

## GREAT MOVEMENTS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

### II. THE GREAT CONFLICT.

**W**EALTH and organization have joined with knowledge, tolerance, justice, liberty, and popular government to remove the ancient limitations and afford new opportunities and new powers to humanity. The great development of national unity, industrial coöperation, and social organization in the nineteenth century is one of the most important facts of the period. The spirit of union, which was so weak in the closing years of the eighteenth century that union was scarcely possible in America, became so strong by the middle of the century that it stood the shock of the most tremendous civil war in history. The German States, whose severance made Western Europe a crazy quilt in 1800, have become a solid empire. Switzerland, though her cantons were loosely federated in the eighteenth century, had no real national existence until 1802. Italy too has become a nation. The principle of union has been working in South America, Africa, and Australia too. The twentieth century may see great continental and intercontinental unions—the United States of South America, the federated governments of North America, the United Colonies of Southern Africa, the united nations of Western Europe, the federation of all English-speaking peoples, the international federation of all civilized societies—to keep the peace and prevent Russia from overrunning Western Europe and grasping all Europe, Asia, and Africa in one colossal empire.

The industrial world has felt the unifying forces almost as fully as the political world. Industry has been organized under powerful firms, great corporations, and vast combinations, ever gravitating into larger and larger groups, till now we have a single trust whose president receives a salary of a million dollars a year and whose capital is more than a billion. The capitalization of the trusts foots up about ten

billions total, and with the railroads, telegraphs, and telephones makes more than a quarter of the country's wealth. The mighty railroad combines, the Standard Oil, and the billion-dollar steel trust illustrate the power of the forces making for the concentration of capital in private control; and the astonishing growth of public ownership of public utilities, especially in European and Australasian lands, demonstrates an equally vigorous tendency, considering the civilized world as a whole, toward the concentration of capital under public control. The American Federation of Labor, with nearly a million members, the vast Socialist organization of workers in Germany, and the splendid coöperative unions of Great Britain, involving one-seventh of the entire population, prove that labor as well as capital is feeling the force of industrial gravitation. Not only are politics and business affected by the spirit of harmony: religion and society also are being transformed by it. There are symptoms of coming union in the churches, and social organization has already been carried so far that the mere description of the societies in Boston alone requires a considerable volume. The trend toward unity, organization, concentration, harmony, and coöperation is one of the most powerful movements of the age.

Vast areas in America, Australia, and Africa have been claimed by civilization in the nineteenth century. The total area occupied by peoples of high civilization has more than quadrupled in these hundred years. By emigration, commerce, education, and sometimes by force of arms, the higher races are capturing the world for modern life. Civilization is sweeping round the globe, on the railroad train, the telegraph wire, the ocean steamer, and, now and then, much as we deplore the means, it travels on a powder cart and opens the way with cannon balls.

Knowledge, liberty, organization, and the spread of civilization have produced a great increase of wealth. Steam and electricity and mechanical development, with better training, higher character, freer conditions, and superior coördination, have multiplied the productive power of labor many fold, so that,

in spite of much larger consumption than at any previous period, the accumulations of the nineteenth century have been most remarkable. In France and England the wealth accumulated during this period is more than five times as great as the total accumulations of all preceding ages in those countries. In America the wealth of the Union in 1800 was about one billion dollars, while now it is well toward ninety billions; or, taking fractions into account, an increase of 85-fold, which is over six times the growth of population in the same period, the *per capita* wealth having risen from \$200 in the year 1800 to \$1,200 or thereabouts in 1900.

While, however, the creation and accumulation of wealth have progressed in this unexampled way, the diffusion of wealth has met with no corresponding improvement. On the contrary, there has been a progressive concentration of wealth into relatively fewer hands, till now one-half the people own practically nothing; one-eighth of the people own seven-eighths of the wealth, or forty-nine times their share; one per cent. of the people own 54 per cent. of the wealth—one family in every hundred being able to buy out the other 99 families and have something left besides; and finally about one-two-hundredths of one per cent. of the people, or 4,000 millionaires and multi-millionaires, have 20 per cent. of the total wealth, or over 4,000 times their fair share on the principles of partnership and brotherhood.

The vast increase of wealth and great congestion of it, along with the vast increase of knowledge and large diffusion of it and the rapid growth of political liberty, constitute the paradox of the nineteenth century and the source of the deepest troubles it bequeathes to the twentieth. The congestion of wealth in the presence of diffused intelligence is the underlying cause of the great unrest of our time. There are only two paths to social equilibrium: the diffusion of enlightenment must vanish or the concentration of wealth must cease. Democracy of intelligence and aristocracy of wealth are incompatible. Industrial privilege must destroy free government and popular enlightenment, or free government and popular enlightenment

will destroy industrial privilege. The concentration of wealth is possible only because intelligence, while widely disseminated, is not *fully* diffused. If the masses of the people had understood the powers and the benefits of union and industrial organization as well as the makers of trusts and combines understand them, the organization of industry would have proceeded on lines of public ownership and coöperative enterprise, instead of taking the form of aggressive combinations in the interest of a few. Instead of a union of part against the rest, we should have had coöperative groups and public plants working toward a union of all for the benefit of all. There is intelligence enough to recognize the evils and injustices of private monopoly, and there will be thought enough among the people soon to recognize and apply the remedy, unless the growth of popular enlightenment is checked by the rising despotism. Trusts and monopolies, and the concentration of wealth and power they cause, endanger free institutions, imperil manhood and independence, and threaten industrial peace and prosperity. Private monopolies corrupt the governments, make the workers serfs instead of partners, glut our markets, and produce depression and panic by denying the workers sufficient wages to buy their proper share of the products they create. Every billion dollars of unjust profit that monopolists secure is that much less for the farmers and workingmen and the small merchants and producers. Machinery multiplies the power of labor, while the wages of labor, though rising somewhat, do not increase in proportion; wherefore surplus products pile up in our markets. The monopolists seek new markets in foreign lands and even use the war power if necessary to attain their purpose, but all their efforts can only delay and not avert the glut and depression sure to result from the imperfect distribution of wealth and the resulting under-consumption of the working classes.

All these evils and many others resulting from wealth congestion and lack of complete organization in the interest of all may be intensified for a time by the growing power of the influence now dominant in industry, but there are strong rea-

sons for hope that wealth congestion may be ultimately overcome by the forces making for diffusion. The fundamental principle on which industrial organization is proceeding, if fully carried out, must lead to wealth diffusion. It is the *partial* organization of our time, the incomplete application of the principle of coöperation, that is making all the mischief. Every time a trust is born or a labor union formed, every time two trusts unite or two labor unions affiliate, we are one step nearer complete coördination. Either through the union of the trusts, and the federation of labor, and the coalescence of the two, or through the growth of public ownership and voluntary coöperation, or a mixture of these processes, the organization of industry will be carried to completion and become a vast coöperation for the benefit of all, instead of a coöperation of part for the mastery of the rest, *unless* the aristocracy of wealth can choke democracy and stop the growth of popular enlightenment.

Excepting this trend to wealth congestion, and the ideal developed by and developing it, every leading influence of the century makes for liberty and civilization; every power developed by science, invention, literature, education, wealth, and political, industrial, or social organization, is a means of making life fuller and freer than it was before. If the new power be monopolized by a few, it may become an instrument of oppression to the masses of the people and a means of freedom only to the few; but if the growth of power be linked with, or take place under, democratic conditions, it will enlarge and enrich the life of the people. The amazing evolution of knowledge, wealth, and organization in the last hundred years, together with the equally astonishing development of political liberty and democratic government, has brought about a magnificent enlargement and enrichment of life. This was the supreme movement of the nineteenth century. To put the matter in a single sentence: the despotism of dogma, the imprisonment of ignorance, the bondage of injustice, the tyrannies of thrones and aristocracies, the desperate restraints of chattel slavery and serfdom, the vast restrictions of isolation and

opposition, of severance and conflict, the barriers of space and time, the serious limitations of individual and social poverty, and the fetters of ancient forms and outgrown laws, have given way in large degree to tolerance, knowledge, justice, democracy, liberty, union, wealth, and progress; and this development of knowledge, union, wealth, and power, *along with* the development of the diffusive forces of sympathy, justice, liberty, democracy, and coöperation, means the liberation and enrichment of the life of the people.

As we have seen, however, this splendid movement toward a nobler life is not the only current of the century just closed. There is a counter current that must be reckoned with, and its power has increased so swiftly in later years that many a careful observer fears it may become the dominant movement of the twentieth century. This counter current is the trend toward industrial despotism. Union and organization are excellent in themselves, but if controlled in the interests of a few they become despotic, whether the field of organization be religion, politics, or industry. The world has groaned for centuries under religious despotism, and for thousands of years political despotism was the common lot of humanity. The leaders and managers of political unions—tribes, States, and nations—abused their powers for selfish purposes. Instead of recognizing the rights of the people, they treated the government as their private property, to be used for their private benefit and as a means of compelling the people to serve them and pay taxes to them. The whole sweep of thought and events in the political life of the nineteenth century was a magnificent protest against this private monopoly of government. The century is full to the brim with the grand movement toward democracy. Yet the same century, overflowing with the gospel of public ownership of the government, is marked by a startling development of private monopoly in industry. The managers of great industrial organizations, factories, stores, corporations, trusts, and combines are doing just what the managers of political groups did long ago, using the powers of organization for their selfish purposes

against the public interest, treating the trusts and combines as means of taxing the people and controlling them for the benefit of the managers. The wealth that belongs to the farm and the home is being drawn into the treasuries of the great monopolies. Farmers and workers sell in a competitive market and buy in a monopolized market; *i.e.*, they buy high and sell low. With each new advance of monopoly and capitalistic combination, the people get a relatively smaller share of the national product and the monopolists get a larger and larger share.

The country is paying tribute to the trusts, just as France and England used to pay tribute to their kings and nobles. Only there was no noble, king, or potentate who drew such tribute from the people as the kings of steel and emperors of oil in America to-day. The German Emperor's official income is less than \$11,000 a day, and the civil list of the Emperor-King of Austria-Hungary is only about \$10,000 a day; while a number of our monopolists have incomes ranging from \$15,000 to \$40,000 a day, and one has an income variously estimated at \$70,000 to \$200,000 a day. The contrast between the sovereign and the subject in the Old World is not more startling than the contrast between the laboring man earning \$1 a day and the magnate who can buy the labor of a hundred thousand men with his surplus income. The managers of a billion-dollar trust or a giant railway system control the livelihood of thousands of people, and can make or mar the fortunes of individuals, cities, States, and nations. We are living under the deepening shadow of a despotism that threatens to become as mighty and as heartless as any to be found in all the past. The despotic element of human nature—the longing for mastery over others that characterizes militant savagery and persists in societies pervaded by the militant spirit after actual war is over—has trekked its way to virgin fields and built new thrones and aristocracies. Driven from politics it has gone into industry, to establish its imperialism there, and, from that vantage, tunnel back to undermine political liberty, and through an underground political des-

potism destroy democracy itself. As the spirit of conquest in military form destroyed the republic in ancient Rome, so the spirit of conquest in commercial form may destroy the republics of Europe and America. Even so conservative a thinker as President Hadley of Yale says we shall have an emperor in Washington within twenty-five years unless we can rouse the people to control the trusts. Yet the trusts are merely a partial application of the beneficent principles of harmony and coöperation perverted to private use. Even brotherhood, if limited and made the basis of new aggression, may become a source of evil. The contest of our time is between organization for the benefit of a few and organization for the benefit of all.

The conflict of the two great movements of liberation and conquest is the heart of the history that is forming to-day. The question of the age is Equality or Aristocracy, Fraternity or Mastery, Partnership or Subjection, Democracy or Despotism. On the one hand the mighty power of wealth is seeking to maintain and extend its empire and intensify its domination; on the other hand the giant forces that have carried the nations into democratic government are pushing them on to the democratization of industry. In some countries, Germany especially, this great movement, which is really a phase of the movement toward the liberation of life, has taken the form of a great political party pledged to the socialization of all the means of production and distribution. In other countries, as New Zealand, Switzerland, England, and the United States, the principal strength of the movement is expended in the gradual extension of the public ownership of monopolies and vital public utilities and the development of coöperative industry—processes that lead directly to the equalization of industrial conditions. In America, too, the interests opposed to plutocracy have manifested much vitality but have not organized as yet in any effective form, and the tide of commercial conquest sweeps on unchecked. It is a race between the people and the monopolists. Shall the world belong to all or to a few? Shall civilization, wealth, power, and opportunity be grasped

by private monopoly or be the common heritage of the people? Will the liberation of life go forward to completion or will the mastery of monopolized wealth engulf the liberties of the people? Will the ideal of brotherhood, partnership, and mutual service triumph, or the ideal of mastery and commercial conquest?

To sum up on a somewhat different line of analysis, let us briefly note the mighty movements of *development*, *diffusion*, *organization*, and *expansion* that mark the civilization of the nineteenth century and make it the blossom-time for science, wealth, liberty, union, and democracy, except where the doom of despotism is delayed by the *concentration of wealth*, which has resulted incidentally from the organization of industry without sufficient infusion of public interest or coöperative principle in the process of crystallization. Development, intellectual, moral, and physical—astonishing growth of knowledge, virtue, wealth, and power—is the century's leading characteristic. It is *par excellence* the century of evolution as well as the century of evolutionary philosophy. New powers and values in man and for man fill the years to overflowing, and make the thirty centuries known to history previous to our time, with their combined results, quite insignificant compared to the vast achievements of this one century—in which the world has grown as if a youth, who had for thirty years and more remained a child, should take a vigorous start and in a single year grow up to manhood's power and knowledge. A thousand centuries or more humanity has wandered in the darkness and the twilight, but in our century the van emerged from the arctic night and has seen the sun of civilization climb the sky till its brilliance dazzles the strongest eyes. The expansion of civilization by colonization, commerce, and conquest has carried the light around the world and redeemed four continents from darkness and sent the dawn into the other two.

The organization of nations and federations, corporations, trusts and combines, labor unions, scientific and social societies, and numberless other associations, attests the vigorous action

of political and industrial gravitation, social cohesion, intellectual and ethical magnetism, and other attractive energies that, with the gathering forces just named in speaking of the expansion of civilization, are working for unification, the coördination of human activity, the harmonization of human interests, and the consolidation of humanity.

The tendency to diffusion is quite as emphatic as the trend to union, organization, expansion, and development, but it is less universal. The diffusion of knowledge in the nineteenth century is not less remarkable than its increase. Schools and colleges, books, magazines, and newspapers have brought to every door the thought and feeling of the world, the arguments of statesmen, the reasoning of philosophers, the riches of science. In the political field diffusion is the dominant fact—the amazing growth of liberty and democracy is *the* political element of the century just closed, the chief of all its wonderful accomplishments, excepting the vast development of knowledge, wealth, and power, and exceeding in value even these more famous facts perhaps, since it underlies them as an interacting cause and determines their scope and effectiveness as a condition of their reaching the masses of the people. Liberty is at once a principal cause of the development of knowledge, wealth, and power, and an essential condition of their distribution; so that their benefits may not be confined to a few individuals but accrue to the people and lift the whole State to a higher plane of civilization. Diffusion rules the century in the realms of government and education, and pours its power into industry also, but in that field it does not reign supreme; a counter movement rises with the vigor of a tropic storm, sweeping diffusion out of industry and piling the ruins of individual enterprise in giant heaps around the walls of monopoly.

This counter current toward congestion results from the dominant method of industrial organization. Organization is as beneficent and inevitable in industry as in any other department of life, but the method and spirit of organization are always of prime importance. If organization is in the interest

of all, democracies and coöperations are the outcome. But if organization is in private interest, despotisms and plutocracies result. If the masses of farmers, merchants, manufacturers, and laborers had wakened to the benefits of organization and sent their delegates to form a plan of industrial union for the good of all, as our fathers in 1787 sent delegates to form a plan of political union for the good of all—or if our various industries had crystallized under enlightened influences in public-spirited and coöperative groups, federating into larger and larger groups under the coöperative principle—the organization of industry might have progressed in perfect harmony with the great movement toward diffusion. But the masses did not wake in time, and local crystallizations were not generally governed by public spirit and coöperative principle, but by the spirit of private profit and union of a few for the capture of wealth from the rest; wherefore industrial organization so far has led to the centralization of wealth and founded a new aristocracy that bids fair to become almost as despotic as the political aristocracies of former times.

Throughout the centuries of the past, in all the relations of mankind, two principles have been contending for control—the principle of mastery and the principle of coöperation. In this last century the principle of coöperation has made great progress in every department of life. In government it has gone far toward sweeping its rival from the world. In industry also it has done much, but there it has been met by a new outburst of the spirit of mastery that grasps the power of union in a trust or combine to destroy the diffusion of benefit a union of all would afford, and uses the coöperation of a few to defeat the ends that would be attained by a coöperation of all. Government was organized for ages on the private plan, but the public principle has claimed it for its own. Will the private plan succeed in industry, against the diffusion of knowledge and power, or will private monopoly in industry follow its sister monopoly in government into oblivion? Will the forces that have gone so far to drive the principle of mastery out of politics yield to the new attack of despotism,

with railroads for battle-axes and monopolies for clubs? Can civilization be outflanked by a few capitalists? If a people with few schools and printing-presses, and without the ballot, won their freedom against a universal despotism bolstered by ages of homage, will not an enlightened people with the ballot win their freedom against a limited despotism heartily despised from its inception and opposed already by a most specific, vigorous, outspoken, ceaselessly aggressive, and rapidly growing movement for the socialization and democratization of industry? If this freedom can and should be won, then how and when? And by what means may it be protected against new masteries?

If, instead of a gradual relief at moderate pressure, as in New Zealand, Switzerland, and England, the tension rises to the battle point in America, as predicted by Macaulay and others, may not the outcome be State Socialism, with a bureaucratic despotism as bad or worse than that of private capital, making a new reaction needful to bring true liberty with voluntary coöperation in manufactures, commerce, agriculture, and public monopolies managed by governments under effective and continuous control of the people?

The future is threatened on the one hand by the tyrannies of elected despots and on the other hand by the tyrannies of the self-constituted despots of the market. What are the prospects of liberty and how may they best be realized? Will knowledge and wealth continue to develop while liberty and justice wane, or will they all rise or all go down together? Will diffusion of benefit accompany its increase; will the liberation of life go hand in hand with its enrichment in the years to come, lifting and ennobling the whole people and establishing at last an actual brotherhood in government and business aiming at mutual help and not at commercial conquest or the control of others for the selfish benefit of the controller; or will the new life be grasped and monopolized by a few while the masses toil in want to let their masters live in idle and debasing luxury? What part may this generation have in deciding the momentous issue? What can the individual do

to influence the decision and to influence it to his utmost power? To find what light the past may throw upon these questions we must study the political, industrial, intellectual, and moral movements of the age with reference to the character, strength, and persistence of their causes, and specially note all blossoming signs of a new ideal of nobler type than that which dominates our life to-day, and earnestly seek the conditions of developing the new ideal and the means of lifting it to sovereign control in place of the present ideal of commercial conquest and triumph in industrial battle. The mightiest of all forces, molding education, government, social conditions, and economic systems, is the dominant ideal, which in turn is modified by all the elements of life. No more momentous years have ever come to man than the opening years of this new century, through the portals of which he has just entered. No grander mission can be found than to give one's life to the building of a loftier ideal and the effort to turn the organization of industry away from despotism toward liberty, democracy, and diffusion of benefit, so that the wealth and knowledge of the twentieth century shall make *all* the people rich and free—the grand movement toward the liberation and enrichment of life, sweeping aside the aristocracy of wealth as it has the aristocracy of birth, and filling the years with a new equality that shall make all other equalities real and safe.

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