of religion can effect but little; and the wonder is, not that men are so self-seeking, but that they are not much more so. That under present circumstances men are not more grasping, more unfaithful, more selfish than they are, proves the goodness and fruitfulness of human nature, the ceaseless flow of the perennial fountains from which its moral qualities are fed. All of us have mothers; most of us have children, and so faith, and purity, and unselfishness can never be utterly banished from the world, howsoever bad be social adjustments.

But whatever is potent for evil may be made potent for good. The change I have proposed would destroy the conditions that distort impulses in themselves beneficent, and would transmute the forces which now tend to disintegrate society into forces which would tend to unite and purify it.

Give labor a free field and its full earnings; take for the benefit of the whole community that fund which the growth of the community creates, and want and the fear of want would be gone. The springs of production would be set free, and the enormous increase of wealth would give the poorest ample comfort. Men would no more worry about finding employment than they worry about finding air to breathe; they need have no more care about physical necessities than do the lilies of the field. The progress of science, the march of invention, the diffusion of knowledge, would bring their benefits to all.

With this abolition of want and the fear of want, the admiration of riches would decay, and men would seek

the respect and approbation of their fellows in other modes than by the acquisition and display of wealth. In this way there would be brought to the management of public affairs, and the administration of common funds, the skill, the attention, the fidelity, and integrity that can now be secured only for private interests, and a railroad or gas works might be operated on public account, not only more economically and efficiently than as at present, under joint stock management, but as economically and efficiently as would be possible under a single ownership. The prize of the Olympian games, that called forth the most strenuous exertions of all Greece, was but a wreath of wild olive; for a bit of ribbon men have over and over again performed services no money could have bought.

Shortsighted is the philosophy which counts on selfishness as the master motive of human action. It is blind to facts of which the world is full. It sees not the present, and reads not the past aright. If you would move men to action, to what shall you appeal? Not to their pockets, but to their patriotism; not to selfishness, but to sympathy. Self-interest is, as it were, a mechanical force—potent, it is true; capable of large and wide results. But there is in human nature what may be likened to a chemical force; which melts and fuses and overwhelms; to which nothing seems impossible. "All that a man hath will he give for his life"—that is self-interest. But in loyalty to higher impulses men will give even life.

It is not selfishness that enriches the annals of every people with heroes and saints. It is not selfishness that on every page of the world's history bursts out in sudden splendor of noble deeds or sheds the soft radiance of benignant lives. It was not selfishness that turned Gautama's back to his royal home or bade the Maid of Orleans lift the sword from the altar; that held the



Three Hundred in the Pass of Thermopylæ, or gathered into Winkelried's bosom the sheaf of spears; that chained Vincent de Paul to the bench of the galley, or brought little starving children, during the Indian famine, tottering to the relief stations with yet weaker starvelings in their arms. Call it religion, patriotism, sympathy, the enthusiasm for humanity, or the love of God—give it what name you will; there is yet a force which overcomes and drives out selfishness; a force which is the electricity of the moral universe; a force beside which all others are weak. Everywhere that men have lived it has shown its power, and to-day, as ever, the world is full of it. To be pitied is the man who has never seen and never felt it. Look around! among common men and women, amid the care and the struggle of daily life, in the jar of the noisy street and amid the squalor where want hides—every here and there is the darkness lighted with the tremulous play of its lambent flames. He who has not seen it has walked with shut eyes. He who looks may see, as says Plutarch, that "the soul has a principle of kindness in itself, and is born to love, as well as to perceive, think, or remember."

And this force of forces—that now goes to waste or assumes perverted forms—we may use for the strengthening, and building up, and ennobling of society, if we but will, just as we now use physical forces that once seemed but powers of destruction. All we have to do is but to give it freedom and scope. The wrong that produces inequality; the wrong that in the midst of abundance tortures men with want or harries them with the fear of want; that stunts them physically, degrades them intellectually, and distorts them morally, is what alone prevents harmonious social development. For "all that is from the gods is full of providence. We are made for co-operation—like feet, like hands, like eyelids, like the rows of the upper and lower teeth."

There are people into whose heads it never enters to conceive of any better state of society than that which now exists—who imagine that the idea that there could be a state of society in which greed would be banished, prisons stand empty, individual interests be subordinated to general interests, and no one seek to rob or to oppress his neighbor, is but the dream of impracticable dreamers, for whom these practical level-headed men, who pride themselves on recognizing facts as they are, have a hearty contempt. But such men—though some of them write books, and some of them occupy the chairs of universities, and some of them stand in pulpits—do not think.

If they were accustomed to dine in such eating houses as are to be found in the lower quarters of London and Paris, where the knives and forks are chained to the table, they would deem it the natural, ineradicable disposition of man to carry off the knife and fork with which he has eaten.

Take a company of well-bred men and women dining together. There is no struggling for food, no attempt on the part of any one to get more than his neighbor; no attempt to gorge or to carry off. On the contrary, each one is anxious to help his neighbor before he partakes himself; to offer to others the best rather than pick it out for himself; and should any one show the slightest disposition to prefer the gratification of his own appetite to that of the others, or in any way to act the pig or pilferer, the swift and heavy penalty of social contempt and ostracism would show how such conduct is reprobated by common opinion.

All this is so common as to excite no remark, as to seem the natural state of things. Yet it is no more natural that men should not be greedy of food than that they should not be greedy of wealth. They *are* greedy of food when they are not assured that there will

be a fair and equitable distribution which will give each enough. But when these conditions are assured, they cease to be greedy of food. And so in society, as at present constituted, men are greedy of wealth because the conditions of distribution are so unjust that instead of each being sure of enough, many are certain to be condemned to want. It is the "devil catch the hindmost" of present social adjustments that causes the race and scramble for wealth, in which all considerations of justice, mercy, religion, and sentiment are trampled under foot; in which men forget their own souls, and struggle to the very verge of the grave for what they cannot take beyond. But an equitable distribution of wealth, that would exempt all from the fear of want, would destroy the greed of wealth, just as in polite society the greed of food has been destroyed.

On the crowded steamers of the early California lines there was often a marked difference between the manners of the steerage and the cabin, which illustrates this principle of human nature. An abundance of food was provided for the steerage as for the cabin, but in the former there were no regulations which insured efficient service, and the meals became a scramble. In the cabin, on the contrary, where each was allotted his place and there was no fear that everyone would not get enough, there was no such scrambling and waste as were witnessed in the steerage. The difference was not in the character of the people, but simply in this fact. The cabin passenger transferred to the steerage would participate in the greedy rush, and the steerage passenger transferred to the cabin would at once become decorous and polite. The same difference would show itself in society in general were the present unjust distribution of wealth replaced by a just distribution.

Consider this existing fact of a cultivated and refined society, in which all the coarser passions are held in

check, not by force, not by law, but by common opinion and the mutual desire of pleasing. If this is possible for a part of a community, it is possible for a whole community. There are states of society in which every one has to go armed—in which every one has to hold himself in readiness to defend person and property with the strong hand. If we have progressed beyond that, we may progress still further.

But it may be said, to banish want and the fear of want, would be to destroy the stimulus to exertion; men would become simply idlers, and such a happy state of general comfort and content would be the death of progress. This is the old slaveholders' argument, that men can be driven to labor only with the lash. Nothing is more untrue.

Want might be banished, but desire would remain. Man is the unsatisfied animal. He has but begun to explore, and the universe lies before him. Each step that he takes opens new vistas and kindles new desires. He is the constructive animal; he builds, he improves, he invents, and puts together, and the greater the thing he does, the greater the thing he wants to do. He is more than an animal. Whatever be the intelligence that breathes through nature, it is in that likeness that man is made. The steamship, driven by her throbbing engines through the sea, is in kind, though not in degree, as much a creation as the whale that swims beneath. The telescope and the microscope, what are they but added eyes, which man has made for himself; the soft webs and fair colors in which our women array themselves, do they not answer to the plumage that nature gives the bird? Man must be doing something, or fancy that he is doing something, for in him throbs the creative impulse; the mere basker in the sunshine is not a natural, but an abnormal man.

As soon as a child can command its muscles, it will

begin to make mud pies or dress a doll; its play is but the imitation of the work of its elders; its very destructiveness arises from the desire to be doing something, from the satisfaction of seeing itself accomplish something. There is no such thing as the pursuit of pleasure for the sake of pleasure. Our very amusements amuse only as they are, or simulate, the learning or the doing of something. The moment they cease to appeal either to our inquisitive or to our constructive powers, they cease to amuse. It will spoil the interest of the novel reader to be told just how the story will end; it is only the chance and the skill involved in the game that enable the card-player to "kill time" by shuffling bits of pasteboard. The luxurious frivolities of Versailles were possible to human beings only because the king thought he was governing a kingdom and the courtiers were in pursuit of fresh honors and new pensions. People who lead what are called lives of fashion and pleasure must have some other object in view, or they would die of *ennui*; they support it only because they imagine that they are gaining position, making friends, or improving the chances of their children. Shut a man up, and deny him employment, and he must either die or go mad.

It is not labor in itself that is repugnant to man; it is not the natural necessity for exertion which is a curse. It is only labor which produces nothing—exertion of which he cannot see the results. To toil day after day, and yet get but the necessaries of life, this is indeed hard; it is like the infernal punishment of compelling a man to pump lest he be drowned, or to trudge on a treadmill lest he be crushed. But, released from this necessity, men would but work the harder and the better, for then they would work as their inclinations led them; then would they seem to be really doing something for themselves or for others. Was Humboldt's

life an idle one? Did Franklin find no occupation when he retired from the printing business with enough to live on? Is Herbert Spencer a laggard? Did Michael Angelo paint for board and clothes?

The fact is that the work which improves the condition of mankind, the work which extends knowledge and increases power, and enriches literature, and elevates thought, is not done to secure a living. It is not the work of slaves, driven to their task either by the lash of a master or by animal necessities. It is the work of men who perform it for its own sake, and not that they may get more to eat or drink, or wear, or display. In a state of society where want was abolished, work of this sort would be enormously increased.

I am inclined to think that the result of confiscating rent in the manner I have proposed would be to cause the organization of labor, wherever large capitals were used, to assume the co-operative form, since the more equal diffusion of wealth would unite capitalist and laborer in the same person. But whether this would be so or not is of little moment. The hard toil of routine labor would disappear. Wages would be too high and opportunities too great to compel any man to stint and starve the higher qualities of his nature, and in every avocation the brain would aid the hand. Work, even of the coarser kinds, would become a lightsome thing, and the tendency of modern production to subdivision would not involve monotony or the contraction of ability in the worker; but would be relieved by short hours, by change, by the alternation of intellectual with manual occupations. There would result, not only the utilization of productive forces now going to waste; not only would our present knowledge, now so imperfectly applied, be fully used; but from the mobility of labor and the mental activity which would be generated, there would result

advances in the methods of production that we now cannot imagine.

For, greatest of all the enormous wastes which the present constitution of society involves, is that of mental power. How infinitesimal are the forces that concur to the advance of civilization, as compared to the forces that lie latent! How few are the thinkers, the discoverers, the inventors, the organizers, as compared with the great mass of the people! Yet such men are born in plenty; it is the conditions that permit so few to develop. There are among men infinite diversities of aptitude and inclination, as there are such infinite diversities in physical structure that among a million there will not be two that cannot be told apart. But, both from observation and reflection, I am inclined to think that the differences of natural power are no greater than the differences of stature or of physical strength. Turn to the lives of great men, and see how easily they might never have been heard of. Had Cæsar come of a proletarian family; had Napoleon entered the world a few years earlier; had Columbus gone into the Church instead of going to sea; had Shakespeare been apprenticed to a cobbler or chimney-sweep; had Sir Isaac Newton been assigned by fate the education and the toil of an agricultural laborer; had Dr. Adam Smith been born in the coal hews, or Herbert Spencer forced to get his living as a factory operative, what would their talents have availed? But there would have been, it will be said, other Cæsars or Napoleons, Columbuses or Shakespeares, Newtons, Smiths or Spencers. This is true. And it shows how prolific is our human nature. As the common worker is on need transformed into queen bee, so, when circumstances favor his development, what might otherwise pass for a common man rises into a hero or leader, discoverer or teacher, sage or saint. So widely has the sower scattered the seed, so strong is the ger-

minative force that bids it bud and blossom. But, alas, for the stony ground, and the birds and the tares! For one who attains his full stature, how many are stunted and deformed.

The will within us is the ultimate fact of consciousness. Yet how little have the best of us, in acquirements, in position, even in character, that may be credited entirely to ourselves; how much to the influences that have molded us. Who is there, wise, learned, discreet, or strong, who might not, were he to trace the inner history of his life, turn, like the Stoic Emperor, to give thanks to the gods, that by this one and that one, and here and there, good examples have been set him, noble thoughts have reached him, and happy opportunities opened before him. Who is there, who, with his eyes about him, has reached the meridian of life, who has not sometimes echoed the thought of the pious Englishman, as the criminal passed to the gallows, "But for the grace of God, there go I." How little does heredity count as compared with conditions. This one, we say, is the result of a thousand years of European progress, and that one of a thousand years of Chinese petrification; yet, placed an infant in the heart of China, and but for the angle of the eye or the shade of the hair, the Caucasian would grow up as those around him, using the same speech, thinking the same thoughts, exhibiting the same tastes. Change Lady Vere de Vere in her cradle with an infant of the slums, and will the blood of a hundred earls give you a refined and cultured woman?

To remove want and the fear of want, to give to all classes leisure, and comfort, and independence, the decencies and refinements of life, the opportunities of mental and moral development, would be like turning water into a desert. The sterile waste would clothe itself with verdure, and the barren places where life seemed banned would ere long be dappled with the



shade of trees and musical with the song of birds. Talents now hidden, virtues unsuspected, would come forth to make human life richer, fuller, happier, nobler. For in these round men who are stuck into three-cornered holes, and three-cornered men who are jammed into round holes; in these men who are wasting their energies in the scramble to be rich; in these who in factories are turned into machines, or are chained by necessity to bench or plow; in these children who are growing up in squalor, and vice, and ignorance, are powers of the highest order, talents the most splendid. They need but the opportunity to bring them forth.

Consider the possibilities of a state of society that gave that opportunity to all. Let imagination fill out the picture; its colors grow too bright for words to paint. Consider the moral elevation, the intellectual activity, the social life. Consider how by a thousand actions and interactions the members of every community are linked together, and how in the present condition of things even the fortunate few who stand upon the apex of the social pyramid must suffer, though they know it not, from the want, ignorance, and degradation that are underneath. Consider these things and then say whether the change I propose would not be for the benefit of every one—even the greatest land holder? Would he not be safer of the future of his children in leaving them penniless in such a state of society than in leaving them the largest fortune in this? Did such a state of society anywhere exist, would he not buy entrance to it cheaply by giving up all his possessions?

I have now traced to their source social weakness and disease. I have shown the remedy. I have covered every point and met every objection. But the problems that we have been considering, great as they are, pass into problems greater yet—into the grandest problems with which the human mind can grapple. I am about

to ask the reader who has gone with me so far, to go with me further, into still higher fields. But I ask him to remember that in the little space which remains of the limits to which this book must be confined, I cannot fully treat the questions which arise. I can but suggest some thoughts, which may, perhaps, serve as hints for further thought.