

# EQUALITY

EDWARD BELLAMY\*

In the year 1887 Julian West was a rich young man living in Boston. He was soon to be married to a young lady of wealthy family named Edith Bartlett, and meanwhile lived alone with his man-servant Sawyer in the family mansion. Being a sufferer from insomnia, he had caused a chamber to be built of stone beneath the foundation of the house, which he used for a sleeping room. When even the silence and seclusion of this retreat failed to bring slumber, he sometimes called in a professional mesmerizer to put him into a hypnotic sleep, from which Sawyer knew how to arouse him at a fixed time. This habit, as well as the existence of the underground chamber, were secrets known only to Sawyer and the hypnotist who rendered his services. On the night of May 30, 1887, West sent for the latter, and was put to sleep as usual. The hypnotist had previously informed his patron that he was intending to leave the city permanently the same evening, and referred him to other practitioners. That night the house of Julian West took fire and was wholly destroyed. Remains identified as those of Sawyer were found and, though no vestige of West appeared, it was assumed that he of course had also perished.

One hundred and thirteen years later, in September, A. D. 2000, Dr. Leete, a physician of Boston, on the retired list, was conducting excavations in his garden for the foundations of a private laboratory, when the workers came on a mass of masonry covered with ashes and charcoal. On opening it, a vault, luxuriously fitted up in the style of a nineteenth-century bedchamber, was found, and on the bed the body of a young man looking as if he had just lain down to sleep. Although great trees had been growing above the vault, the unaccountable preservation of the youth's body tempted Dr. Leete to attempt resuscitation, and to his own astonishment his efforts proved successful. The sleeper returned to life, and after a short time to the full vigor of youth which his appearance had indicated. His shock on learning what had befallen him was so great as to have endangered his sanity but for the medical skill of Dr. Leete, and the not less sympathetic ministrations of the other members of the household, the doctor's wife, and Edith the beautiful daughter. Presently, however, the young man forgot to wonder at what had happened to himself in his astonishment on learning of the social transformation through which the world had passed while he lay sleeping. Step by step, almost as to a child, his hosts explained to him, who had known no other way of living except the struggle for existence, what were the simple principles of national co-operation for the promotion of the

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general welfare on which the new civilization rested. He learned that there were no longer any who were or could be richer or poorer than others, but that all were economic equals. He learned that no one any longer worked for another, either by compulsion or for hire, but that all alike were in the service of the nation working for the common fund, which all equally shared, and that even necessary personal attendance, as of the physician, was rendered as to the state like that of the military surgeon. All these wonders, it was explained, had very simply come about as the results of replacing private capitalism by public capitalism, and organizing the machinery of production and distribution, like the political government, as business of general concern to be carried on for the public benefit instead of private gain.

But, though it was not long before the young stranger's first astonishment at the institutions of the new world had passed into enthusiastic admiration and he was ready to admit that the race had for the first time learned how to live, he presently began to repine at a fate which had introduced him to the new world, only to leave him oppressed by a sense of hopeless loneliness which all the kindness of his new friends could not relieve, feeling, as he must, that it was dictated by pity only. Then it was that he first learned that his experience had been a yet more marvelous one than he had supposed. Edith Leete was no other than the great-granddaughter of Edith Bartlett, his betrothed, who, after long mourning her lost lover, had at last allowed herself to be consoled. The story of the tragical bereavement which had shadowed her early life was a family tradition, and among the family heirlooms were letters from Julian West, together with a photograph which represented so handsome a youth that Edith was illogically inclined to quarrel with her great-grandmother for ever marrying anybody else. As for the young man's picture, she kept it on her dressing table. Of course, it followed that the identity of the tenant of the subterranean chamber had been fully known to his rescuers from the moment of the discovery; but Edith, for reasons of her own, had insisted that he should not know who she was till she saw fit to tell him. When, at the proper time, she had seen fit to do this, there was no further question of loneliness for the young man, for how could destiny more unmistakably have indicated that two persons were meant for each other?

His cup of happiness now being full, he had an experience in which it seemed to be dashed from his lips. As he lay on his bed in Dr. Leete's house he was oppressed by a hideous nightmare. It seemed to him that he opened his eyes to find himself on his bed in the underground chamber where the mesmerizer had put him to sleep. Sawyer was just completing the passes used to break the hypnotic influence. He called for the morning paper, and read on the date line May 31, 1887. Then he knew that all this wonderful matter about the year 2000, its happy, care-free world of brothers and the fair girl he had met there were but fragments of a dream. His brain in a whirl, he went forth into the city. He saw everything with new eyes, contrasting it with what he had seen in the Boston of the year 2000. The frenzied folly of the competitive industrial

system, the inhuman contrasts of luxury and woe—pride and abjectness—the boundless squalor, wretchedness, and madness of the whole scheme of things which met his eye at every turn, outraged his reason and made his heart sick. He felt like a sane man shut up by accident in a madhouse. After a day of this wandering he found himself at nightfall in a company of his former companions, who rallied him on his distraught appearance. He told them of his dream and what it had taught him of the possibilities of a juster, nobler, wiser social system. He reasoned with them, showing how easy it would be, laying aside the suicidal folly of competition, by means of fraternal co-operation, to make the actual world as blessed as that he had dreamed of. At first they derided him, but, seeing his earnestness, grew angry, and denounced him as a pestilent fellow, an anarchist, an enemy of society, and drove him from them. Then it was that, in an agony of weeping, he awoke, this time awaking really, not falsely, and found himself in his bed in Dr. Leete's house, with the morning sun of the twentieth century shining in his eyes. Looking from the window of his room, he saw Edith in the garden gathering flowers for the breakfast table, and hastened to descend to her and relate his experience. At this point we will leave him to continue the narrative for himself.

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EQUALITY.

## CHAPTER I.

A SHARP CROSS-EXAMINER.

With many expressions of sympathy and interest Edith listened to the story of my dream. When, finally, I had made an end, she remained musing.

"What are you thinking about?" I said.

"I was thinking," she answered, "how it would have been if your dream had been true."

"True!" I exclaimed. "How could it have been true?"

"I mean," she said, "if it had all been a dream, as you supposed it was in your nightmare, and you had never really seen our Republic of the Golden Rule or me, but had only slept a night and dreamed the whole thing about us. And suppose you had gone forth just as you did in your dream, and had passed up and down telling men of the terrible folly and wickedness of their way of life and how much nobler and happier a way there was. Just think what good you might have done, how you might have helped people in those days when they needed help so much. It seems to me you must be almost sorry you came back to us."

"You look as if you were almost sorry yourself," I said, for her wistful expression seemed susceptible of that interpretation.

"Oh, no," she answered, smiling. "It was only on your own account. As for me, I have very good reasons for being glad that you came back."

"I should say so, indeed. Have you reflected that if I had dreamed it all you would have had no existence save as a figment in the brain of a sleeping man a hundred years ago?"

"I had not thought of that part of it," she said smiling and still half serious; "yet if I could have been more useful to humanity as a fiction than as a reality, I ought not to have minded the—the inconvenience."

But I replied that I greatly feared no amount of opportunity to help mankind in general would have reconciled me to life anywhere or under any conditions after leaving her behind in a dream—a confession of shameless selfishness which she was pleased to pass over without special rebuke, in consideration, no doubt, of my unfortunate bringing up.

"Besides," I resumed, being willing a little further to vindicate myself, "it would not have done any good. I have just told you how in my nightmare last night, when I tried to tell my contemporaries and even my best friends about the nobler way men might live together, they derided me as a fool and madman. That is exactly what they would have done in reality had the dream been true and I had gone about preaching as in the case you supposed."

"Perhaps a few might at first have acted as you dreamed they did," she replied. "Perhaps they would not at once have liked the idea of economic equality, fearing that it might mean a leveling down for them, and not understanding that it would presently mean a leveling up of all together to a vastly higher plane of life and happiness, of material welfare and moral dignity than the most fortunate had ever enjoyed. But even if the rich had at first mistaken you for an enemy to their class, the poor, the great masses of the poor, the real nation, they surely from the first would have listened as for their lives, for to them your story would have meant glad tidings of great joy."

"I do not wonder that you think so," I answered, "but, though I am still learning the A B C of this new world, I knew my contemporaries, and I know that it would not have been as you fancy. The poor would have listened no better than the rich, for, though poor and rich in my day were at bitter odds in everything else, they were agreed in believing that there must always be rich and poor, and that a condition of material equality was impossible. It used to be commonly said, and it often seemed true, that the social reformer who tried to better the condition of the people found a more discouraging obstacle in the hopelessness of the masses he would raise than in the active resistance of the few, whose superiority was threatened. And indeed, Edith, to be fair to my own class, I am bound to say that with the best of the rich it was often as much this same hopelessness as deliberate selfishness that made them what we used to call conservative. So you see, it would have done no good even

if I had gone to preaching as you fancied. The poor would have regarded my talk about the possibility of an equality of wealth as a fairy tale, not worth a laboring man's time to listen to. Of the rich, the baser sort would have mocked and the better sort would have sighed, but none would have given ear seriously."

But Edith smiled serenely.

"It seems very audacious for me to try to correct your impressions of your own contemporaries and of what they might be expected to think and do, but you see the peculiar circumstances give me a rather unfair advantage. Your knowledge of your times necessarily stops short with 1887, when you became oblivious of the course of events. I, on the other hand, having gone to school in the twentieth century, and been obliged, much against my will, to study nineteenth-century history, naturally know what happened after the date at which your knowledge ceased. I know, impossible as it may seem to you, that you had scarcely fallen into that long sleep before the American people began to be deeply and widely stirred with aspirations for an equal order such as we enjoy, and that very soon the political movement arose which, after various mutations, resulted early in the twentieth century in overthrowing the old system and setting up the present one."

This was indeed interesting information to me, but when I began to question Edith further, she sighed and shook her head.

"Having tried to show my superior knowledge, I must now confess my ignorance. All I know is the bare fact that the revolutionary movement began, as I said, very soon after you fell asleep. Father must tell you the rest. I might as well admit while I am about it, for you would soon find it out, that I know almost nothing either as to the Revolution or nineteenth-century matters generally. You have no idea how hard I have been trying to post myself on the subject so as to be able to talk intelligently with you, but I fear it is of no use. I could not understand it in school and can not seem to understand it any better now. More than ever this morning I am sure that I never shall. Since you have been telling me how the old world appeared to you in that dream, your talk has brought those days so terribly near that I can almost see them, and yet I can not say that they seem a bit more intelligible than before."

"Things were bad enough and black enough certainly," I said; "but I don't see what there was particularly unintelligible about them. What is the difficulty?"

"The main difficulty comes from the complete lack of agreement between the pretensions of your contemporaries about the way their society was organized and the actual facts as given in the histories."

"For example?" I queried.

"I don't suppose there is much use in trying to explain my trouble," she said. "You will only think me stupid for my pains, but I'll try to make you see what I mean. You ought to be able to clear up the matter if anybody can. You have just been telling me about the shockingly unequal conditions of the people, the contrasts of waste and want, the pride and power of the rich, the abjectness and servitude of the poor, and all the rest of the dreadful story."

"Yes."

"It appears that these contrasts were almost as great as at any previous period of history."

"It is doubtful," I replied, "if there was ever a greater disparity between the conditions of different classes than you would find in a half hour's walk in Boston, New York, Chicago, or any other great city of America in the last quarter of the nineteenth century."

"And yet," said Edith, "it appears from all the books that meanwhile the Americans' great boast was that they differed from all other and former nations in that they were free and equal. One is constantly coming upon this phrase in the literature of the day. Now, you have made it clear that they were neither free nor equal in any ordinary sense of the word, but were divided as mankind had always been before into rich and poor, masters and servants. Won't you please tell me, then, what they meant by calling themselves free and equal?"

"It was meant, I suppose, that they were all equal before the law."

"That means in the courts. And were the rich and poor equal in the courts? Did they receive the same treatment?"

"I am bound to say," I replied, "that they were nowhere else more unequal. The law applied in terms to all alike, but not in fact. There was more difference in the position of the rich and the poor man before the law than in any other respect. The rich were practically above the law, the poor under its wheels."

"In what respect, then, were the rich and poor equal?"

"They were said to be equal in opportunities."

"Opportunities for what?"

"For bettering themselves, for getting rich, for getting ahead of others in the struggle for wealth."

"It seems to me that only meant, if it were true, not that all were equal, but that all had an equal chance to make themselves unequal. But

was it true that all had equal opportunities for getting rich and bettering themselves?"

"It may have been so to some extent at one time when the country was new," I replied, "but it was no more so in my day. Capital had practically monopolized all economic opportunities by that time; there was no opening in business enterprise for those without large capital save by some extraordinary fortune."

"But surely," said Edith, "there must have been, in order to give at least a color to all this boasting about equality, some one respect in which the people were really equal?"

"Yes, there was. They were political equals. They all had one vote alike, and the majority was the supreme lawgiver."

"So the books say, but that only makes the actual condition of things more absolutely unaccountable."

"Why so?"

"Why, because if these people all had an equal voice in the government—these toiling, starving, freezing, wretched masses of the poor—why did they not without a moment's delay put an end to the inequalities from which they suffered?"

"Very likely," she added, as I did not at once reply, "I am only showing how stupid I am by saying this. Doubtless I am overlooking some important fact, but did you not say that all the people, at least all the men, had a voice in the government?"

"Certainly; by the latter part of the nineteenth century manhood suffrage had become practically universal in America."

"That is to say, the people through their chosen agents made all the laws. Is that what you mean?"

"Certainly."

"But I remember you had Constitutions of the nation and of the States. Perhaps they prevented the people from doing quite what they wished."

"No; the Constitutions were only a little more fundamental sort of laws. The majority made and altered them at will. The people were the sole and supreme final power, and their will was absolute."

"If, then, the majority did not like any existing arrangement, or think it to their advantage, they could change it as radically as they wished?"

”Certainly; the popular majority could do anything if it was large and determined enough.”

”And the majority, I understand, were the poor, not the rich—the ones who had the wrong side of the inequalities that prevailed?”

”Emphatically so; the rich were but a handful comparatively.”

”Then there was nothing whatever to prevent the people at any time, if they just willed it, from making an end of their sufferings and organizing a system like ours which would guarantee their equality and prosperity?”

”Nothing whatever.”

”Then once more I ask you to kindly tell me why, in the name of common sense, they didn’t do it at once and be happy instead of making a spectacle of themselves so woeful that even a hundred years after it makes us cry?”

”Because,” I replied, ”they were taught and believed that the regulation of industry and commerce and the production and distribution of wealth was something wholly outside of the proper province of government.”

”But, dear me, Julian, life itself and everything that meanwhile makes life worth living, from the satisfaction of the most primary physical needs to the gratification of the most refined tastes, all that belongs to the development of mind as well as body, depend first, last, and always on the manner in which the production and distribution of wealth is regulated. Surely that must have been as true in your day as ours.”

”Of course.”

”And yet you tell me, Julian, that the people, after having abolished the rule of kings and taken the supreme power of regulating their affairs into their own hands, deliberately consented to exclude from their jurisdiction the control of the most important, and indeed the only really important, class of their interests.”

”Do not the histories say so?”

”They do say so, and that is precisely why I could never believe them. The thing seemed so incomprehensible I thought there must be some way of explaining it. But tell me, Julian, seeing the people did not think that they could trust themselves to regulate their own industry and the distribution of the product, to whom did they leave the responsibility?”

”To the capitalists.”

"And did the people elect the capitalists?"

"Nobody elected them."

"By whom, then, were they appointed?"

"Nobody appointed them."

"What a singular system! Well, if nobody elected or appointed them, yet surely they must have been accountable to somebody for the manner in which they exercised powers on which the welfare and very existence of everybody depended."

"On the contrary, they were accountable to nobody and nothing but their own consciences."

"Their consciences! Ah, I see! You mean that they were so benevolent, so unselfish, so devoted to the public good, that people tolerated their usurpation out of gratitude. The people nowadays would not endure the irresponsible rule even of demigods, but probably it was different in your day."

"As an ex-capitalist myself, I should be pleased to confirm your surmise, but nothing could really be further from the fact. As to any benevolent interest in the conduct of industry and commerce, the capitalists expressly disavowed it. Their only object was to secure the greatest possible gain for themselves without any regard whatever to the welfare of the public."

"Dear me! Dear me! Why you make out these capitalists to have been even worse than the kings, for the kings at least professed to govern for the welfare of their people, as fathers acting for children, and the good ones did try to. But the capitalists, you say, did not even pretend to feel any responsibility for the welfare of their subjects?"

"None whatever."

"And, if I understand," pursued Edith, "this government of the capitalists was not only without moral sanction of any sort or plea of benevolent intentions, but was practically an economic failure—that is, it did not secure the prosperity of the people."

"What I saw in my dream last night," I replied, "and have tried to tell you this morning, gives but a faint suggestion of the misery of the world under capitalist rule."

Edith meditated in silence for some moments. Finally she said: "Your contemporaries were not madmen nor fools; surely there is something you have not told me; there must be some explanation or at least color of excuse why the people not only abdicated the power of controlling their

most vital and important interests, but turned them over to a class which did not even pretend any interest in their welfare, and whose government completely failed to secure it.”

”Oh, yes,” I said, ”there was an explanation, and a very fine-sounding one. It was in the name of individual liberty, industrial freedom, and individual initiative that the economic government of the country was surrendered to the capitalists.”

”Do you mean that a form of government which seems to have been the most irresponsible and despotic possible was defended in the name of liberty?”

”Certainly; the liberty of economic initiative by the individual.”

”But did you not just tell me that economic initiative and business opportunity in your day were practically monopolized by the capitalists themselves?”

”Certainly. It was admitted that there was no opening for any but capitalists in business, and it was rapidly becoming so that only the greatest of the capitalists themselves had any power of initiative.”

”And yet you say that the reason given for abandoning industry to capitalist government was the promotion of industrial freedom and individual initiative among the people at large.”

”Certainly. The people were taught that they would individually enjoy greater liberty and freedom of action in industrial matters under the dominion of the capitalists than if they collectively conducted the industrial system for their own benefit; that the capitalists would, moreover, look out for their welfare more wisely and kindly than they could possibly do it themselves, so that they would be able to provide for themselves more bountifully out of such portion of their product as the capitalists might be disposed to give them than they possibly could do if they became their own employers and divided the whole product among themselves.”

”But that was mere mockery; it was adding insult to injury.”

”It sounds so, doesn’t it? But I assure you it was considered the soundest sort of political economy in my time. Those who questioned it were set down as dangerous visionaries.”

”But I suppose the people’s government, the government they voted for, must have done something. There must have been some odds and ends of things which the capitalists left the political government to attend to.”

”Oh, yes, indeed. It had its hands full keeping the peace among the people. That was the main part of the business of political governments

in my day.”

”Why did the peace require such a great amount of keeping? Why didn’t it keep itself, as it does now?”

”On account of the inequality of conditions which prevailed. The strife for wealth and desperation of want kept in quenchless blaze a hell of greed and envy, fear, lust, hate, revenge, and every foul passion of the pit. To keep this general frenzy in some restraint, so that the entire social system should not resolve itself into a general massacre, required an army of soldiers, police, judges, and jailers, and endless law-making to settle the quarrels. Add to these elements of discord a horde of outcasts degraded and desperate, made enemies of society by their sufferings and requiring to be kept in check, and you will readily admit there was enough for the people’s government to do.”

”So far as I can see,” said Edith, ”the main business of the people’s government was to struggle with the social chaos which resulted from its failure to take hold of the economic system and regulate it on a basis of justice.”

”That is exactly so. You could not state the whole case more adequately if you wrote a book.”

”Beyond protecting the capitalist system from its own effects, did the political government do absolutely nothing?”

”Oh, yes, it appointed postmasters and tidewaiters, maintained an army and navy, and picked quarrels with foreign countries.”

”I should say that the right of a citizen to have a voice in a government limited to the range of functions you have mentioned would scarcely have seemed to him of much value.”

”I believe the average price of votes in close elections in America in my time was about two dollars.”

”Dear me, so much as that!” said Edith. ”I don’t know exactly what the value of money was in your day, but I should say the price was rather extortionate.”

”I think you are right,” I answered. ”I used to give in to the talk about the pricelessness of the right of suffrage, and the denunciation of those whom any stress of poverty could induce to sell it for money, but from the point of view to which you have brought me this morning I am inclined to think that the fellows who sold their votes had a far clearer idea of the sham of our so-called popular government, as limited to the class of functions I have described, than any of the rest of us did, and that if they were wrong it was, as you suggest, in asking too high a price.”

"But who paid for the votes?"

"You are a merciless cross-examiner," I said. "The classes which had an interest in controlling the government—that is, the capitalists and the office-seekers—did the buying. The capitalists advanced the money necessary to procure the election of the office-seekers on the understanding that when elected the latter should do what the capitalists wanted. But I ought not to give you the impression that the bulk of the votes were bought outright. That would have been too open a confession of the sham of popular government as well as too expensive. The money contributed by the capitalists to procure the election of the office-seekers was mainly expended to influence the people by indirect means. Immense sums under the name of campaign funds were raised for this purpose and used in innumerable devices, such as fireworks, oratory, processions, brass bands, barbecues, and all sorts of devices, the object of which was to galvanize the people to a sufficient degree of interest in the election to go through the motion of voting. Nobody who has not actually witnessed a nineteenth-century American election could even begin to imagine the grotesqueness of the spectacle."

"It seems, then," said Edith, "that the capitalists not only carried on the economic government as their special province, but also practically managed the machinery of the political government as well."

"Oh, yes, the capitalists could not have got along at all without control of the political government. Congress, the Legislatures, and the city councils were quite necessary as instruments for putting through their schemes. Moreover, in order to protect themselves and their property against popular outbreaks, it was highly needful that they should have the police, the courts, and the soldiers devoted to their interests, and the President, Governors, and mayors at their beck."

"But I thought the President, the Governors, and Legislatures represented the people who voted for them."

"Bless your heart! no, why should they? It was to the capitalists and not to the people that they owed the opportunity of officeholding. The people who voted had little choice for whom they should vote. That question was determined by the political party organizations, which were beggars to the capitalists for pecuniary support. No man who was opposed to capitalist interests was permitted the opportunity as a candidate to appeal to the people. For a public official to support the people's interest as against that of the capitalists would be a sure way of sacrificing his career. You must remember, if you would understand how absolutely the capitalists controlled the Government, that a President, Governor, or mayor, or member of the municipal, State, or national council, was only temporarily a servant of the people or dependent on their favour. His public position he held only from election to election, and rarely long. His permanent, lifelong, and all-controlling interest, like that of us all, was his livelihood, and that was dependent, not on

the applause of the people, but the favor and patronage of capital, and this he could not afford to imperil in the pursuit of the bubbles of popularity. These circumstances, even if there had been no instances of direct bribery, sufficiently explained why our politicians and officeholders with few exceptions were vassals and tools of the capitalists. The lawyers, who, on account of the complexities of our system, were almost the only class competent for public business, were especially and directly dependent upon the patronage of the great capitalistic interests for their living.”

”But why did not the people elect officials and representatives of their own class, who would look out for the interests of the masses?”

”There was no assurance that they would be more faithful. Their very poverty would make them the more liable to money temptation; and the poor, you must remember, although so much more pitiable, were not morally any better than the rich. Then, too—and that was the most important reason why the masses of the people, who were poor, did not send men of their class to represent them—poverty as a rule implied ignorance, and therefore practical inability, even where the intention was good. As soon as the poor man developed intelligence he had every temptation to desert his class and seek the patronage of capital.”

Edith remained silent and thoughtful for some moments.

”Really,” she said, finally, ”it seems that the reason I could not understand the so-called popular system of government in your day is that I was trying to find out what part the people had in it, and it appears that they had no part at all.”

”You are getting on famously,” I exclaimed. ”Undoubtedly the confusion of terms in our political system is rather calculated to puzzle one at first, but if you only grasp firmly the vital point that the rule of the rich, the supremacy of capital and its interests, as against those of the people at large, was the central principle of our system, to which every other interest was made subservient, you will have the key that clears up every mystery.”

## **CHAPTER II.**

### **WHY THE REVOLUTION DID NOT COME EARLIER.**

Absorbed in our talk, we had not heard the steps of Dr. Leete as he approached.

”I have been watching you for ten minutes from the house,” he said,

"until, in fact, I could no longer resist the desire to know what you find so interesting."

"Your daughter," said I, "has been proving herself a mistress of the Socratic method. Under a plausible pretext of gross ignorance, she has been asking me a series of easy questions, with the result that I see as I never imagined it before the colossal sham of our pretended popular government in America. As one of the rich I knew, of course, that we had a great deal of power in the state, but I did not before realize how absolutely the people were without influence in their own government."

"Aha!" exclaimed the doctor in great glee, "so my daughter gets up early in the morning with the design of supplanting her father in his position of historical instructor?"

Edith had risen from the garden bench on which we had been seated and was arranging her flowers to take into the house. She shook her head rather gravely in reply to her father's challenge.

"You need not be at all apprehensive," she said; "Julian has quite cured me this morning of any wish I might have had to inquire further into the condition of our ancestors. I have always been dreadfully sorry for the poor people of that day on account of the misery they endured from poverty and the oppression of the rich. Henceforth, however, I wash my hands of them and shall reserve my sympathy for more deserving objects."

"Dear me!" said the doctor, "what has so suddenly dried up the fountains of your pity? What has Julian been telling you?"

"Nothing, really, I suppose, that I had not read before and ought to have known, but the story always seemed so unreasonable and incredible that I never quite believed it until now. I thought there must be some modifying facts not set down in the histories."

"But what is this that he has been telling you?"

"It seems," said Edith, "that these very people, these very masses of the poor, had all the time the supreme control of the Government and were able, if determined and united, to put an end at any moment to all the inequalities and oppressions of which they complained and to equalize things as we have done. Not only did they not do this, but they gave as a reason for enduring their bondage that their liberties would be endangered unless they had irresponsible masters to manage their interests, and that to take charge of their own affairs would imperil their freedom. I feel that I have been cheated out of all the tears I have shed over the sufferings of such people. Those who tamely endure wrongs which they have the power to end deserve not compassion but contempt. I have felt a little badly that Julian should have been one of the oppressor class, one of the rich. Now that I really understand the

matter, I am glad. I fear that, had he been one of the poor, one of the mass of real masters, who with supreme power in their hands consented to be bondsmen, I should have despised him.”

Having thus served formal notice on my contemporaries that they must expect no more sympathy from her, Edith went into the house, leaving me with a vivid impression that if the men of the twentieth century should prove incapable of preserving their liberties, the women might be trusted to do so.

”Really, doctor,” I said, ”you ought to be greatly obliged to your daughter. She has saved you lots of time and effort.”

”How so, precisely?”

”By rendering it unnecessary for you to trouble yourself to explain to me any further how and why you came to set up your nationalized industrial system and your economic equality. If you have ever seen a desert or sea mirage, you remember that, while the picture in the sky is very clear and distinct in itself, its unreality is betrayed by a lack of detail, a sort of blur, where it blends with the foreground on which you are standing. Do you know that this new social order of which I have so strangely become a witness has hitherto had something of this mirage effect? In itself it is a scheme precise, orderly, and very reasonable, but I could see no way by which it could have naturally grown out of the utterly different conditions of the nineteenth century. I could only imagine that this world transformation must have been the result of new ideas and forces that had come into action since my day. I had a volume of questions all ready to ask you on the subject, but now we shall be able to use the time in talking of other things, for Edith has shown me in ten minutes’ time that the only wonderful thing about your organization of the industrial system as public business is not that it has taken place, but that it waited so long before taking place, that a nation of rational beings consented to remain economic serfs of irresponsible masters for more than a century after coming into possession of absolute power to change at pleasure all social institutions which inconvenienced them.”

”Really,” said the doctor, ”Edith has shown herself a very efficient teacher, if an involuntary one. She has succeeded at one stroke in giving you the modern point of view as to your period. As we look at it, the immortal preamble of the American Declaration of Independence, away back in 1776, logically contained the entire statement of the doctrine of universal economic equality guaranteed by the nation collectively to its members individually. You remember how the words run:

”We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal, with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes

destructive of these rights it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it and institute a new government, laying its foundations on such principles and organizing its powers in such form as may seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.'

"Is it possible, Julian, to imagine any governmental system less adequate than ours which could possibly realize this great ideal of what a true people's government should be? The corner stone of our state is economic equality, and is not that the obvious, necessary, and only adequate pledge of these three birthrights—life, liberty, and happiness? What is life without its material basis, and what is an equal right to life but a right to an equal material basis for it? What is liberty? How can men be free who must ask the right to labor and to live from their fellow-men and seek their bread from the hands of others? How else can any government guarantee liberty to men save by providing them a means of labor and of life coupled with independence; and how could that be done unless the government conducted the economic system upon which employment and maintenance depend? Finally, what is implied in the equal right of all to the pursuit of happiness? What form of happiness, so far as it depends at all on material facts, is not bound up with economic conditions; and how shall an equal opportunity for the pursuit of happiness be guaranteed to all save by a guarantee of economic equality?"

"Yes," I said, "it is indeed all there, but why were we so long in seeing it?"

"Let us make ourselves comfortable on this bench," said the doctor, "and I will tell you what is the modern answer to the very interesting question you raise. At first glance, certainly the delay of the world in general, and especially of the American people, to realize that democracy logically meant the substitution of popular government for the rule of the rich in regulating the production and distribution of wealth seems incomprehensible, not only because it was so plain an inference from the idea of popular government, but also because it was one which the masses of the people were so directly interested in carrying out. Edith's conclusion that people who were not capable of so simple a process of reasoning as that did not deserve much sympathy for the afflictions they might so easily have remedied, is a very natural first impression.

"On reflection, however, I think we shall conclude that the time taken by the world in general and the Americans in particular in finding out the full meaning of democracy as an economic as well as a political proposition was not greater than might have been expected, considering the vastness of the conclusions involved. It is the democratic idea that all human beings are peers in rights and dignity, and that the sole just excuse and end of human governments is, therefore, the maintenance and furtherance of the common welfare on equal terms. This idea was the greatest social conception that the human mind had up to that time ever formed. It contained, when first conceived, the promise and potency of a complete transformation of all then existing social institutions, one and

all of which had hitherto been based and formed on the principle of personal and class privilege and authority and the domination and selfish use of the many by the few. But it was simply inconsistent with the limitations of the human intellect that the implications of an idea so prodigious should at once have been taken in. The idea must absolutely have time to grow. The entire present order of economic democracy and equality was indeed logically bound up in the first full statement of the democratic idea, but only as the full-grown tree is in the seed: in the one case, as in the other, time was an essential element in the evolution of the result.

”We divide the history of the evolution of the democratic idea into two broadly contrasted phases. The first of these we call the phase of negative democracy. To understand it we must consider how the democratic idea originated. Ideas are born of previous ideas and are long in outgrowing the characteristics and limitations impressed on them by the circumstances under which they came into existence. The idea of popular government, in the case of America as in previous republican experiments in general, was a protest against royal government and its abuses. Nothing is more certain than that the signers of the immortal Declaration had no idea that democracy necessarily meant anything more than a device for getting along without kings. They conceived of it as a change in the forms of government only, and not at all in the principles and purposes of government.

”They were not, indeed, wholly without misgivings lest it might some time occur to the sovereign people that, being sovereign, it would be a good idea to use their sovereignty to improve their own condition. In fact, they seem to have given some serious thought to that possibility, but so little were they yet able to appreciate the logic and force of the democratic idea that they believed it possible by ingenious clauses in paper Constitutions to prevent the people from using their power to help themselves even if they should wish to.

”This first phase of the evolution of democracy, during which it was conceived of solely as a substitute for royalty, includes all the so-called republican experiments up to the beginning of the twentieth century, of which, of course, the American Republic was the most important. During this period the democratic idea remained a mere protest against a previous form of government, absolutely without any new positive or vital principle of its own. Although the people had deposed the king as driver of the social chariot, and taken the reins into their own hands, they did not think as yet of anything but keeping the vehicle in the old ruts and naturally the passengers scarcely noticed the change.

”The second phase in the evolution of the democratic idea began with the awakening of the people to the perception that the deposing of kings, instead of being the main end and mission of democracy, was merely preliminary to its real programme, which was the use of the collective social machinery for the indefinite promotion of the welfare of the

people at large.

”It is an interesting fact that the people began to think of applying their political power to the improvement of their material condition in Europe earlier than in America, although democratic forms had found much less acceptance there. This was, of course, on account of the perennial economic distress of the masses in the old countries, which prompted them to think first about the bearing any new idea might have on the question of livelihood. On the other hand, the general prosperity of the masses in America and the comparative ease of making a living up to the beginning of the last quarter of the nineteenth century account for the fact that it was not till then that the American people began to think seriously of improving their economic condition by collective action.

”During the negative phase of democracy it had been considered as differing from monarchy only as two machines might differ, the general use and purpose of which were the same. With the evolution of the democratic idea into the second or positive phase, it was recognized that the transfer of the supreme power from king and nobles to people meant not merely a change in the forms of government, but a fundamental revolution in the whole idea of government, its motives, purposes, and functions—a revolution equivalent to a reversal of polarity of the entire social system, carrying, so to speak, the entire compass card with it, and making north south, and east west. Then was seen what seems so plain to us that it is hard to understand why it was not always seen, that instead of its being proper for the sovereign people to confine themselves to the functions which the kings and classes had discharged when they were in power, the presumption was, on the contrary, since the interest of kings and classes had always been exactly opposed to those of the people, that whatever the previous governments had done, the people as rulers ought not to do, and whatever the previous governments had not done, it would be presumably for the interest of the people to do; and that the main use and function of popular government was properly one which no previous government had ever paid any attention to, namely, the use of the power of the social organization to raise the material and moral welfare of the whole body of the sovereign people to the highest possible point at which the same degree of welfare could be secured to all—that is to say, an equal level. The democracy of the second or positive phase triumphed in the great Revolution, and has since been the only form of government known in the world.”

”Which amounts to saying,” I observed, ”that there never was a democratic government properly so called before the twentieth century.”

”Just so,” assented the doctor. ”The so-called republics of the first phase we class as pseudo-republics or negative democracies. They were not, of course, in any sense, truly popular governments at all, but merely masks for plutocracy, under which the rich were the real though irresponsible rulers! You will readily see that they could have been nothing else. The masses from the beginning of the world had been the

subjects and servants of the rich, but the kings had been above the rich, and constituted a check on their dominion. The overthrow of the kings left no check at all on the power of the rich, which became supreme. The people, indeed, nominally were sovereigns; but as these sovereigns were individually and as a class the economic serfs of the rich, and lived at their mercy, the so-called popular government became the mere stalking-horse of the capitalists.

”Regarded as necessary steps in the evolution of society from pure monarchy to pure democracy, these republics of the negative phase mark a stage of progress; but if regarded as finalities they were a type far less admirable on the whole than decent monarchies. In respect especially to their susceptibility to corruption and plutocratic subversion they were the worst kind of government possible. The nineteenth century, during which this crop of pseudo-democracies ripened for the sickle of the great Revolution, seems to the modern view nothing but a dreary interregnum of nondescript, *faineant* government intervening between the decadence of virile monarchy in the eighteenth century and the rise of positive democracy in the twentieth. The period may be compared to that of the minority of a king, during which the royal power is abused by wicked stewards. The people had been proclaimed as sovereign, but they had not yet assumed the sceptre.”

”And yet,” said I, ”during the latter part of the nineteenth century, when, as you say, the world had not yet seen a single specimen of popular government, our wise men were telling us that the democratic system had been fully tested and was ready to be judged on its results. Not a few of them, indeed, went so far as to say that the democratic experiment had proved a failure when, in point of fact, it seems that no experiment in democracy, properly understood, had as yet ever been so much as attempted.”

The doctor shrugged his shoulders.

”It is a very sympathetic task,” he said, ”to explain the slowness of the masses in feeling their way to a comprehension of all that the democratic idea meant for them, but it is one equally difficult and thankless to account for the blank failure of the philosophers, historians, and statesmen of your day to arrive at an intelligent estimate of the logical content of democracy and to forecast its outcome. Surely the very smallness of the practical results thus far achieved by the democratic movement as compared with the magnitude of its proposition and the forces behind it ought to have suggested to them that its evolution was yet but in the first stage. How could intelligent men delude themselves with the notion that the most portentous and revolutionary idea of all time had exhausted its influence and fulfilled its mission in changing the title of the executive of a nation from king to President, and the name of the national Legislature from Parliament to Congress? If your pedagogues, college professors and presidents, and others who were responsible for your education, had been worth their salt, you would have found nothing

in the present order of economic equality that would in the least have surprised you. You would have said at once that it was just what you had been taught must necessarily be the next phase in the inevitable evolution of the democratic idea.”

Edith beckoned from the door and we rose from our seat.

”The revolutionary party in the great Revolution,” said the doctor, as we sauntered toward the house, ”carried on the work of agitation and propaganda under various names more or less grotesque and ill-fitting as political party names were apt to be, but the one word democracy, with its various equivalents and derivatives, more accurately and completely expressed, explained, and justified their method, reason, and purpose than a library of books could do. The American people fancied that they had set up a popular government when they separated from England, but they were deluded. In conquering the political power formerly exercised by the king, the people had but taken the outworks of the fortress of tyranny. The economic system which was the citadel and commanded every part of the social structure remained in possession of private and irresponsible rulers, and so long as it was so held, the possession of the outworks was of no use to the people, and only retained by the sufferance of the garrison of the citadel. The Revolution came when the people saw that they must either take the citadel or evacuate the outworks. They must either complete the work of establishing popular government which had been barely begun by their fathers, or abandon all that their fathers had accomplished.”

## CHAPTER III.

### I ACQUIRE A STAKE IN THE COUNTRY.

On going into breakfast the ladies met us with a highly interesting piece of intelligence which they had found in the morning’s news. It was, in fact, nothing less than an announcement of action taken by the United States Congress in relation to myself. A resolution had, it appeared, been unanimously passed which, after reciting the facts of my extraordinary return to life, proceeded to clear up any conceivable question that might arise as to my legal status by declaring me an American citizen in full standing and entitled to all a citizen’s rights and immunities, but at the same time a guest of the nation, and as such free of the duties and services incumbent upon citizens in general except as I might choose to assume them.

Secluded as I had been hitherto in the Leete household, this was almost the first intimation I had the public in my case. That interest, I was now informed, had passed beyond my personality and was already producing

a general revival of the study of nineteenth-century literature and politics, and especially of the history and philosophy of the transition period, when the old order passed into the new.

"The fact is," said the doctor, "the nation has only discharged a debt of gratitude in making you its guest, for you have already done more for our educational interests by promoting historical study than a regiment of instructors could achieve in a lifetime."

Recurring to the topic of the congressional resolution, the doctor said that, in his opinion, it was superfluous, for though I had certainly slept on my rights as a citizen rather an extraordinary length of time, there was no ground on which I could be argued to have forfeited any of them. However that might be, seeing the resolution left no doubt as to my status, he suggested that the first thing we did after breakfast should be to go down to the National Bank and open my citizen's account.

"Of course," I said, as we left the house, "I am glad to be relieved of the necessity of being a pensioner on you any longer, but I confess I feel a little cheap about accepting as a gift this generous provision of the nation."

"My dear Julian," replied the doctor, "it is sometimes a little difficult for me to quite get your point of view of our institutions."

"I should think it ought to be easy enough in this case. I feel as if I were an object of public charity."

"Ah!" said the doctor, "you feel that the nation has done you a favor, laid you under an obligation. You must excuse my obtuseness, but the fact is we look at this matter of the economic provision for citizens from an entirely different standpoint. It seems to us that in claiming and accepting your citizen's maintenance you perform a civic duty, whereby you put the nation—that is, the general body of your fellow-citizens—under rather more obligation than you incur."

I turned to see if the doctor were not jesting, but he was evidently quite serious.

"I ought by this time to be used to finding that everything goes by contraries in these days," I said, "but really, by what inversion of common sense, as it was understood in the nineteenth century, do you make out that by accepting a pecuniary provision from the nation I oblige it more than it obliges me?"

"I think it will be easy to make you see that," replied the doctor, "without requiring you to do any violence to the methods of reasoning to which your contemporaries were accustomed. You used to have, I believe, a system of gratuitous public education maintained by the state."

"Yes."

"What was the idea of it?"

"That a citizen was not a safe voter without education."

"Precisely so. The state therefore at great expense provided free education for the people. It was greatly for the advantage of the citizen to accept this education just as it is for you to accept this provision, but it was still more for the interest of the state that the citizen should accept it. Do you see the point?"

"I can see that it is the interest of the state that I should accept an education, but not exactly why it is for the state's interest that I should accept a share of the public wealth."

"Nevertheless it is the same reason, namely, the public interest in good government. We hold it to be a self-evident principle that every one who exercises the suffrage should not only be educated, but should have a stake in the country, in order that self-interest may be identified with public interest. As the power exercised by every citizen through the suffrage is the same, the economic stake should be the same, and so you see we come to the reason why the public safety requires that you should loyally accept your equal stake in the country quite apart from the personal advantage you derive by doing so."

"Do you know," I said, "that this idea of yours, that every one who votes should have an economic stake in the country, is one which our rankst Tories were very fond of insisting on, but the practical conclusion they drew from it was diametrically opposed to that which you draw? They would have agreed with you on the axiom that political power and economic stake in the country should go together, but the practical application they made of it was negative instead of positive. You argue that because an economic interest in the country should go with the suffrage, all who have the suffrage should have that interest guaranteed them. They argued, on the contrary, that from all who had not the economic stake the suffrage should be taken away. There were not a few of my friends who maintained that some such limitation of the suffrage was needed to save the democratic experiment from failure."

"That is to say," observed the doctor, "it was proposed to save the democratic experiment by abandoning it. It was an ingenious thought, but it so happened that democracy was not an experiment which could be abandoned, but an evolution which must be fulfilled. In what a striking manner does that talk of your contemporaries about limiting the suffrage to correspond with the economic position of citizens illustrate the failure of even the most intelligent classes in your time to grasp the full significance of the democratic faith which they professed! The primal principle of democracy is the worth and dignity of the individual. That dignity, consisting in the quality of human nature, is essentially

the same in all individuals, and therefore equality is the vital principle of democracy. To this intrinsic and equal dignity of the individual all material conditions must be made subservient, and personal accidents and attributes subordinated. The raising up of the human being without respect of persons is the constant and only rational motive of the democratic policy. Contrast with this conception that precious notion of your contemporaries as to restricting suffrage. Recognizing the material disparities in the circumstances of individuals, they proposed to conform the rights and dignities of the individual to his material circumstances instead of conforming the material circumstances to the essential and equal dignity of the man."

"In short," said I, "while under our system we conformed men to things, you think it more reasonable to conform things to men?"

"That is, indeed," replied the doctor, "the vital difference between the old and the new orders."

We walked in silence for some moments. Presently the doctor said: "I was trying to recall an expression you just used which suggested a wide difference between the sense in which the same phrase was understood in your day and now is. I was saying that we thought everybody who voted ought to have a property stake in the country, and you observed that some people had the same idea in your time, but according to our view of what a stake in the country is no one had it or could have it under your economic system."

"Why not?" I demanded. "Did not men who owned property in a country—a millionaire, for instance, like myself—have a stake in it?"

"In the sense that his property was geographically located in the country it might be perhaps called a stake within the country but not a stake in the country. It was the exclusive ownership of a piece of the country or a portion of the wealth in the country, and all it prompted the owner to was devotion to and care for that specific portion without regard to the rest. Such a separate stake or the ambition to obtain it, far from making its owner or seeker a citizen devoted to the common weal, was quite as likely to make him a dangerous one, for his selfish interest was to aggrandize his separate stake at the expense of his fellow-citizens and of the public interest. Your millionaires—with no personal reflection upon yourself, of course—appear to have been the most dangerous class of citizens you had, and that is just what might be expected from their having what you called but what we should not call a stake in the country. Wealth owned in that way could only be a divisive and antisocial influence.

"What we mean by a stake in the country is something which nobody could possibly have until economic solidarity had replaced the private ownership of capital. Every one, of course, has his own house and piece of land if he or she desires them, and always his or her own income to

use at pleasure; but these are allotments for use only, and, being always equal, can furnish no ground for dissension. The capital of the nation, the source of all this consumption, is indivisibly held by all in common, and it is impossible that there should be any dispute on selfish grounds as to the administration of this common interest on which all private interests depend, whatever differences of judgment there may be. The citizen's share in this common fund is a sort of stake in the country that makes it impossible to hurt another's interest without hurting one's own, or to help one's own interest without promoting equally all other interests. As to its economic bearings it may be said that it makes the Golden Rule an automatic principle of government. What we would do for ourselves we must of necessity do also for others. Until economic solidarity made it possible to carry out in this sense the idea that every citizen ought to have a stake in the country, the democratic system never had a chance to develop its genius."

"It seems," I said, "that your foundation principle of economic equality which I supposed was mainly suggested and intended in the interest of the material well-being of the people, is quite as much a principle of political policy for safeguarding the stability and wise ordering of government."

"Most assuredly," replied the doctor. "Our economic system is a measure of statesmanship quite as much as of humanity. You see, the first condition of efficiency or stability in any government is that the governing power should have a direct, constant, and supreme interest in the general welfare—that is, in the prosperity of the whole state as distinguished from any part of it. It had been the strong point of monarchy that the king, for selfish reasons as proprietor of the country, felt this interest. The autocratic form of government, solely on that account, had always a certain rough sort of efficiency. It had been, on the other hand, the fatal weakness of democracy, during its negative phase previous to the great Revolution, that the people, who were the rulers, had individually only an indirect and sentimental interest in the state as a whole, or its machinery—their real, main, constant, and direct interest being concentrated upon their personal fortunes, their private stakes, distinct from and adverse to the general stake. In moments of enthusiasm they might rally to the support of the commonwealth, but for the most part that had no custodian, but was at the mercy of designing men and factions who sought to plunder the commonwealth and use the machinery of government for personal or class ends. This was the structural weakness of democracies, by the effect of which, after passing their first youth, they became invariably, as the inequality of wealth developed, the most corrupt and worthless of all forms of government and the most susceptible to misuse and perversion for selfish, personal, and class purposes. It was a weakness incurable so long as the capital of the country, its economic interests, remained in private hands, and one that could be remedied only by the radical abolition of private capitalism and the unification of the nation's capital under collective control. This done, the same economic

motive—which, while the capital remained in private hands, was a divisive influence tending to destroy that public spirit which is the breath of life in a democracy—became the most powerful of cohesive forces, making popular government not only ideally the most just but practically the most successful and efficient of political systems. The citizen, who before had been the champion of a part against the rest, became by this change a guardian of the whole.”

## CHAPTER IV.

### A TWENTIETH-CENTURY BANK PARLOR.

The formalities at the bank proved to be very simple. Dr. Leete introduced me to the superintendent, and the rest followed as a matter of course, the whole process not taking three minutes. I was informed that the annual credit of the adult citizen for that year was \$4,000, and that the portion due me for the remainder of the year, it being the latter part of September, was \$1,075.41. Taking vouchers to the amount of \$300, I left the rest on deposit precisely as I should have done at one of the nineteenth-century banks in drawing money for present use. The transaction concluded, Mr. Chapin, the superintendent, invited me into his office.

”How does our banking system strike you as compared with that of your day?” he asked.

”It has one manifest advantage from the point of view of a penniless \_revenant\_ like myself,” I said—”namely, that one receives a credit without having made a deposit; otherwise I scarcely know enough of it to give an opinion.”

”When you come to be more familiar with our banking methods,” said the superintendent. ”I think you will be struck with their similarity to your own. Of course, we have no money and nothing answering to money, but the whole science of banking from its inception was preparing the way for the abolition of money. The only way, really, in which our system differs from yours is that every one starts the year with the same balance to his credit and that this credit is not transferable. As to requiring deposits before accounts are opened, we are necessarily quite as strict as your bankers were, only in our case the people, collectively, make the deposit for all at once. This collective deposit is made up of such provisions of different commodities and such installations for the various public services as are expected to be necessary. Prices or cost estimates are put on these commodities and services, and the aggregate sum of the prices being divided by the population gives the amount of the citizen’s personal credit, which is simply his aliquot share of the commodities and

services available for the year. No doubt, however, Dr. Leete has told you all about this."

"But I was not here to be included in the estimate of the year," I said. "I hope that my credit is not taken out of other people's."

"You need feel no concern," replied the superintendent. "While it is astonishing how variations in demand balance one another when great populations are concerned, yet it would be impossible to conduct so big a business as ours without large margins. It is the aim in the production of perishable things, and those in which fancy often changes, to keep as little ahead of the demand as possible, but in all the important staples such great surpluses are constantly carried that a two years' drought would not affect the price of non-perishable produce, while an unexpected addition of several millions to the population could be taken care of at any time without disturbance."

"Dr. Leete has told me," I said, "that any part of the credit not used by a citizen during the year is canceled, not being good for the next year. I suppose that is to prevent the possibility of hoarding, by which the equality of your economic condition might be undermined."

"It would have the effect to prevent such hoarding, certainly," said the superintendent, "but it is otherwise needful to simplify the national bookkeeping and prevent confusion. The annual credit is an order on a specific provision available during a certain year. For the next year a new calculation with somewhat different elements has to be made, and to make it the books must be balanced and all orders canceled that have not been presented, so that we may know just where we stand."

"What, on the other hand, will happen if I run through my credit before the year is out?"

The superintendent smiled. "I have read," he said, "that the spendthrift evil was quite a serious one in your day. Our system has the advantage over yours that the most incorrigible spendthrift can not trench on his principal, which consists in his indivisible equal share in the capital of the nation. All he can at most do is to waste the annual dividend. Should you do this, I have no doubt your friends will take care of you, and if they do not you may be sure the nation will, for we have not the strong stomachs that enabled our forefathers to enjoy plenty with hungry people about them. The fact is, we are so squeamish that the knowledge that a single individual in the nation was in want would keep us all awake nights. If you insisted on being in need, you would have to hide away for the purpose.

"Have you any idea," I asked, "how much this credit of \$4,000 would have been equal to in purchasing power in 1887?"

"Somewhere about \$6,000 or \$7,000, I should say," replied Mr. Chapin. "In

estimating the economic position of the citizen you must consider that a great variety of services and commodities are now supplied gratuitously on public account, which formerly individuals had to pay for, as, for example, water, light, music, news, the theatre and opera, all sorts of postal and electrical communications, transportation, and other things too numerous to detail."

"Since you furnish so much on public or common account, why not furnish everything in that way? It would simplify matters, I should say."

"We think, on the contrary, that it would complicate the administration, and certainly it would not suit the people as well. You see, while we insist on equality we detest uniformity, and seek to provide free play to the greatest possible variety of tastes in our expenditure."

Thinking I might be interested in looking them over, the superintendent had brought into the office some of the books of the bank. Without having been at all expert in nineteenth-century methods of bookkeeping, I was much impressed with the extreme simplicity of these accounts compared with any I had been familiar with. Speaking of this, I added that it impressed me the more, as I had received an impression that, great as were the superiorities of the national co-operative system over our way of doing business, it must involve a great increase in the amount of bookkeeping as compared with what was necessary under the old system. The superintendent and Dr. Leete looked at each other and smiled.

"Do you know, Mr. West," said the former, "it strikes us as very odd that you should have that idea? We estimate that under our system one accountant serves where dozens were needed in your day."

"But," said I, "the nation has now a separate account with or for every man, woman, and child in the country."

"Of course," replied the superintendent, "but did it not have the same in your day? How else could it have assessed and collected taxes or exacted a dozen other duties from citizens? For example, your tax system alone with its inquisitions, appraisements, machinery of collection and penalties was vastly more complex than the accounts in these books before you, which consist, as you see, in giving to every person the same credit at the beginning of the year, and afterward simply recording the withdrawals without calculations of interest or other incidents whatever. In fact, Mr. West, so simple and invariable are the conditions that the accounts are kept automatically by a machine, the accountant merely playing on a keyboard."

"But I understand that every citizen has a record kept also of his services as the basis of grading and regrading."

"Certainly, and a most minute one, with most careful guards against error or unfairness. But it is a record having none of the complications of one

of your money or wages accounts for work done, but is rather like the simple honor records of your educational institutions by which the ranking of the students was determined.”

”But the citizen also has relations with the public stores from which he supplies his needs?”

”Certainly, but not a relation of account. As your people would have said, all purchases are for cash only—that is, on the credit card.”

”There remains,” I persisted, ”the accounting for goods and services between the stores and the productive departments and between the several departments.”

”Certainly; but the whole system being under one head and all the parts working together with no friction and no motive for any indirection, such accounting is child’s work compared with the adjustment of dealings between the mutually suspicious private capitalists, who divided among themselves the field of business in your day, and sat up nights devising tricks to deceive, defeat, and overreach one another.”

”But how about the elaborate statistics on which you base the calculations that guide production? There at least is need of a good deal of figuring.”

”Your national and State governments,” replied Mr. Chapin, ”published annually great masses of similar statistics, which, while often very inaccurate, must have cost far more trouble to accumulate, seeing that they involved an unwelcome inquisition into the affairs of private persons instead of a mere collection of reports from the books of different departments of one great business. Forecasts of probable consumption every manufacturer, merchant, and storekeeper had to make in your day, and mistakes meant ruin. Nevertheless, he could but guess, because he had no sufficient data. Given the complete data that we have, and a forecast is as much increased in certainty as it is simplified in difficulty.”

”Kindly spare me any further demonstration of the stupidity of my criticism.”

”Dear me, Mr. West, there is no question of stupidity. A wholly new system of things always impresses the mind at first sight with an effect of complexity, although it may be found on examination to be simplicity itself. But please do not stop me just yet, for I have told you only one side of the matter. I have shown you how few and simple are the accounts we keep compared with those in corresponding relations kept by you; but the biggest part of the subject is the accounts you had to keep which we do not keep at all. Debit and credit are no longer known; interest, rents, profits, and all the calculations based on them no more have any place in human affairs. In your day everybody, besides his account with

the state, was involved in a network of accounts with all about him. Even the humblest wage-earner was on the books of half a dozen tradesmen, while a man of substance might be down in scores or hundreds, and this without speaking of men not engaged in commerce. A fairly nimble dollar had to be set down so many times in so many places, as it went from hand to hand, that we calculate in about five years it must have cost itself in ink, paper, pens, and clerk hire, let alone fret and worry. All these forms of private and business accounts have now been done away with. Nobody owes anybody, or is owed by anybody, or has any contract with anybody, or any account of any sort with anybody, but is simply beholden to everybody for such kindly regard as his virtues may attract."

## CHAPTER V.

### I EXPERIENCE A NEW SENSATION.

"Doctor," said I as we came out of the bank, "I have a most extraordinary feeling."

"What sort of a feeling?"

"It is a sensation which I never had anything like before," I said, "and never expected to have. I feel as if I wanted to go to work. Yes, Julian West, millionaire, loafer by profession, who never did anything useful in his life and never wanted to, finds himself seized with an overmastering desire to roll up his sleeves and do something toward rendering an equivalent for his living."

"But," said the doctor, "Congress has declared you the guest of the nation, and expressly exempted you from the duty of rendering any sort of public service."

"That is all very well, and I take it kindly, but I begin to feel that I should not enjoy knowing that I was living on other people."

"What do you suppose it is," said the doctor, smiling, "that has given you this sensitiveness about living on others which, as you say, you never felt before?"

"I have never been much given to self-analysis," I replied, "but the change of feeling is very easily explained in this case. I find myself surrounded by a community every member of which not physically disqualified is doing his or her own part toward providing the material prosperity which I share. A person must be of remarkably tough sensibilities who would not feel ashamed under such circumstances if he did not take hold with the rest and do his part. Why didn't I feel that

way about the duty of working in the nineteenth century? Why, simply because there was no such system then for sharing work, or indeed any system at all. For the reason that there was no fair play or suggestion of justice in the distribution of work, everybody shirked it who could, and those who could not shirk it cursed the luckier ones and got even by doing as bad work as they could. Suppose a rich young fellow like myself had a feeling that he would like to do his part. How was he going to go about it? There was absolutely no social organization by which labor could be shared on any principle of justice. There was no possibility of co-operation. We had to choose between taking advantage of the economic system to live on other people or have them take advantage of it to live on us. We had to climb on their backs as the only way of preventing them from climbing on our backs. We had the alternative of profiting by an unjust system or being its victims. There being no more moral satisfaction in the one alternative than the other, we naturally preferred the first. By glimpses all the more decent of us realized the ineffable meanness of sponging our living out of the toilers, but our consciences were completely bedeviled by an economic system which seemed a hopeless muddle that nobody could see through or set right or do right under. I will undertake to say that there was not a man of my set, certainly not of my friends, who, placed just as I am this morning in presence of an absolutely simple, just, and equal system for distributing the industrial burden, would not feel just as I do the impulse to roll up his sleeves and take hold."

"I am quite sure of it," said the doctor. "Your experience strikingly confirms the chapter of revolutionary history which tells us that when the present economic order was established those who had been under the old system the most irreclaimable loafers and vagabonds, responding to the absolute justice and fairness of the new arrangements, rallied to the service of the state with enthusiasm. But talking of what you are to do, why was not my former suggestion a good one, that you should tell our people in lectures about the nineteenth century?"

"I thought at first that it would be a good idea," I replied, "but our talk in the garden this morning has about convinced me that the very last people who had any intelligent idea of the nineteenth century, what it meant, and what it was leading to, were just myself and my contemporaries of that time. After I have been with you a few years I may learn enough about my own period to discuss it intelligently."

"There is something in that," replied the doctor. "Meanwhile, you see that great building with the dome just across the square? That is our local Industrial Exchange. Perhaps, seeing that we are talking of what you are to do to make yourself useful, you may be interested in learning a little of the method by which our people choose their occupations."

I readily assented, and we crossed the square to the exchange.

"I have given you thus far," said the doctor, "only a general outline of

our system of universal industrial service. You know that every one of either sex, unless for some reason temporarily or permanently exempt, enters the public industrial service in the twenty-first year, and after three years of a sort of general apprenticeship in the unclassified grades elects a special occupation, unless he prefers to study further for one of the scientific professions. As there are a million youth, more or less, who thus annually elect their occupations, you may imagine that it must be a complex task to find a place for each in which his or her own taste shall be suited as well as the needs of the public service."

I assured the doctor that I had indeed made this reflection.

"A very few moments will suffice," he said, "to disabuse your mind of that notion and to show you how wonderfully a little rational system has simplified the task of finding a fitting vocation in life which used to be so difficult a matter in your day and so rarely was accomplished in a satisfactory manner."

Finding a comfortable corner for us near one of the windows of the central hall, the doctor presently brought a lot of sample blanks and schedules and proceeded to explain them to me. First he showed me the annual statement of exigencies by the General Government, specifying in what proportion the force of workers that was to become available that year ought to be distributed among the several occupations in order to carry on the industrial service. That was the side of the subject which represented the necessities of the public service that must be met. Next he showed me the volunteering or preference blank, on which every youth that year graduating from the unclassified service indicated, if he chose to, the order of his preference as to the various occupations making up the public service, it being inferred, if he did not fill out the blank, that he or she was willing to be assigned for the convenience of the service.

"But," said I, "locality of residence is often quite as important as the kind of one's occupation. For example, one might not wish to be separated from parents, and certainly would not wish to be from a sweetheart, however agreeable the occupation assigned might be in other respects."

"Very true," said the doctor. "If, indeed, our industrial system undertook to separate lovers and friends, husbands and wives, parents and children, without regard to their wishes, it certainly would not last long. You see this column of localities. If you make your cross against Boston in that column, it becomes imperative upon the administration to provide you employment somewhere in this district. It is one of the rights of every citizen to demand employment within his home district. Otherwise, as you say, ties of love and friendship might be rudely broken. But, of course, one can not have his cake and eat it too; if you make work in the home district imperative, you may have to take an occupation to which you would have preferred some other that might have been open to you had you been willing to leave home. However, it is not

common that one needs to sacrifice a chosen career to the ties of affection. The country is divided into industrial districts or circles, in each of which there is intended to be as nearly as possible a complete system of industry, wherein all the important arts and occupations are represented. It is in this way made possible for most of us to find an opportunity in a chosen occupation without separation from friends. This is the more simply done, as the modern means of communication have so far abolished distance that the man who lives in Boston and works in Springfield, one hundred miles away, is quite as near his place of business as was the average workingman of your day. One who, living in Boston, should work two hundred miles away (in Albany), would be far better situated than the average suburbanite doing business in Boston a century ago. But while a great number desire to find occupations at home, there are also many who from love of change much prefer to leave the scenes of their childhood. These, too, indicate their preferences by marking the number of the district to which they prefer to be assigned. Second or third preferences may likewise be indicated, so that it would go hard indeed if one could not obtain a location in at least the part of the country he desired, though the locality preference is imperative only when the person desires to stay in the home district. Otherwise it is consulted so far as consistent with conflicting claims. The volunteer having thus filled out his preference blank, takes it to the proper registrar and has his ranking officially stamped upon it."

"What is the ranking?" I asked.

"It is the figure which indicates his previous standing in the schools and during his service as an unclassified worker, and is supposed to give the best attainable criterion thus far of his relative intelligence, efficiency, and devotion to duty. Where there are more volunteers for particular occupations than there is room for, the lowest in ranking have to be content with a second or third preference. The preference blanks are finally handed in at the local exchange, and are collated at the central office of the industrial district. All who have made home work imperative are first provided for in accordance with rank. The blanks of those preferring work in other districts are forwarded to the national bureau and there collated with those from other districts, so that the volunteers may be provided for as nearly as may be according to their wishes, subject, where conflict of claim arises, to their relative ranking right. It has always been observed that the personal eccentricities of individuals in great bodies have a wonderful tendency to balance and mutually complement one another, and this principle is strikingly illustrated in our system of choice of occupation and locality. The preference blanks are filled out in June, and by the first of August everybody knows just where he or she is to report for service in October.

"However, if any one has received an assignment which is decidedly unwelcome either as to location or occupation, it is not even then, or indeed at any time, too late to endeavor to find another. The

administration has done its best to adjust the individual aptitude and wishes of each worker to the needs of the public service, but its machinery is at his service for any further attempts he may wish to make to suit himself better.”

And then the doctor took me to the Transfer Department and showed me how persons who were dissatisfied either with their assignment of occupation or locality could put themselves in communication with all others in any part of the country who were similarly dissatisfied, and arrange, subject to liberal regulations, such exchanges as might be mutually agreeable.

”If a person is not absolutely unwilling to do anything at all,” he said, ”and does not object to all parts of the country equally, he ought to be able sooner or later to provide himself both with pretty nearly the occupation and locality he desires. And if, after all, there should be any one so dull that he can not hope to succeed in his occupation or make a better exchange with another, yet there is no occupation now tolerated by the state which would not have been as to its conditions a godsend to the most fortunately situated workman of your day. There is none in which peril to life or health is not reduced to a minimum, and the dignity and rights of the worker absolutely guaranteed. It is a constant study of the administration so to bait the less attractive occupations with special advantages as to leisure and otherwise always to keep the balance of preference between them as nearly true as possible; and if, finally, there were any occupation which, after all, remained so distasteful as to attract no volunteers, and yet was necessary, its duties would be performed by all in rotation.”

”As, for example,” I said, ”the work of repairing and cleansing the sewers.”

”If that sort of work were as offensive as it must have been in your day, I dare say it might have to be done by a rotation in which all would take their turn,” replied the doctor, ”but our sewers are as clean as our streets. They convey only water which has been chemically purified and deodorized before it enters them by an apparatus connected with every dwelling. By the same apparatus all solid sewage is electrically cremated, and removed in the form of ashes. This improvement in the sewer system, which followed the great Revolution very closely, might have waited a hundred years before introduction but for the Revolution, although the necessary scientific knowledge and appliances had long been available. The case furnishes merely one instance out of a thousand of the devices for avoiding repulsive and perilous sorts of work which, while simple enough, the world would never have troubled itself to adopt so long as the rich had in the poor a race of uncomplaining economic serfs on which to lay all their burdens. The effect of economic equality was to make it equally the interest of all to avoid, so far as possible, the more unpleasant tasks, since henceforth they must be shared by all. In this way, wholly apart from the moral aspects of the matter, the

progress of chemical, sanitary, and mechanical science owes an incalculable debt to the Revolution.”

”Probably,” I said, ”you have sometimes eccentric persons—’crooked sticks’ we used to call them—who refuse to adapt themselves to the social order on any terms or admit any such thing as social duty. If such a person should flatly refuse to render any sort of industrial or useful service on any terms, what would be done with him? No doubt there is a compulsory side to your system for dealing with such persons?”

”Not at all,” replied the doctor. ”If our system can not stand on its merits as the best possible arrangement for promoting the highest welfare of all, let it fall. As to the matter of industrial service, the law is simply that if any one shall refuse to do his or her part toward the maintenance of the social order he shall not be allowed to partake of its benefits. It would obviously not be fair to the rest that he should do so. But as to compelling him to work against his will by force, such an idea would be abhorrent to our people. The service of society is, above all, a service of honor, and all its associations are what you used to call chivalrous. Even as in your day soldiers would not serve with skulkers, but drummed cowards out of the camp, so would our workers refuse the companionship of persons openly seeking to evade their civic duty.”

”But what do you do with such persons?”

”If an adult, being neither criminal nor insane, should deliberately and fixedly refuse to render his quota of service in any way, either in a chosen occupation or, on failure to choose, in an assigned one, he would be furnished with such a collection of seeds and tools as he might choose and turned loose on a reservation expressly prepared for such persons, corresponding a little perhaps with the reservations set apart for such Indians in your day as were unwilling to accept civilization. There he would be left to work out a better solution of the problem of existence than our society offers, if he could do so. We think we have the best possible social system, but if there is a better we want to know it, so that we may adopt it. We encourage the spirit of experiment.”

”And are there really cases,” I said, ”of individuals who thus voluntarily abandon society in preference to fulfilling their social duty?”

”There have been such cases, though I do not know that there are any at the present time. But the provision for them exists.”

## CHAPTER VI.

HONI SOIT QUI MAL Y PENSE.

When we reached the house the doctor said:

"I am going to leave you to Edith this morning. The fact is, my duties as mentor, while extremely to my taste, are not quite a sinecure. The questions raised in our talks frequently suggest the necessity of refreshing my general knowledge of the contrasts between your day and this by looking up the historical authorities. The conversation this morning has indicated lines of research which will keep me busy in the library the rest of the day."

I found Edith in the garden, and received her congratulations upon my fully fledged citizenship. She did not seem at all surprised on learning my intention promptly to find a place in the industrial service.

"Of course you will want to enter the service as soon as you can," she said. "I knew you would. It is the only way to get in touch with the people and feel really one of the nation. It is the great event we all look forward to from childhood."

"Talking of industrial service," I said, "reminds me of a question it has a dozen times occurred to me to ask you. I understand that everyone who is able to do so, women as well as men, serves the nation from twenty-one to forty-five years of age in some useful occupation; but so far as I have seen, although you are the picture of health and vigor, you have no employment, but are quite like young ladies of elegant leisure in my day, who spent their time sitting in the parlor and looking handsome. Of course, it is highly agreeable to me that you should be so free, but how, exactly, is so much leisure on your part squared with the universal obligation of service?"

Edith was greatly amused. "And so you thought I was shirking? Had it not occurred to you that there might probably be such things as vacations or furloughs in the industrial service, and that the rather unusual and interesting guest in our household might furnish a natural occasion for me to take an outing if I could get it?"

"And can you take your vacation when you please?"

"We can take a portion of it when we please, always subject, of course, to the needs of the service."

"But what do you do when you are at work—teach school, paint china, keep books for the Government, stand behind a counter in the public stores, or operate a typewriter or telegraph wire?"

"Does that list exhaust the number of women's occupations in your day?"

"Oh, no; those were only some of their lighter and pleasanter occupations. Women were also the scrubbers, the washers, the servants of all work. The most repulsive and humiliating kinds of drudgery were put off upon the women of the poorer class; but I suppose, of course, you do not do any such work."

"You may be sure that I do my part of whatever unpleasant things there are to do, and so does every one in the nation; but, indeed, we have long ago arranged affairs so that there is very little such work to do. But, tell me, were there no women in your day who were machinists, farmers, engineers, carpenters, iron workers, builders, engine drivers, or members of the other great crafts?"

"There were no women in such occupations. They were followed by men only."

"I suppose I knew that," she said; "I have read as much; but it is strange to talk with a man of the nineteenth century who is so much like a man of to-day and realize that the women were so different as to seem like another order of beings."

"But, really," said I, "I don't understand how in these respects the women can do very differently now unless they are physically much stronger. Most of these occupations you have just mentioned were too heavy for their strength, and for that reason, largely, were limited to men, as I should suppose they must still be."

"There is not a trade or occupation in the whole list," replied Edith, "in which women do not take part. It is partly because we are physically much more vigorous than the poor creatures of your time that we do the sorts of work that were too heavy for them, but it is still more an account of the perfection of machinery. As we have grown stronger, all sorts of work have grown lighter. Almost no heavy work is done directly now; machines do all, and we only need to guide them, and the lighter the hand that guides, the better the work done. So you see that nowadays physical qualities have much less to do than mental with the choice of occupations. The mind is constantly getting nearer to the work, and father says some day we may be able to work by sheer will power directly and have no need of hands at all. It is said that there are actually more women than men in great machine works. My mother was first lieutenant in a great iron works. Some have a theory that the sense of power which one has in controlling giant engines appeals to women's sensibilities even more than to men's. But really it is not quite fair to make you guess what my occupation is, for I have not fully decided on it."

"But you said you were already at work."

"Oh, yes, but you know that before we choose our life occupation we are three years in the unclassified or miscellaneous class of workers. I am in my second year in that class."

"What do you do?"

"A little of everything and nothing long. The idea is to give us during that period a little practical experience in all the main departments of work, so that we may know better how and what to choose as an occupation. We are supposed to have got through with the schools before we enter this class, but really I have learned more since I have been at work than in twice the time spent in school. You can not imagine how perfectly delightful this grade of work is. I don't wonder some people prefer to stay in it all their lives for the sake of the constant change in tasks, rather than elect a regular occupation. Just now I am among the agricultural workers on the great farm near Lexington. It is delightful, and I have about made up my mind to choose farm work as an occupation. That is what I had in mind when I asked you to guess my trade. Do you think you would ever have guessed that?"

"I don't think I ever should, and unless the conditions of farm work have greatly changed since my day I can not imagine how you could manage it in a woman's costume."

Edith regarded me for a moment with an expression of simple surprise, her eyes growing large. Then her glance fell to her dress, and when she again looked up her expression had changed to one which was at once meditative, humorous, and wholly inscrutable. Presently she said:

"Have you not observed, my dear Julian, that the dress of the women you see on the streets is different from that which women wore in the nineteenth century?"

"I have noticed, of course, that they generally wear no skirts, but you and your mother dress as women did in my day."

"And has it not occurred to you to wonder why our dress was not like theirs—why we wear skirts and they do not?"

"Possibly that has occurred to me among the thousand other questions that every day arise in my mind, only to be driven out by a thousand others before I can ask them; but I think in this case I should have rather wondered why these other women did not dress as you do instead of why you did not dress as they do, for your costume, being the one I was accustomed to, naturally struck me as the normal type, and this other style as a variation for some special or local reason which I should later learn about. You must not think me altogether stupid. To tell the truth, these other women have as yet scarcely impressed me as being very real. You were at first the only person about whose reality I felt entirely sure. All the others seemed merely parts of a fantastic farrago

of wonders, more or less possible, which is only just beginning to become intelligible and coherent. In time I should doubtless have awakened to the fact that there were other women in the world besides yourself and begun to make inquiries about them."

As I spoke of the absoluteness with which I had depended on her during those first bewildering days for the assurance even of my own identity the quick tears rushed to my companion's eyes, and—well, for a space the other women were more completely forgotten than ever.

Presently she said: "What were we talking about? Oh, yes, I remember—about those other women. I have a confession to make. I have been guilty toward you all this time of a sort of fraud, or at least of a flagrant suppression of the truth, which ought not to be kept up a moment longer. I sincerely hope you will forgive me, in consideration of my motive, and not—"

"Not what?"

"Not be too much startled."

"You make me very curious," I said. "What is this mystery? I think I can stand the disclosure."

"Listen, then," she said. "That wonderful night when we saw you first, of course our great thought was to avoid agitating you when you should recover full consciousness by any more evidence of the amazing things that had happened since your day than it was necessary you should see. We knew that in your time the use of long skirts by women was universal, and we reflected that to see mother and me in the modern dress would no doubt strike you very strangely. Now, you see, although skirtless costumes are the general—indeed, almost universal—wear for most occasions, all possible costumes, ancient and modern, of all races, ages, and civilizations, are either provided or to be obtained on the shortest possible notice at the stores. It was therefore very easy for us to furnish ourselves with the old-style dress before father introduced you to us. He said people had in your day such strange ideas of feminine modesty and propriety that it would be the best way to do. Can you forgive us, Julian, for taking such an advantage of your ignorance?"

"Edith," I said, "there were a great many institutions of the nineteenth century which we tolerated because we did not know how to get rid of them, without, however, having a bit better opinion of them than you have, and one of them was the costume by means of which our women used to disguise and cripple themselves."

"I am delighted!" exclaimed Edith. "I perfectly detest these horrible bags, and will not wear them a moment longer!" And bidding me wait where I was, she ran into the house.

Five minutes, perhaps, I waited there in the arbor, where we had been sitting, and then, at a light step on the grass, looked up to see Edith with eyes of smiling challenge standing before me in modern dress. I have seen her in a hundred varieties of that costume since then, and have grown familiar with the exhaustless diversity of its adaptations, but I defy the imagination of the greatest artist to devise a scheme of color and fabric that would again produce upon me the effect of enchanting surprise which I received from that quite simple and hasty toilet.

I don't know how long I stood looking at her without a thought of words, my eyes meanwhile no doubt testifying eloquently enough how adorable I found her. She seemed, however, to divine more than that in my expression, for presently she exclaimed:

"I would give anything to know what you are thinking down in the bottom of your mind! It must be something awfully funny. What are you turning so red for?"

"I am blushing for myself," I said, and that is all I would tell her, much as she teased me. Now, at this distance of time I may tell the truth. My first sentiment, apart from overwhelming admiration, had been a slight astonishment at her absolute ease and composure of bearing under my gaze. This is a confession that may well seem incomprehensible to twentieth-century readers, and God forbid that they should ever catch the point of view which would enable them to understand it better! A woman of my day, unless professionally accustomed to use this sort of costume, would have seemed embarrassed and ill at ease, at least for a time, under a gaze so intent as mine, even though it were a brother's or a father's. I, it seems, had been prepared for at least some slight appearance of discomposure on Edith's part, and was consciously surprised at a manner which simply expressed an ingenuous gratification at my admiration. I refer to this momentary experience because it has always seemed to me to illustrate in a particularly vivid way the change that has taken place not only in the customs but in the mental attitude of the sexes as to each other since my former life. In justice to myself I must hasten to add that this first feeling of surprise vanished even as it arose, in a moment, between two heart-beats. I caught from her clear, serene eyes the view point of the modern man as to woman, never again to lose it. Then it was that I flushed red with shame for myself. Wild horses could not have dragged from me the secret of that blush at the time, though I have told her long ago.

"I was thinking," I said, and I was thinking so, too, "that we ought to be greatly obliged to twentieth-century women for revealing for the first time the artistic possibilities of the masculine dress."

"The masculine dress," she repeated, as if not quite comprehending my meaning. "Do you mean my dress?"

"Why, yes; it is a man's dress I suppose, is it not?"

"Why any more than a woman's?" she answered rather blankly. "Ah, yes, I actually forgot for a moment whom I was talking to. I see; so it was considered a man's dress in your day, when the women masqueraded as mermaids. You may think me stupid not to catch your idea more quickly, but I told you I was dull at history. It is now two full generations since women as well as men have worn this dress, and the idea of associating it with men more than women would occur to no one but a professor of history. It strikes us merely as the only natural and convenient solution of the dress necessity, which is essentially the same for both sexes, since their bodily conformation is on the same general lines."

## CHAPTER VII.

### A STRING OF SURPRISES.

The extremely delicate tints of Edith's costume led me to remark that the color effects of the modern dress seemed to be in general very light as compared with those which prevailed in my day.

"The result," I said, "is extremely pleasing, but if you will excuse a rather prosaic suggestion, it occurs to me that with the whole nation given over to wearing these delicate schemes of color, the accounts for washing must be pretty large. I should suppose they would swamp the national treasury if laundry bills are anything like what they used to be."

This remark, which I thought a very sensible one, set Edith to laughing. "Doubtless we could not do much else if we washed our clothes," she said; "but you see we do not wash them."

"Not wash them!—why not?"

"Because we don't think it nice to wear clothes again after they have been so much soiled as to need washing."

"Well, I won't say that I am surprised," I replied; "in fact, I think I am no longer capable of being surprised at anything; but perhaps you will kindly tell me what you do with a dress when it becomes soiled."

"We throw it away—that is, it goes back to the mills to be made into something else."

"Indeed! To my nineteenth-century intellect, throwing away clothing would seem even more expensive than washing it."

"Oh, no, much less so. What do you suppose, now, this costume of mine cost?"

"I don't know, I am sure. I never had a wife to pay dressmaker's bills for, but I should say certainly it cost a great deal of money."

"Such costumes cost from ten to twenty cents," said Edith. "What do you suppose it is made of?"

I took the edge of her mantle between my fingers.

"I thought it was silk or fine linen," I replied, "but I see it is not. Doubtless it is some new fiber."

"We have discovered many new fibers, but it is rather a question of process than material that I had in mind. This is not a textile fabric at all, but paper. That is the most common material for garments nowadays."

"But—but," I exclaimed, "what if it should come on to rain on these paper clothes? Would they not melt, and at a little strain would they not part?"

"A costume such as this," said Edith, "is not meant for stormy weather, and yet it would by no means melt in a rainstorm, however severe. For storm-garments we have a paper that is absolutely impervious to moisture on the outer surface. As to toughness, I think you would find it as hard to tear this paper as any ordinary cloth. The fabric is so strengthened with fiber as to hold together very stoutly."

"But in winter, at least, when you need warmth, you must have to fall back on our old friend the sheep."

"You mean garments made of sheep's hair? Oh, no, there is no modern use for them. Porous paper makes a garment quite as warm as woolen could, and vastly lighter than the clothes you had. Nothing but eider down could have been at once so warm and light as our winter coats of paper."

"And cotton!—linen! Don't tell me that they have been given up, like wool?"

"Oh, no; we weave fabrics of these and other vegetable products, and they are nearly as cheap as paper, but paper is so much lighter and more easily fashioned into all shapes that it is generally preferred for garments. But, at any rate, we should consider no material fit for garments which could not be thrown away after being soiled. The idea of washing and cleaning articles of bodily use and using them over and over again would be quite intolerable. For this reason, while we want beautiful garments, we distinctly do not want durable ones. In your day, it seems, even worse than the practice of washing garments to be used

again you were in the habit of keeping your outer garments without washing at all, not only day after day, but week after week, year after year, sometimes whole lifetimes, when they were specially valuable, and finally, perhaps, giving them away to others. It seems that women sometimes kept their wedding dresses long enough for their daughters to wear at their weddings. That would seem shocking to us, and yet, even your fine ladies did such things. As for what the poor had to do in the way of keeping and wearing their old clothes till they went to rags, that is something which won't bear thinking of."

"It is rather startling," I said, "to find the problem of clean clothing solved by the abolition of the wash tub, although I perceive that that was the only radical solution. 'Warranted to wear and wash' used to be the advertisement of our clothing merchants, but now it seems, if you would sell clothing, you must warrant the goods neither to wear nor to wash."

"As for wearing," said Edith, "our clothing never gets the chance to show how it would wear before we throw it away, any more than the other fabrics, such as carpets, bedding, and hangings that we use about our houses."

"You don't mean that they are paper-made also!" I exclaimed.

"Not always made of paper, but always of some fabric so cheap that they can be rejected after the briefest period of using. When you would have swept a carpet we put in a new one. Where you would wash or air bedding we renew it, and so with all the hangings about our houses so far as we use them at all. We upholster with air or water instead of feathers. It is more than I can understand how you ever endured your musty, fusty, dusty rooms with the filth and disease germs of whole generations stored in the woolen and hair fabrics that furnished them. When we clean out a room we turn the hose on ceiling, walls, and floor. There is nothing to harm—nothing but tiled or other hard-finished surfaces. Our hygienists say that the change in customs in these matters relating to the purity of our clothing and dwellings, has done more than all our other improvements to eradicate the germs of contagious and other diseases and relegate epidemics to ancient history.

"Talking of paper," said Edith, extending a very trim foot by way of attracting attention to its gear, "what do you think of our modern shoes?"

"Do you mean that they also are made of paper?" I exclaimed.

"Of course."

"I noticed the shoes your father gave me were very light as compared with anything I had ever worn before. Really that is a great idea, for lightness in foot wear is the first necessity. Scamp shoemakers used to

put paper soles in shoes in my day. It is evident that instead of prosecuting them for rascals we should have revered them as unconscious prophets. But, for that matter, how do you prepare soles of paper that will last?"

"There are plenty of solutions which will make paper as hard as iron."

"And do not these shoes leak in winter?"

"We have different kinds for different weathers. All are seamless, and the wet-weather sort are coated outside with a lacquer impervious to moisture."

"That means, I suppose, that rubbers too as articles of wear have been sent to the museum?"

"We use rubber, but not for wear. Our waterproof paper is much lighter and better every way."

"After all this it is easy to believe that your hats and caps are also paper-made."

"And so they are to a great extent," said Edith; "the heavy headgear that made your men bald ours would not endure. We want as little as possible on our heads, and that as light as may be."

"Go on!" I exclaimed. "I suppose I am next to be told that the delicious but mysterious articles of food which come by the pneumatic carrier from the restaurant or are served there are likewise made out of paper. Proceed—I am prepared to believe it!"

"Not quite so bad as that," laughed my companion, "but really the next thing to it, for the dishes you eat them from are made of paper. The crash of crockery and glass, which seems to have been a sort of running accompaniment to housekeeping in your day, is no more heard in the land. Our dishes and kettles for eating or cooking, when they need cleaning are thrown away, or rather, as in the case of all these rejected materials I have spoken of, sent back to the factories to be reduced again to pulp and made over into other forms."

"But you certainly do not use paper kettles? Fire will still burn, I fancy, although you seem to have changed most of the other rules we went by."

"Fire will still burn, indeed, but the electrical heat has been adopted for cooking as well as for all other purposes. We no longer heat our vessels from without but from within, and the consequence is that we do our cooking in paper vessels on wooden stoves, even as the savages used to do it in birch-bark vessels with hot stones, for, so the philosophers

say, history repeats itself in an ever-ascending spiral.”

And now Edith began to laugh at my perplexed expression. She declared that it was clear my credulity had been taxed with these accounts of modern novelties about as far as it would be prudent to try it without furnishing some further evidence of the truth of the statements she had made. She proposed accordingly, for the balance of the morning, a visit to some of the great paper-process factories.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE GREATEST WONDER YET—FASHION DETHRONED.

”You surely can not form the slightest idea of the bodily ecstasy it gives me to have done with that horrible masquerade in mummy clothes,” exclaimed my companion as we left the house. ”To think this is the first time we have actually been walking together!”

”Surely you forget,” I replied; ”we have been out together several times.”

”Out together, yes, but not walking,” she answered; ”at least I was not walking. I don’t know what would be the proper zoological term to describe the way I got over the ground inside of those bags, but it certainly was not walking. The women of your day, you see, were trained from childhood in that mode of progression, and no doubt acquired some skill in it; but I never had skirts on in my life except once, in some theatricals. It was the hardest thing I ever tried, and I doubt if I ever again give you so strong a proof of my regard. I am astonished that you did not seem to notice what a distressful time I was having.”

But if, being accustomed, as I had been, to the gait of women hampered by draperies, I had not observed anything unusual in Edith’s walk when we had been out on previous occasions, the buoyant grace of her carriage and the elastic vigor of her step as she strode now by my side was a revelation of the possibilities of an athletic companionship which was not a little intoxicating.

To describe in detail what I saw in my tour that day through the paper-process factories would be to tell an old story to twentieth-century readers; but what far more impressed me than all the ingenuity and variety of mechanical adaptations was the workers themselves and the conditions of their labor. I need not tell my readers what the great mills are in these days—lofty, airy halls, walled with beautiful designs in tiles and metal, furnished like palaces, with every convenience, the machinery running almost noiselessly, and every incident

of the work that might be offensive to any sense reduced by ingenious devices to the minimum. Neither need I describe to you the princely workers in these palaces of industry, the strong and splendid men and women, with their refined and cultured faces, prosecuting with the enthusiasm of artists their self-chosen tasks of combining use and beauty. You all know what your factories are to-day; no doubt you find them none too pleasant or convenient, having been used to such things all your lives. No doubt you even criticise them in various ways as falling short of what they might be, for such is human nature; but if you would understand how they seem to me, shut your eyes a moment and try to conceive in fancy what our cotton and woolen and paper mills were like a hundred years ago.

Picture low rooms roofed with rough and grimy timbers and walled with bare or whitewashed brick. Imagine the floor so crammed with machinery for economy of space as to allow bare room for the workers to writhe about among the flying arms and jaws of steel, a false motion meaning death or mutilation. Imagine the air space above filled, instead of air, with a mixture of stenches of oil and filth, unwashed human bodies, and foul clothing. Conceive a perpetual clang and clash of machinery like the screech of a tornado.

But these were only the material conditions of the scene. Shut your eyes once more, that you may see what I would fain forget I had ever seen—the interminable rows of women, pallid, hollow-cheeked, with faces vacant and stolid but for the accent of misery, their clothing tattered, faded, and foul; and not women only, but multitudes of little children, weazen-faced and ragged—children whose mother’s milk was barely out of their blood, their bones yet in the gristle.

Edith introduced me to the superintendent of one of the factories, a handsome woman of perhaps forty years. She very kindly showed us about and explained matters to me, and was much interested in turn to know what I thought of the modern factories and their points of contrast with those of former days. Naturally, I told her that I had been impressed, far more than by anything in the new mechanical appliances, with the transformation in the condition of the workers themselves.

”Ah, yes,” she said, ”of course you would say so; that must indeed be the great contrast, though the present ways seem so entirely a matter of course to us that we forget it was not always so. When the workers settle how the work shall be done, it is not wonderful that the conditions should be the pleasantest possible. On the other hand, when, as in your day, a class like your private capitalists, who did not share the work, nevertheless settled how it should be done it is not surprising that the conditions of industry should have been as barbarous as they were, especially when the operation of the competitive system compelled the capitalists to get the most work possible out of the workers on the

cheapest terms.”

”Do I understand.” I asked, ”that the workers in each trade regulate for themselves the conditions of their particular occupation?”

”By no means. The unitary character of our industrial administration is the vital idea of it, without which it would instantly become impracticable. If the members of each trade controlled its conditions, they would presently be tempted to conduct it selfishly and adversely to the general interest of the community, seeking, as your private capitalists did, to get as much and give as little as possible. And not only would every distinctive class of workers be tempted to act in this manner, but every subdivision of workers in the same trade would presently be pursuing the same policy, until the whole industrial system would become disintegrated, and we should have to call the capitalists from their graves to save us. When I said that the workers regulated the conditions of work, I meant the workers as a whole—that is, the people at large, all of whom are nowadays workers, you know. The regulation and mutual adjustment of the conditions of the several branches of the industrial system are wholly done by the General Government. At the same time, however, the regulation of the conditions of work in any occupation is effectively, though indirectly, controlled by the workers in it through the right we all have to choose and change our occupations. Nobody would choose an occupation the conditions of which were not satisfactory, so they have to be made and kept satisfactory.”

While we were at the factory the noon hour came, and I asked the superintendent and Edith to go out to lunch with me. In fact, I wanted to ascertain whether my newly acquired credit card was really good for anything or not.

”There is one point about your modern costumes,” I said, as we sat at our table in the dining hall, ”about which I am rather curious. Will you tell me who or what sets the fashions?”

”The Creator sets the only fashion which is now generally followed,” Edith answered.

”And what is that?”

”The fashion of our bodies,” she answered.

”Ah, yes, very good,” I replied, ”and very true, too, of your costumes, as it certainly was not of ours; but my question still remains. Allowing that you have a general theory of dress, there are a thousand differences in details, with possible variations of style, shape, color, material, and what not. Now, the making of garments is carried on, I suppose, like all your other industries, as public business, under collective

management, is it not?"

"Certainly. People, of course, can make their own clothes if they wish to, just as they can make anything else, but it would be a great waste of time and energy."

"Very well. The garments turned out by the factories have to be made up on some particular design or designs. In my day the question of designs of garments was settled by society leaders, fashion journals, edicts from Paris, or the Lord knows how; but at any rate the question was settled for us, and we had nothing to do but to obey. I don't say it was a good way; on the contrary, it was detestable; but what I want to know is, What system have you instead, for I suppose you have now no society leaders, fashion journals, or Paris edicts? Who settles the question what you shall wear?"

"We do," replied the superintendent.

"You mean, I suppose, that you determine it collectively by democratic methods. Now, when I look around me in this dining hall and see the variety and beauty of the costumes, I am bound to say that the result of your system seems satisfactory, and yet I think it would strike even the strongest believer in the principle of democracy that the rule of the majority ought scarcely to extend to dress. I admit that the yoke of fashion which we bowed to was very onerous, and yet it was true that if we were brave enough, as few indeed were, we might defy it; but with the style of dress determined by the administration, and only certain styles made, you must either follow the taste of the majority or lie abed. Why do you laugh? Is it not so?"

"We were smiling," replied the superintendent, "on account of a slight misapprehension on your part. When I said that we regulated questions of dress, I meant that we regulated them not collectively, by majority, but individually, each for himself or herself."

"But I don't see how you can," I persisted. "The business of producing fabrics and of making them into garments is carried on by the Government. Does not that imply, practically, a governmental control or initiative in fashions of dress?"

"Dear me, no!" exclaimed the superintendent. "It is evident, Mr. West, as indeed the histories say, that governmental action carried with it in your day an arbitrary implication which it does not now. The Government is actually now what it nominally was in the America of your day—the servant, tool, and instrument by which the people give effect to their will, itself being without will. The popular will is expressed in two ways, which are quite distinct and relate to different provinces: First, collectively, by majority, in regard to blended, mutually involved interests, such as the large economic and political concerns of the community; second, personally, by each individual for himself or herself

in the furtherance of private and self-regarding matters. The Government is not more absolutely the servant of the collective will in regard to the blended interests of the community than it is of the individual convenience in personal matters. It is at once the august representative of all in general concerns, and everybody's agent, errand boy, and factotum for all private ends. Nothing is too high or too low, too great or too little, for it to do for us.

"The dressmaking department holds its vast provision of fabrics and machinery at the absolute disposition of the whims of every man or woman in the nation. You can go to one of the stores and order any costume of which a historical description exists, from the days of Eve to yesterday, or you can furnish a design of your own invention for a brand-new costume, designating any material at present existing, and it will be sent home to you in less time than any nineteenth-century dressmaker ever even promised to fill an order. Really, talking of this, I want you to see our garment-making machines in operation. Our paper garments, of course, are seamless, and made wholly by machinery. The apparatus being adjustable to any measure, you can have a costume turned out for you complete while you are looking over the machine. There are, of course, some general styles and shapes that are usually popular, and the stores keep a supply of them on hand, but that is for the convenience of the people, not of the department, which holds itself always ready to follow the initiative of any citizen and provide anything ordered in the least possible time."

"Then anybody can set the fashion?" I said.

"Anybody can set it, but whether it is followed depends on whether it is a good one, and really has some new point in respect of convenience or beauty; otherwise it certainly will not become a fashion. Its vogue will be precisely proportioned to the merit the popular taste recognizes in it, just as if it were an invention in mechanics. If a new idea in dress has any merit in it, it is taken up with great promptness, for our people are extremely interested in enhancing personal beauty by costume, and the absence of any arbitrary standards of style such as fashion set for you leaves us on the alert for attractions and novelties in shape and color. It is in variety of effect that our mode of dressing seems indeed to differ most from yours. Your styles were constantly being varied by the edicts of fashion, but as only one style was tolerated at a time, you had only a successive and not a simultaneous variety, such as we have. I should imagine that this uniformity of style, extending, as I understand it often did, to fabric, color, and shape alike, must have caused your great assemblages to present a depressing effect of sameness.

"That was a fact fully admitted in my day," I replied. "The artists were the enemies of fashion, as indeed all sensible people were, but resistance was in vain. Do you know, if I were to return to the nineteenth century, there is perhaps nothing else I could tell my contemporaries of the changes you have made that would so deeply impress

them as the information that you had broken the scepter of fashion, that there were no longer any arbitrary standards in dress recognized, and that no style had any other vogue that might be given it by individual recognition of its merits. That most of the other yokes humanity wore might some day be broken, the more hopeful of us believed, but the yoke of fashion we never expected to be freed from, unless perhaps in heaven."

"The reign of fashion, as the history books call it, always seemed to me one of the most utterly incomprehensible things about the old order," said Edith. "It would seem that it must have had some great force behind it to compel such abject submission to a rule so tyrannical. And yet there seems to have been no force at all used. Do tell us what the secret was, Julian?"

"Don't ask me," I protested. "It seemed to be some fell enchantment that we were subject to—that is all I know. Nobody professed to understand why we did as we did. Can't you tell us," I added, turning to the superintendent—"how do you moderns diagnose the fashion mania that made our lives such a burden to us?"

"Since you appeal to me," replied our companion, "I may say that the historians explain the dominion of fashion in your age as the natural result of a disparity of economic conditions prevailing in a community in which rigid distinctions of caste had ceased to exist. It resulted from two factors: the desire of the common herd to imitate the superior class, and the desire of the superior class to protect themselves from that imitation and preserve distinction of appearance. In times and countries where class was caste, and fixed by law or iron custom, each caste had its distinctive dress, to imitate which was not allowed to another class. Consequently fashions were stationary. With the rise of democracy, the legal protection of class distinctions was abolished, while the actual disparity in social ranks still existed, owing to the persistence of economic inequalities. It was now free for all to imitate the superior class, and thus seem at least to be as good as it, and no kind of imitation was so natural and easy as dress. First, the socially ambitious led off in this imitation; then presently the less pretentious were constrained to follow their example, to avoid an apparent confession of social inferiority; till, finally, even the philosophers had to follow the herd and conform to the fashion, to avoid being conspicuous by an exceptional appearance."

"I can see," said Edith, "how social emulation should make the masses imitate the richer and superior class, and how the fashions should in this way be set; but why were they changed so often, when it must have been so terribly expensive and troublesome to make the changes?"

"For the reason," answered the superintendent, "that the only way the superior class could escape their imitators and preserve their distinction in dress was by adopting constantly new fashions, only to drop them for still newer ones as soon as they were imitated.—Does it

seem to you, Mr. West, that this explanation corresponds with the facts as you observed them?"

"Entirely so," I replied. "It might be added, too, that the changes in fashions were greatly fomented and assisted by the self-interest of vast industrial and commercial interests engaged in purveying the materials of dress and personal belongings. Every change, by creating a demand for new materials and rendering those in use obsolete, was what we called good for trade, though if tradesmen were unlucky enough to be caught by a sudden change of fashion with a lot of goods on hand it meant ruin to them. Great losses of this sort, indeed, attended every change in fashion."

"But we read that there were fashions in many things besides dress," said Edith.

"Certainly," said the superintendent. "Dress was the stronghold and main province of fashion because imitation was easiest and most effective through dress, but in nearly everything that pertained to the habits of living, eating, drinking, recreation, to houses, furniture, horses and carriages, and servants, to the manner of bowing even, and shaking hands, to the mode of eating food and taking tea, and I don't know what else—there were fashions which must be followed, and were changed as soon as they were followed. It was indeed a sad, fantastic race, and, Mr. West's contemporaries appear to have fully realized it; but as long as society was made up of unequals with no caste barriers to prevent imitation, the inferiors were bound to ape the superiors, and the superiors were bound to baffle imitation, so far as possible, by seeking ever-fresh devices for expressing their superiority."

"In short," I said, "our tedious sameness in dress and manners appears to you to have been the logical result of our lack of equality in conditions."

"Precisely so," answered the superintendent. "Because you were not equal, you made yourself miserable and ugly in the attempt to seem so. The aesthetic equivalent of the moral wrong of inequality was the artistic abomination of uniformity. On the other hand, equality creates an atmosphere which kills imitation, and is pregnant with originality, for every one acts out himself, having nothing to gain by imitating any one else."

## **CHAPTER IX.**

SOMETHING THAT HAD NOT CHANGED.

When we parted with the superintendent of the paper-process factory I said to Edith that I had taken in since that morning about all the new impressions and new philosophies I could for the time mentally digest, and felt great need of resting my mind for a space in the contemplation of something—if indeed there were anything—which had not changed or been improved in the last century.

After a moment's consideration Edith exclaimed: "I have it! Ask no questions, but just come with me."

Presently, as we were making our way along the route she had taken, she touched my arm, saying, "Let us hurry a little."

Now, hurrying was the regulation gait of the nineteenth century. "Hurry up!" was about the most threadbare phrase in the English language, and rather than "*E pluribus unum*," should especially have been the motto of the American people, but it was the first time the note of haste had impressed my consciousness since I had been living twentieth-century days. This fact, together with the touch of my companion upon my arm as she sought to quicken my pace, caused me to look around, and in so doing to pause abruptly.

"What is this?" I exclaimed.

"It is too bad!" said my companion. "I tried to get you past without seeing it."

But indeed, though I had asked what was this building we stood in presence of, nobody could know so well as I what it was. The mystery was how it had come to be there for in the midst of this splendid city of equals, where poverty was an unknown word, I found myself face to face with a typical nineteenth-century tenement house of the worst sort—one of the rookeries, in fact, that used to abound in the North End and other parts of the city. The environment was indeed in strong enough contrast with that of such buildings in my time, shut in as they generally were by a labyrinth of noisome alleys and dark, damp courtyards which were reeking reservoirs of foetid odors, kept in by lofty, light-excluding walls. This building stood by itself, in the midst of an open square, as if it had been a palace or other show place. But all the more, indeed, by this fine setting was the dismal squalor of the grimy structure emphasized. It seemed to exhale an atmosphere of gloom and chill which all the bright sunshine of the breezy September afternoon was unable to dominate. One would not have been surprised, even at noonday, to see ghosts at the black windows. There was an inscription over the door, and I went across the square to read it, Edith reluctantly following me. These words I read, above the central doorway:

"THIS HABITATION OF CRUELTY IS PRESERVED AS A MEMENTO  
TO COMING  
GENERATIONS OF THE RULE OF THE RICH."

"This is one of the ghost buildings," said Edith, "kept to scare the people with, so that they may never risk anything that looks like bringing back the old order of things by allowing any one on any plea to obtain an economic advantage over another. I think they had much better be torn down, for there is no more danger of the world's going back to the old order than there is of the globe reversing its rotation."

A band of children, accompanied by a young woman, came across the square as we stood before the building, and filed into the doorway and up the black and narrow stairway. The faces of the little ones were very serious, and they spoke in whispers.

"They are school children," said Edith. "We are all taken through this building, or some other like it, when we are in the schools, and the teacher explains what manner of things used to be done and endured there. I remember well when I was taken through this building as a child. It was long afterward before I quite recovered from the terrible impression I received. Really, I don't think it is a good idea to bring young children here, but it is a custom that became settled in the period after the Revolution, when the horror of the bondage they had escaped from was yet fresh in the minds of the people, and their great fear was that by some lack of vigilance the rule of the rich might be restored.

"Of course," she continued, "this building and the others like it, which were reserved for warnings when the rest were razed to the ground, have been thoroughly cleaned and strengthened and made sanitary and safe every way, but our artists have very cunningly counterfeited all the old effects of filth and squalor, so that the appearance of everything is just as it was. Tablets in the rooms describe how many human beings used to be crowded into them, and the horrible conditions of their lives. The worst about it is that the facts are all taken from historical records, and are absolutely true. There are some of these places in which the inhabitants of the buildings as they used to swarm in them are reproduced in wax or plaster with every detail of garments, furniture, and all the other features based on actual records or pictures of the time. There is something indescribably dreadful in going through the buildings fitted out in that way. The dumb figures seem to appeal to you to help them. It was so long ago, and yet it makes one feel conscience-stricken not to be able to do anything."

"But, Julian, come away. It was just a stupid accident my bringing you past here. When I undertook to show you something that had not changed since your day, I did not mean to mock you."

Thanks to modern rapid transit, ten minutes later we stood on the ocean shore, with the waves of the Atlantic breaking noisily at our feet and its blue floor extending unbroken to the horizon. Here indeed was something that had not been changed—a mighty existence, to which a thousand years were as one day and one day as a thousand years. There

could be no tonic for my case like the inspiration of this great presence, this unchanging witness of all earth's mutations. How petty seemed the little trick of time that had been played on me as I stood in the presence of this symbol of everlastingness which made past, present, and future terms of little meaning!

In accompanying Edith to the part of the beach where we stood I had taken no note of directions, but now, as I began to study the shore, I observed with lively emotion that she had unwittingly brought me to the site of my old seaside place at Nahant. The buildings were indeed gone, and the growth of trees had quite changed the aspect of the landscape, but the shore line remained unaltered, and I knew it at once. Bidding her follow me, I led the way around a point to a little strip of beach between the sea and a wall of rock which shut off all sight or sound of the land behind. In my former life the spot had been a favorite resort when I visited the shore. Here in that life so long ago, and yet recalled as if of yesterday, I had been used from a lad to go to do my day dreaming. Every feature of the little nook was as familiar to me as my bedroom and all was quite unchanged. The sea in front, the sky above, the islands and the blue headlands of the distant coast—all, indeed, that filled the view was the same in every detail. I threw myself upon the warm sand by the margin of the sea, as I had been wont to do, and in a moment the flood of familiar associations had so completely carried me back to my old life that all the marvels that had happened to me, when presently I began to recall them, seemed merely as a day dream that had come to me like so many others before it in that spot by the shore. But what a dream it had been, that vision of the world to be; surely of all the dreams that had come to me there by the sea the weirdest!

There had been a girl in the dream, a maiden much to be desired. It had been ill if I had lost her; but I had not, for this was she, the girl in this strange and graceful garb, standing by my side and smiling down at me. I had by some great hap brought her back from dreamland, holding her by the very strength of my love when all else of the vision had dissolved at the opening of the eyes.

Why not? What youth has not often been visited in his dreams by maidenly ideals fairer than walk on earth, whom, waking, he has sighed for and for days been followed by the haunting beauty of their half-remembered faces? I, more fortunate than they, had baffled the jealous warder at the gates of sleep and brought my queen of dreamland through.

When I proceeded to state to Edith this theory to account for her presence, she professed to find it highly reasonable, and we proceeded at much length to develop the idea. Falling into the conceit that she was an anticipation of the twentieth-century woman instead of my being an excavated relic of the nineteenth-century man, we speculated what we should do for the summer. We decided to visit the great pleasure resorts, where, no doubt, she would under the circumstances excite much curiosity and at the same time have an opportunity of studying what to her

twentieth-century mind would seem even more astonishing types of humanity than she would seem to them—namely, people who, surrounded by a needy and anguished world, could get their own consent to be happy in a frivolous and wasteful idleness. Afterward we would go to Europe and inspect such things there as might naturally be curiosities to a girl out of the year 2000, such as a Rothschild, an emperor, and a few specimens of human beings, some of which were at that time still extant in Germany, Austria, and Russia, who honestly believed that God had given to certain fellow-beings a divine title to reign over them.

## CHAPTER X.

### A MIDNIGHT PLUNGE.

It was after dark when we reached home, and several hours later before we had made an end of telling our adventures. Indeed, my hosts seemed at all times unable to hear too much of my impressions of modern things, appearing to be as much interested in what I thought of them as I was in the things themselves.

"It is really, you see," Edith's mother had said, "the manifestation of vanity on our part. You are a sort of looking-glass to us, in which we can see how we appear from a different point of view from our own. If it were not for you, we should never have realized what remarkable people we are, for to one another, I assure you, we seem very ordinary."

To which I replied that in talking with them I got the same looking-glass effect as to myself and my contemporaries, but that it was one which by no means ministered to my vanity.

When, as we talked, the globe of the color clock turning white announced that it was midnight, some one spoke of bed, but the doctor had another scheme.

"I propose," said he, "by way of preparing a good night's rest for us all, that we go over to the natatorium and take a plunge."

"Are there any public baths open so late as this?" I said. "In my day everything was shut up long before now."

Then and there the doctor gave me the information which, matter of course as it is to twentieth-century readers, was surprising enough to me, that no public service or convenience is ever suspended at the present day, whether by day or night, the year round; and that, although the service provided varies in extent, according to the demand, it never varies in quality.

"It seems to us," said the doctor, "that among the minor inconveniences of life in your day none could have been more vexing than the recurrent interruption of all, or of the larger part of all, public services every night. Most of the people, of course, are asleep then, but always a portion of them have occasion to be awake and about, and all of us sometimes, and we should consider it a very lame public service that did not provide for the night workers as good a service as for the day workers. Of course, you could not do it, lacking any unitary industrial organization, but it is very easy with us. We have day and night shifts for all the public services—the latter, of course, much the smaller."

"How about public holidays; have you abandoned them?"

"Pretty generally. The occasional public holidays in your time were prized by the people, as giving them much-needed breathing spaces. Nowadays, when the working day is so short and the working year so interspersed with ample vacations, the old-fashioned holiday has ceased to serve any purpose, and would be regarded as a nuisance. We prefer to choose and use our leisure time as we please."

It was to the Leander Natatorium that we had directed our steps. As I need not remind Bostonians, this is one of the older baths, and considered quite inferior to the modern structures. To me, however, it was a vastly impressive spectacle. The lofty interior glowing with light, the immense swimming tank, the four great fountains filling the air with diamond-dazzle and the noise of falling water, together with the throng of gayly dressed and laughing bathers, made an exhilarating and magnificent scene, which was a very effective introduction to the athletic side of the modern life. The loveliest thing of all was the great expanse of water made translucent by the light reflected from the white tiled bottom, so that the swimmers, their whole bodies visible, seemed as if floating on a pale emerald cloud, with an effect of buoyancy and weightlessness that was as startling as charming. Edith was quick to tell me, however, that this was as nothing to the beauty of some of the new and larger baths, where, by varying the colors of the tiling at the bottom, the water is made to shade through all the tints of the rainbow while preserving the same translucent appearance.

I had formed an impression that the water would be fresh, but the green hue, of course, showed it to be from the sea.

"We have a poor opinion of fresh water for swimming when we can get salt," said the doctor. "This water came in on the last tide from the Atlantic."

"But how do you get it up to this level?"

"We make it carry itself up," laughed the doctor; "it would be a pity if the tidal force that raises the whole harbor fully seven feet, could not

raise what little we want a bit higher. Don't look at it so suspiciously," he added. "I know that Boston Harbor water was far from being clean enough for bathing in your day, but all that is changed. Your sewerage systems, remember, are forgotten abominations, and nothing that can defile is allowed to reach sea or river nowadays. For that reason we can and do use sea water, not only for all the public baths, but provide it as a distinct service for our home baths and also for all the public fountains, which, thus inexhaustibly supplied, can be kept always playing. But let us go in."

"Certainly, if you say so," said I, with a shiver, "but are you sure that it is not a trifle cool? Ocean water was thought by us to be chilly for bathing in late September."

"Did you think we were going to give you your death?" said the doctor. "Of course, the water is warmed to a comfortable temperature; these baths are open all winter."

"But, dear me! how can you possibly warm such great bodies of water, which are so constantly renewed, especially in winter?"

"Oh, we have no conscience at all about what we make the tides do for us," replied the doctor. "We not only make them lift the water up here, but heat it, too. Why, Julian, cold or hot are terms without real meaning, mere coquettish airs which Nature puts on, indicating that she wants to be wooed a little. She would just as soon warm you as freeze you, if you will approach her rightly. The blizzards which used to freeze your generation might just as well have taken the place of your coal mines. You look incredulous, but let me tell you now, as a first step toward the understanding of modern conditions, that power, with all its applications of light, heat, and energy, is to-day practically exhaustless and costless, and scarcely enters as an element into mechanical calculation. The uses of the tides, winds, and waterfalls are indeed but crude methods of drawing on Nature's resources of strength compared with others that are employed by which boundless power is developed from natural inequalities of temperature."

A few moments later I was enjoying the most delicious sea bath that ever up to that time had fallen to my lot; the pleasure of the pelting under the fountains was to me a new sensation in life.

"You'll make a first-rate twentieth-century Bostonian," said the doctor, laughing at my delight. "It is said that a marked feature of our modern civilization is that we are tending to revert to the amphibious type of our remote ancestry; evidently you will not object to drifting with the tide."

It was one o'clock when we reached home.

"I suppose," said Edith, as I bade her good-night, "that in ten minutes

you will be back among your friends of the nineteenth century if you dream as you did last night. What would I not give to take the journey with you and see for myself what the world was like!"

"And I would give as much to be spared a repetition of the experience," I said, "unless it were in your company."

"Do you mean that you really are afraid you will dream of the old times again?"

"So much afraid," I replied, "that I have a good mind to sit up all night to avoid the possibility of another such nightmare."

"Dear me! you need not do that," she said. "If you wish me to, I will see that you are troubled no more in that way."

"Are you, then, a magician?"

"If I tell you not to dream of any particular matter, you will not," she said.

"You are easily the mistress of my waking thoughts," I said; "but can you rule my sleeping mind as well?"

"You shall see," she said, and, fixing her eyes upon mine, she said quietly, "Remember, you are not to dream of anything to-night which belonged to your old life!" and, as she spoke, I knew in my mind that it would be as she said.

## CHAPTER XI.

### LIFE THE BASIS OF THE RIGHT OF PROPERTY.

Among the pieces of furniture in the subterranean bedchamber where Dr. Leete had found me sleeping was one of the strong boxes of iron cunningly locked which in my time were used for the storage of money and valuables. The location of this chamber so far underground, its solid stone construction and heavy doors, had not only made it impervious to noise but equally proof against thieves, and its very existence being, moreover, a secret, I had thought that no place could be safer for keeping the evidences of my wealth.

Edith had been very curious about the safe, which was the name we gave to these strong boxes, and several times when we were visiting the vault had expressed a lively desire to see what was inside. I had proposed to open it for her, but she had suggested that, as her father and mother would be

as much interested in the process as herself, it would be best to postpone the treat till all should be present.

As we sat at breakfast the day after the experiences narrated in the previous chapters, she asked why that morning would not be a good time to show the inside of the safe, and everybody agreed that there could be no better.

"What is in the safe?" asked Edith's mother.

"When I last locked it in the year 1887," I replied, "there were in it securities and evidences of value of various sorts representing something like a million dollars. When we open it this morning we shall find, thanks to the great Revolution, a fine collection of waste paper.—I wonder, by the way, doctor, just what your judges would say if I were to take those securities to them and make a formal demand to be reinstated in the possessions which they represented? Suppose I said: 'Your Honors, these properties were once mine and I have never voluntarily parted with them. Why are they not mine now, and why should they not be returned to me?' You understand, of course, that I have no desire to start a revolt against the present order, which I am very ready to admit is much better than the old arrangements, but I am quite curious to know just what the judges would reply to such a demand, provided they consented to entertain it seriously. I suppose they would laugh me out of court. Still, I think I might argue with some plausibility that, seeing I was not present when the Revolution divested us capitalists of our wealth, I am at least entitled to a courteous explanation of the grounds on which that course was justified at the time. I do not want my million back, even if it were possible to return it, but as a matter of rational satisfaction I should like to know on just what plea it was appropriated and is retained by the community."

"Really Julian," said the doctor, "it would be an excellent idea if you were to do just what you have suggested—that is, bring a formal suit against the nation for reinstatement in your former property. It would arouse the liveliest popular interest and stimulate a discussion of the ethical basis of our economic equality that would be of great educational value to the community. You see the present order has been so long established that it does not often occur to anybody except historians that there ever was any other. It would be a good thing for the people to have their minds stirred up on the subject and be compelled to do some fundamental thinking as to the merits of the differences between the old and the new order and the reasons for the present system. Confronting the court with those securities in your hand, you would make a fine dramatic situation. It would be the nineteenth century challenging the twentieth, the old civilization, demanding an accounting of the new. The judges, you may be sure, would treat you with the greatest consideration. They would at once admit your rights under the peculiar circumstances to have the whole question of wealth distribution and the rights of property reopened from the beginning, and be ready to discuss it in the broadest spirit."

"No doubt," I answered, "but it is just an illustration, I suppose, of the lack of unselfish public spirit among my contemporaries that I do not feel disposed to make myself a spectacle even in the cause of education. Besides, what is the need? You can tell me as well as the judges could what the answer would be, and as it is the answer I want and not the property that will do just as well."

"No doubt," said the doctor, "I could give you the general line of reasoning they would follow."

"Very well. Let us suppose, then, that you are the court. On what ground would you refuse to return me my million, for I assume that you would refuse?"

"Of course it would be the same ground," replied the doctor, "that the nation proceeded upon in nationalizing the property which that same million represented at the time of the great Revolution."

"I suppose so; that is what I want to get at. What is that ground?"

"The court would say that to allow any person to withdraw or withhold from the public administration for the common use any larger portion of capital than the equal portion allotted to all for personal use and consumption would in so far impair the ability of society to perform its first duty to its members."

"What is this first duty of society to its members, which would be interfered with by allowing particular citizens to appropriate more than an equal proportion of the capital of the country?"

"The duty of safeguarding the first and highest right of its members—the right of life."

"But how is the duty of society to safeguard the lives of its members interfered with when one person, has more capital than another?"

"Simply," answered the doctor, "because people have to eat in order to live, also to be clothed and to consume a mass of necessary and desirable things, the sum of which constitutes what we call wealth or capital. Now, if the supply of these things was always unlimited, as is the air we need to breathe, it would not be necessary to see that each one had his share, but the supply of wealth being, in fact, at any one time limited, it follows that if some have a disproportionate share, the rest will not have enough and may be left with nothing, as was indeed the case of millions all over the world until the great Revolution established economic equality. If, then, the first right of the citizen is protection to life and the first duty of society is to furnish it, the state must evidently see to it that the means of life are not unduly appropriated by particular individuals, but are distributed so as to meet the needs of

all. Moreover, in order to secure the means of life to all, it is not merely necessary that the state should see that the wealth available for consumption is properly distributed at any given time; for, although all might in that case fare well for to-day, tomorrow all might starve unless, meanwhile, new wealth were being produced. The duty of society to guarantee the life of the citizen implies, therefore, not merely the equal distribution of wealth for consumption, but its employment as capital to the best possible advantage for all in the production of more wealth. In both ways, therefore, you will readily see that society would fail in its first and greatest function in proportion as it were to permit individuals beyond the equal allotment to withdraw wealth, whether for consumption or employment as capital, from the public administration in the common interest."

"The modern ethics of ownership is rather startlingly simple to a representative of the nineteenth century," I observed. "Would not the judges even ask me by what right or title of ownership I claimed my wealth?"

"Certainly not. It is impossible that you or any one could have so strong a title to material things as the least of your fellow-citizens have to their lives, or could make so strong a plea for the use of the collective power to enforce your right to things as they could make that the collective power should enforce their right to life against your right to things at whatever point the two claims might directly or indirectly conflict. The effect of the disproportionate possession of the wealth of a community by some of its members to curtail and threaten the living of the rest is not in any way affected by the means by which that wealth was obtained. The means may have constituted, as in past times they often did by their iniquity, an added injury to the community; but the fact of the disproportion, however resulting, was a continuing injury, without regard to its beginnings. Our ethics of wealth is indeed, as you say, extremely simple. It consists merely in the law of self-preservation, asserted in the name of all against the encroachments of any. It rests upon a principle which a child can understand as well as a philosopher, and which no philosopher ever attempted to refute—namely, the supreme right of all to live, and consequently to insist that society shall be so organized as to secure that right.

"But, after all," said the doctor, "what is there in our economic application of this principle which need impress a man of your time with any other sensation than one of surprise that it was not earlier made? Since what you were wont to call modern civilization existed, it has been a principle subscribed to by all governments and peoples that it is the first and supreme duty of the state to protect the lives of the citizens. For the purpose of doing this the police, the courts, the army, and the greater part of the machinery of governments has existed. You went so far as to hold that a state which did not at any cost and to the utmost of its resources safeguard the lives of its citizens forfeited all claim to their allegiance.

”But while professing this principle so broadly in words, you completely ignored in practice half and vastly the greater half of its meaning. You wholly overlooked and disregarded the peril to which life is exposed on the economic side—the hunger, cold, and thirst side. You went on the theory that it was only by club, knife, bullet, poison, or some other form of physical violence that life could be endangered, as if hunger, cold, and thirst—in a word, economic want—were not a far more constant and more deadly foe to existence than all the forms of violence together. You overlooked the plain fact that anybody who by any means, however indirect or remote, took away or curtailed one’s means of subsistence attacked his life quite as dangerously as it could be done with knife or bullet—more so, indeed, seeing that against direct attack he would have a better chance of defending himself. You failed to consider that no amount of police, judicial, and military protection would prevent one from perishing miserably if he had not enough to eat and wear.”

”We went on the theory,” I said, ”that it was not well for the state to intervene to do for the individual or to help him to do what he was able to do for himself. We held that the collective organization should only be appealed to when the power of the individual was manifestly unequal to the task of self-defense.”

”It was not so bad a theory if you had lived up to it,” said the doctor, ”although the modern theory is far more rational that whatever can be done better by collective than individual action ought to be so undertaken, even if it could, after a more imperfect fashion, be individually accomplished. But don’t you think that under the economic conditions which prevailed in America at the end of the nineteenth century, not to speak of Europe, the average man armed with a good revolver would have found the task of protecting himself and family against violence a far easier one than that of protecting them against want? Were not the odds against him far greater in the latter struggle than they could have been, if he were a tolerably good shot, in the former? Why, then, according to your own maxim, was the collective force of society devoted without stint to safeguarding him against violence, which he could have done for himself fairly well, while he was left to struggle against hopeless odds for the means of a decent existence? What hour, of what day of what year ever passed in which the number of deaths, and the physical and moral anguish resulting from the anarchy of the economic struggle and the crushing odds against the poor, did not outweigh as a hundred to one that same hour’s record of death or suffering resulting from violence? Far better would society have fulfilled its recognized duty of safeguarding the lives of its members if, repealing every criminal law and dismissing every judge and policeman, it had left men to protect themselves as best they might against physical violence, while establishing in place of the machinery of criminal justice a system of economic administration whereby all would have been guaranteed against want. If, indeed, it had but substituted this collective economic organization for the criminal and judicial

system it presently would have had as little need of the latter as we do, for most of the crimes that plagued you were direct or indirect consequences of your unjust economic conditions, and would have disappeared with them.

"But excuse my vehemence. Remember that I am arraigning your civilization and not you. What I wanted to bring out is that the principle that the first duty of society is to safeguard the lives of its members was as fully admitted by your world as by ours, and that in failing to give the principle an economic as well as police, judicial, and military interpretation, your world convicted itself of an inconsistency as glaring in logic as it was cruel in consequences. We, on the other hand, in assuming as a nation the responsibility of safeguarding the lives of the people on the economic side, have merely, for the first time, honestly carried out a principle as old as the civilized state."

"That is clear enough," I said. "Any one, on the mere statement of the case, would of course be bound to admit that the recognized duty of the state to guarantee the life of the citizen against the action of his fellows does logically involve responsibility to protect him from influences attacking the economic basis of life quite as much as from direct forcible assaults. The more advanced governments of my day, by their poor laws and pauper systems, in a dim way admitted this responsibility, although the kind of provision they made for the economically unfortunate was so meager and accompanied with such conditions of ignominy that men would ordinarily rather die than accept it. But grant that the sort of recognition we gave of the right of the citizen to be guaranteed a subsistence was a mockery more brutal than its total denial would have been, and that a far larger interpretation of its duty in this respect was incumbent on the state, yet how does it logically follow that society is bound to guarantee or the citizen to demand an absolute economic equality?"

"It is very true, as you say," answered the doctor, "that the duty of society to guarantee every member the economic basis of his life might be after some fashion discharged short of establishing economic equality. Just so in your day might the duty of the state to safeguard the lives of citizens from physical violence have been discharged after a nominal fashion if it had contented itself with preventing outright murders, while leaving the people to suffer from one another's wantonness all manner of violence not directly deadly; but tell me, Julian, were governments in your day content with so construing the limit of their duty to protect citizens from violence, or would the citizens have been content with such a limitation?"

"Of course not."

"A government which in your day," continued the doctor, "had limited its undertaking to protect citizens from violence to merely preventing

murders would not have lasted a day. There were no people so barbarous as to have tolerated it. In fact, not only did all civilized governments undertake to protect citizens from assaults against their lives, but from any and every sort of physical assault and offense, however petty. Not only might not a man so much as lay a finger on another in anger, but if he only wagged his tongue against him maliciously he was laid by the heels in jail. The law undertook to protect men in their dignity as well as in their mere bodily integrity, rightly recognizing that to be insulted or spit upon is as great a grievance as any assault upon life itself.

”Now, in undertaking to secure the citizen in his right to life on the economic side, we do but studiously follow your precedents in safeguarding him from direct assault. If we did but secure his economic basis so far as to avert death by direct effect of hunger and cold as your pauper laws made a pretense of doing, we should be like a State in your day which forbade outright murder but permitted every kind of assault that fell short of it. Distress and deprivation resulting from economic want falling short of actual starvation precisely correspond to the acts of minor violence against which your State protected citizens as carefully as against murder. The right of the citizen to have his life secured him on the economic side can not therefore be satisfied by any provision for bare subsistence, or by anything less than the means for the fullest supply of every need which it is in the power of the nation by the thriftiest stewardship of the national resources to provide for all.

”That is to say, in extending the reign of law and public justice to the protection and security of men’s interests on the economic side, we have merely followed, as we were reasonably bound to follow, your much-vaunted maxim of ‘equality before the law.’ That maxim meant that in so far as society collectively undertook any governmental function, it must act absolutely without respect of persons for the equal benefit of all. Unless, therefore, we were to reject the principle of ‘equality before the law,’ it was impossible that society, having assumed charge of the production and distribution of wealth as a collective function, could discharge it on any other principle than equality.”

”If the court please,” I said, ”I should like to be permitted at this point to discontinue and withdraw my suit for the restoration of my former property. In my day we used to hold on to all we had and fight for all we could get with a good stomach, for our rivals were as selfish as we, and represented no higher right or larger view. But this modern social system with its public stewardship of all capital for the general welfare quite changes the situation. It puts the man who demands more than his share in the light of a person attacking the livelihood and seeking to impair the welfare of everybody else in the nation. To enjoy that attitude anybody must be a good deal better convinced of the justice of his title than I ever was even in the old days.”

## CHAPTER XII.

### HOW INEQUALITY OF WEALTH DESTROYS LIBERTY.

"Nevertheless," said the doctor, "I have stated only half the reason the judges would give wherefore they could not, by returning your wealth, permit the impairment of our collective economic system and the beginnings of economic inequality in the nation. There is another great and equal right of all men which, though strictly included under the right of life, is by generous minds set even above it: I mean the right of liberty—that is to say, the right not only to live, but to live in personal independence of one's fellows, owning only those common social obligations resting on all alike.

"Now, the duty of the state to safeguard the liberty of citizens was recognized in your day just as was its duty to safeguard their lives, but with the same limitation, namely, that the safeguard should apply only to protect from attacks by violence. If it were attempted to kidnap a citizen and reduce him by force to slavery, the state would interfere, but not otherwise. Nevertheless, it was true in your day of liberty and personal independence, as of life, that the perils to which they were chiefly exposed were not from force or violence, but resulted from economic causes, the necessary consequences of inequalities of wealth. Because the state absolutely ignored this side, which was incomparably the largest side of the liberty question, its pretense of defending the liberties of citizens was as gross a mockery as that of guaranteeing their lives. Nay, it was a yet more absolute mockery and on a far vaster scale.

"For, although I have spoken of the monopolization of wealth and of the productive machinery by a portion of the people as being first of all a threat to the lives of the rest of the community and to be resisted as such, nevertheless the main practical effect of the system was not to deprive the masses of mankind of life outright, but to force them, through want, to buy their lives by the surrender of their liberties. That is to say, they accepted servitude to the possessing class and became their serfs on condition of receiving the means of subsistence. Although multitudes were always perishing from lack of subsistence, yet it was not the deliberate policy of the possessing class that they should do so. The rich had no use for dead men; on the other hand, they had endless use for human beings as servants, not only to produce more wealth, but as the instruments of their pleasure and luxury.

"As I need not remind you who were familiar with it, the industrial system of the world before the great Revolution was wholly based upon the compulsory servitude of the mass of mankind to the possessing class, enforced by the coercion of economic need."

"Undoubtedly," I said, "the poor as a class were in the economic service of the rich, or, as we used to say, labor was dependent on capital for employment, but this service and employment had become in the nineteenth century an entirely voluntary relation on the part of the servant or employee. The rich had no power to compel the poor to be their servants. They only took such as came voluntarily to ask to be taken into service, and even begged to be, with tears. Surely a service so sought after could scarcely be called compulsory."

"Tell us, Julian," said the doctor, "did the rich go to one another and ask the privilege of being one another's servants or employees?"

"Of course not."

"But why not?"

"Because, naturally, no one could wish to be another's servant or subject to his orders who could get along without it."

"I should suppose so, but why, then, did the poor so eagerly seek to serve the rich when the rich refused with scorn to serve one another? Was it because the poor so loved the rich?"

"Scarcely."

"Why then?"

"It was, of course, for the reason that it was the only way the poor could get a living."

"You mean that it was only the pressure of want or the fear of it that drove the poor to the point of becoming the servants of the rich?"

"That is about it."

"And would you call that voluntary service? The distinction between forced service and such service as that would seem quite imperceptible to us. If a man may be said to do voluntarily that which only the pressure of bitter necessity compels him to elect to do, there has never been any such thing as slavery, for all the acts of a slave are at the last the acceptance of a less evil for fear of a worse. Suppose, Julian, you or a few of you owned the main water supply, or food supply, clothing supply, land supply, or main industrial opportunities in a community and could maintain your ownership, that fact alone would make the rest of the people your slaves, would it not, and that, too, without any direct compulsion on your part whatever?"

"No doubt."

"Suppose somebody should charge you with holding the people under compulsory servitude, and you should answer that you laid no hand on them but that they willingly resorted to you and kissed your hands for the privilege of being allowed to serve you in exchange for water, food, or clothing, would not that be a very transparent evasion on your part of the charge of slaveholding?"

"No doubt it would be."

"Well, and was not that precisely the relation the capitalists or employers as a class held toward the rest of the community through their monopolization of wealth and the machinery of production?"

"I must say that it was."

"There was a great deal said by the economists of your day," the doctor went on, "about the freedom of contract—the voluntary, unconstrained agreement of the laborer with the employer as to the terms of his employment. What hypocrisy could have been so brazen as that pretense when, as a matter of fact, every contract made between the capitalist who had bread and could keep it and the laborer who must have it or die would have been declared void, if fairly judged, even under your laws as a contract made under duress of hunger, cold, and nakedness, nothing less than the threat of death! If you own the things men must have, you own the men who must have them."

"But the compulsion of want," said I, "meaning hunger and cold, is a compulsion of Nature. In that sense we are all under compulsory servitude to Nature."

"Yes, but not to one another. That is the whole difference between slavery and freedom. To-day no man serves another, but all the common good in which we equally share. Under your system the compulsion of Nature through the appropriation by the rich of the means of supplying Nature's demands was turned into a club by which the rich made the poor pay Nature's debt of labor not only for themselves but for the rich also, with a vast overcharge besides for the needless waste of the system."

"You make out our system to have been little better than slavery. That is a hard word."

"It is a very hard word, and we want above all things to be fair. Let us look at the question. Slavery exists where there is a compulsory using of men by other men for the benefit of the users. I think we are quite agreed that the poor man in your day worked for the rich only because his necessities compelled him to. That compulsion varied in force according to the degree of want the worker was in. Those who had a little economic means would only render the lighter kinds of service on more or less easy and honorable conditions, while those who had less means or no means at all would do anything on any terms however painful or degrading. With the

mass of the workers the compulsion of necessity was of the sharpest kind. The chattel slave had the choice between working for his master and the lash. The wage-earner chose between laboring for an employer or starving. In the older, cruder forms of slavery the masters had to be watching constantly to prevent the escape of their slaves, and were troubled with the charge of providing for them. Your system was more convenient, in that it made Nature your taskmaster, and depended on her to keep your servants to the task. It was a difference between the direct exercise of coercion, in which the slave was always on the point of rebellion, and an indirect coercion by which the same industrial result was obtained, while the slave, instead of rebelling against his master's authority, was grateful for the opportunity of serving him."

"But," said I, "the wage-earner received wages and the slave received nothing."

"I beg your pardon. The slave received subsistence—clothing and shelter—and the wage-earner who could get more than these out of his wages was rarely fortunate. The rate of wages, except in new countries and under special conditions and for skilled workers, kept at about the subsistence point, quite as often dropping below as rising above. The main difference was that the master expended the subsistence wage of the chattel slave for him while the earner expended it for himself. This was better for the worker in some ways; in others less desirable, for the master out of self-interest usually saw that the chattel, children had enough; while the employer, having no stake in the life or health of the wage-earner, did not concern himself as to whether he lived or died. There were never any slave quarters so vile as the tenement houses of the city slums where the wage-earners were housed."

"But at least," said I, "there was this radical difference between the wage-earner of my day and the chattel slave: the former could leave his employer at will, the latter could not."

"Yes, that is a difference, but one surely that told not so much in favor of as against the wage-earner. In all save temporarily fortunate countries with sparse population the laborer would have been glad indeed to exchange the right to leave his employer for a guarantee that he would not be discharged by him. Fear of losing his opportunity to work—his job, as you called it—was the nightmare of the laborer's life as it was reflected in the literature of your period. Was it not so?"

I had to admit that it was even so.

"The privilege of leaving one employer for another," pursued the doctor, "even if it had not been more than balanced by the liability to discharge, was of very little worth to the worker, in view of the fact that the rate of wages was at about the same point wherever he might go, and the change would be merely a choice between the personal dispositions of different masters, and that difference was slight enough, for business

rules controlled the relations of masters and men.”

I rallied once more.

”One point of real superiority at least you must admit the wage-earner had over the chattel slave. He could by merit rise out of his condition and become himself an employer, a rich man.”

”Surely, Julian, you forget that there has rarely been a slave system under which the more energetic, intelligent, and thrifty slaves could and did not buy their freedom or have it given them by their masters. The freedmen in ancient Rome rose to places of importance and power quite as frequently as did the born proletarian of Europe or America get out of his condition.”

I did not think of anything to reply at the moment, and the doctor, having compassion on me, pursued: ”It is an old illustration of the different view points of the centuries that precisely this point which you make of the possibility of the wage-earner rising, although it was getting to be a vanishing point in your day, seems to us the most truly diabolical feature of the whole system. The prospect of rising as a motive to reconcile the wage-earner or the poor man in general to his subjection, what did it amount to? It was but saying to him, ’Be a good slave, and you, too, shall have slaves of your own.’ By this wedge did you separate the cleverer of the wage-workers from the mass of them and dignify treason to humanity by the name of ambition. No true man should wish to rise save to raise others with him.”

”One point of difference, however, you must at least admit,” I said. ”In chattel slavery the master had a power over the persons of his slaves which the employer did not have over even the poorest of his employees: he could not lay his hand upon them in violence.”

”Again, Julian,” said the doctor, ”you have mentioned a point of difference that tells in favor of chattel slavery as a more humane industrial method than the wage system. If here and there the anger of the chattel slave owner made him forget his self-restraint so far as to cripple or maim his slaves, yet such cases were on the whole rare, and such masters were held to an account by public opinion if not by law; but under the wage system the employer had no motive of self-restraint to spare life or limb of his employees, and he escaped responsibility by the fact of the consent and even eagerness of the needy people to undertake the most perilous and painful tasks for the sake of bread. We read that in the United States every year at least two hundred thousand men, women, and children were done to death or maimed in the performance of their industrial duties, nearly forty thousand alone in the single branch of the steam railroad service. No estimate seems to have ever been attempted of the many times greater number who perished more indirectly through the injurious effects of bad industrial conditions. What chattel-slave system ever made a record of such wastefulness of human life, as that?”

"Nay, more, the chattel-slave owner, if he smote his slave, did it in anger and, as likely as not, with some provocation; but these wholesale slaughters of wage-earners that made your land red were done in sheer cold-bloodedness, without any other motive on the part of the capitalists, who were responsible, save gain.

"Still again, one of the more revolting features of chattel slavery has always been considered the subjection of the slave women to the lust of their masters. How was it in this respect under the rule of the rich? We read in our histories that great armies of women in your day were forced by poverty to make a business of submitting their bodies to those who had the means of furnishing them a little bread. The books say that these armies amounted in your great cities to bodies of thirty or forty thousand women. Tales come down to us of the magnitude of the maiden tribute levied upon the poorer classes for the gratification of the lusts of those who could pay, which the annals of antiquity could scarcely match for horror. Am I saying too much, Julian?"

"You have mentioned nothing but facts which stared me in the face all my life," I replied, "and yet it appears I have had to wait for a man of another century to tell me what they meant."

"It was precisely because they stared you and your contemporaries so constantly in the face, and always had done so, that you lost the faculty of judging their meaning. They were, as we might say, too near the eyes to be seen aright. You are far enough away from the facts now to begin to see them clearly and to realize their significance. As you shall continue to occupy this modern view point, you will more and more completely come to see with us that the most revolting aspect of the human condition before the great Revolution was not the suffering from physical privation or even the outright starvation of multitudes which directly resulted from the unequal distribution of wealth, but the indirect effect of that inequality to reduce almost the total human race to a state of degrading bondage to their fellows. As it seems to us, the offense of the old order against liberty was even greater than the offense to life; and even if it were conceivable that it could have satisfied the right of life by guaranteeing abundance to all, it must just the same have been destroyed, for, although the collective administration of the economic system had been unnecessary to guarantee life, there could be no such thing as liberty so long as by the effect of inequalities of wealth and the private control of the means of production the opportunity of men to obtain the means of subsistence depended on the will of other men."

## CHAPTER XIII.

### PRIVATE CAPITAL STOLEN FROM THE SOCIAL FUND.

"I observe," pursued the doctor, "that Edith is getting very impatient with these dry disquisitions, and thinks it high time we passed from wealth in the abstract to wealth in the concrete, as illustrated by the contents of your safe. I will delay the company only while I say a very few words more; but really this question of the restoration of your million, raised half in jest as it was, so vitally touches the central and fundamental principle of our social order that I want to give you at least an outline idea of the modern ethics of wealth distribution.

"The essential difference between the new and the old point of view you fully possess by this time. The old ethics conceived of the question of what a man might rightfully possess as one which began and ended with the relation of individuals to things. Things have no rights as against moral beings, and there was no reason, therefore, in the nature of the case as thus stated, why individuals should not acquire an unlimited ownership of things so far as their abilities permitted. But this view absolutely ignored the social consequences which result from an unequal distribution of material things in a world where everybody absolutely depends for life and all its uses on their share of those things. That is to say, the old so-called ethics of property absolutely overlooked the whole ethical side of the subject—namely, its bearing on human relations. It is precisely this consideration which furnishes the whole basis of the modern ethics of property. All human beings are equal in rights and dignity, and only such a system of wealth distribution can therefore be defensible as respects and secures those equalities. But while this is the principle which you will hear most generally stated as the moral ground of our economic equality, there is another quite sufficient and wholly different ground on which, even if the rights of life and liberty were not involved, we should yet maintain that equal sharing of the total product of industry was the only just plan, and that any other was robbery.

"The main factor in the production of wealth among civilized men is the social organism, the machinery of associated labor and exchange by which hundreds of millions of individuals provide the demand for one another's product and mutually complement one another's labors, thereby making the productive and distributive systems of a nation and of the world one great machine. This was true even under private capitalism, despite the prodigious waste and friction of its methods; but of course it is a far more important truth now when the machinery of co-operation runs with absolute smoothness and every ounce of energy is utilized to the utmost effect. The element in the total industrial product which is due to the social organism is represented by the difference between the value of what one man produces as a worker in connection with the social organization and what he could produce in a condition of isolation.

Working in concert with his fellows by aid of the social organism, he and they produce enough to support all in the highest luxury and refinement. Toiling in isolation, human experience has proved that he would be fortunate if he could at the utmost produce enough to keep himself alive. It is estimated, I believe, that the average daily product of a worker in America to-day is some fifty dollars. The product of the same man working in isolation would probably be highly estimated on the same basis of calculation if put at a quarter of a dollar. Now tell me, Julian, to whom belongs the social organism, this vast machinery of human association, which enhances some two hundredfold the product of every one's labor?"

"Manifestly," I replied, "it can belong to no one in particular, but to nothing less than society collectively. Society collectively can be the only heir to the social inheritance of intellect and discovery, and it is society collectively which furnishes the continuous daily concourse by which alone that inheritance is made effective."

"Exactly so. The social organism, with all that it is and all it makes possible, is the indivisible inheritance of all in common. To whom, then, properly belongs that two hundredfold enhancement of the value of every one's labor which is owing to the social organism?"

"Manifestly to society collectively—to the general fund."

"Previous to the great Revolution," pursued the doctor. "Although there seems to have been a vague idea of some such social fund as this, which belonged to society collectively, there was no clear conception of its vastness, and no custodian of it, or possible provision to see that it was collected and applied for the common use. A public organization of industry, a nationalized economic system, was necessary before the social fund could be properly protected and administered. Until then it must needs be the subject of universal plunder and embezzlement. The social machinery was seized upon by adventurers and made a means of enriching themselves by collecting tribute from the people to whom it belonged and whom it should have enriched. It would be one way of describing the effect of the Revolution to say that it was only the taking possession by the people collectively of the social machinery which had always belonged to them, thenceforth to be conducted as a public plant, the returns of which were to go to the owners as the equal proprietors and no longer to buccaneers.

"You will readily see," the doctor went on, "how this analysis of the product of industry must needs tend to minimize the importance of the personal equation of performance as between individual workers. If the modern man, by aid of the social machinery, can produce fifty dollars' worth of product where he could produce not over a quarter of a dollar's worth without society, then forty-nine dollars and three quarters out of every fifty dollars must be credited to the social fund to be equally distributed. The industrial efficiency of two men working without society might have differed as two to one—that is, while one man was able to

produce a full quarter dollar's worth of work a day, the other could produce only twelve and a half cents' worth. This was a very great difference under those circumstances, but twelve and a half cents is so slight a proportion of fifty dollars as not to be worth mentioning. That is to say, the difference in individual endowments between the two men would remain the same, but that difference would be reduced to relative unimportance by the prodigious equal addition made to the product of both alike by the social organism. Or again, before gunpowder was invented one man might easily be worth two as a warrior. The difference between the men as individuals remained what it was; yet the overwhelming factor added to the power of both alike by the gun practically equalized them as fighters. Speaking of guns, take a still better illustration—the relation of the individual soldiers in a square of infantry to the formation. There might be large differences in the fighting power of the individual soldiers singly outside the ranks. Once in the ranks, however, the formation added to the fighting efficiency of every soldier equally an element so overwhelming as to dwarf the difference between the individual efficiency of different men. Say, for instance, that the formation added ten to the fighting force of every member, then the man who outside the ranks was as two to one in power compared with his comrade would, when they both stood in the ranks, compare with him only as twelve to eleven—an inconsiderable difference.

"I need scarcely point out to you, Julian, the bearing of the principle of the social fund on economic equality when the industrial system was nationalized. It made it obvious that even if it were possible to figure out in a satisfactory manner the difference in the industrial products which in an accounting with the social fund could be respectively credited to differences in individual performance, the result would not be worth the trouble. Even the worker of special ability, who might hope to gain most by it, could not hope to gain so much as he would lose in common with others by sacrificing the increased efficiency of the industrial machinery that would result from the sentiment of solidarity and public spirit among the workers arising from a feeling of complete unity of interest."

"Doctor," I exclaimed, "I like that idea of the social fund immensely! It makes me understand, among other things, the completeness with which you seem to have outgrown the wages notion, which in one form or other was fundamental to all economic thought in my day. It is because you are accustomed to regarding the social capital rather than your day-to-day specific exertions as the main source of your wealth. It is, in a word, the difference between the attitude of the capitalist and the proletarian."

"Even so," said the doctor. "The Revolution made us all capitalists, and the idea of the dividend has driven out that of the stipend. We take wages only in honor. From our point of view as to the collective ownership of the economic machinery of the social system, and the absolute claim of society collectively to its product, there is something

amusing in the laborious disputations by which your contemporaries used to try to settle just how much or little wages or compensation for services this or that individual or group was entitled to. Why, dear me, Julian, if the cleverest worker were limited to his own product, strictly separated and distinguished from the elements by which the use of the social machinery had multiplied it, he would fare no better than a half-starved savage. Everybody is entitled not only to his own product, but to vastly more—namely, to his share of the product of the social organism, in addition to his personal product, but he is entitled to this share not on the grab-as-grab-can plan of your day, by which some made themselves millionaires and others were left beggars, but on equal terms with all his fellow-capitalists.”

”The idea of an unearned increment given to private properties by the social organism was talked of in my day,” I said, ”but only, as I remember, with reference to land values. There were reformers who held that society had the right to take in taxes all increase in value of land that resulted from social factors, such as increased population or public improvements, but they seemed to think the doctrine applicable to land only.”

”Yes,” said the doctor, ”and it is rather odd that, having hold of the clew, they did not follow it up.”

## CHAPTER XIV.

### WE LOOK OVER MY COLLECTION OF HARNESSSES.

Wires for light and heat had been put into the vault, and it was as warm and bright and habitable a place as it had been a century before, when it was my sleeping chamber. Kneeling before the door of the safe, I at once addressed myself to manipulating the dial, my companions meanwhile leaning over me in attitudes of eager interest.

It had been one hundred years since I locked the safe the last time, and under ordinary circumstances that would have been long enough for me to forget the combination several times over, but it was as fresh in my mind as if I had devised it a fortnight before, that being, in fact, the entire length of the intervening period so far as my conscious life was concerned.

”You observe,” I said, ”that I turn this dial until the letter ’K’ comes opposite the letter ’R.’ Then I move this other dial till the number ’9’ comes opposite the same point. Now the safe is practically unlocked. All I have to do to open it is to turn this knob, which moves the bolts, and then swing the door open, as you see.”

But they did not see just then, for the knob would not turn, the lock remaining fast. I knew that I had made no mistake about the combination. Some of the tumblers in the lock had failed to fall. I tried it over again several times and thumped the dial and the door, but it was of no use. The lock remained stubborn. One might have said that its memory was not as good as mine. It had forgotten the combination. A materialistic explanation somewhat more probable was that the oil in the lock had been hardened by time so as to offer a slight resistance. The lock could not have rusted, for the atmosphere of the room had been absolutely dry. Otherwise I should not have survived.

"I am sorry to disappoint you," I said, "but we shall have to send to the headquarters of the safe manufacturers for a locksmith. I used to know just where in Sudbury Street to go, but I suppose the safe business has moved since then."

"It has not merely moved," said the doctor, "it has disappeared; there are safes like this at the historical museum, but I never knew how they were opened until now. It is really very ingenious."

"And do you mean to say that there are actually no locksmiths to-day who could open this safe?"

"Any machinist can cut the steel like cardboard," replied the doctor; "but really I don't believe there is a man in the world who could pick the lock. We have, of course, simple locks to insure privacy and keep children out of mischief, but nothing calculated to offer serious resistance either to force or cunning. The craft of the locksmith is extinct."

At this Edith, who was impatient to see the safe opened, exclaimed that the twentieth century had nothing to boast of if it could not solve a puzzle which any clever burglar of the nineteenth century was equal to.

"From the point of view of an impatient young woman it may seem so," said the doctor. "But we must remember that lost arts often are monuments of human progress, indicating outgrown limitations and necessities, to which they ministered. It is because we have no more thieves that we have no more locksmiths. Poor Julian had to go to all this pains to protect the papers in that safe, because if he lost them he would be left a beggar, and, from being one of the masters of the many, would have become one of the servants of the few, and perhaps be tempted to turn burglar himself. No wonder locksmiths were in demand in those days. But now you see, even supposing any one in a community enjoying universal and equal wealth could wish to steal anything, there is nothing that he could steal with a view to selling it again. Our wealth consists in the guarantee of an equal share in the capital and income of the nation—a guarantee that is personal and can not be taken from us nor given away, being vested in each one at birth, and divested only by death. So you see the locksmith

and safe-maker would be very useless persons.”

As we talked, I had continued to work the dial in the hope that the obstinate tumbler might be coaxed to act, and presently a faint click rewarded my efforts and I swung the door open.

”Faugh!” exclaimed Edith at the musty gust of confined air which followed. ”I am sorry for your people if that is a fair sample of what you had to breathe.”

”It is probably about the only sample left, at any rate,” observed the doctor.

”Dear me! what a ridiculous little box it turns out to be for such a pretentious outside!” exclaimed Edith’s mother.

”Yes,” said I. ”The thick walls are to make the contents fireproof as well as burglar-proof—and, by the way, I should think you would need fireproof safes still.”

”We have no fires, except in the old structures,” replied the doctor. ”Since building was undertaken by the people collectively, you see we could not afford to have them, for destruction of property means to the nation a dead loss, while under private capitalism the loss might be shuffled off on others in all sorts of ways. They could get insured, but the nation has to insure itself.”

Opening the inner door of the safe, I took out several drawers full of securities of all sorts, and emptied them on the table in the room.

”Are these stuffy-looking papers what you used to call wealth?” said Edith, with evident disappointment.

”Not the papers in themselves,” I said, ”but what they represented.”

”And what was that?” she asked.

”The ownership of land, houses, mills, ships, railroads, and all manner of other things,” I replied, and went on as best I could to explain to her mother and herself about rents, profits, interest, dividends, etc. But it was evident, from the blank expression of their countenances, that I was not making much headway.

Presently the doctor looked up from the papers which he was devouring with the zeal of an antiquarian, and chuckled.

”I am afraid, Julian, you are on the wrong tack. You see economic science in your day was a science of things; in our day it is a science of human beings. We have nothing at all answering to your rent, interest, profits, or other financial devices, and the terms expressing them have no meaning

now except to students. If you wish Edith and her mother to understand you, you must translate these money terms into terms of men and women and children, and the plain facts of their relations as affected by your system. Shall you consider it impertinent if I try to make the matter a little clearer to them?"

"I shall be much obliged to you," I said; "and perhaps you will at the same time make it clearer to me."

"I think," said the doctor, "that we shall all understand the nature and value of these documents much better if, instead of speaking of them as titles of ownership in farms, factories, mines, railroads, etc., we state plainly that they were evidences that their possessors were the masters of various groups of men, women, and children in different parts of the country. Of course, as Julian says, the documents nominally state his title to things only, and say nothing about men and women. But it is the men and women who went with the lands, the machines, and various other things, and were bound to them by their bodily necessities, which gave all the value to the possession of the things.

"But for the implication that there were men who, because they must have the use of the land, would submit to labor for the owner of it in return for permission to occupy it, these deeds and mortgages would have been of no value. So of these factory shares. They speak only of water power and looms, but they would be valueless but for the thousands of human workers bound to the machines by bodily necessities as fixedly as if they were chained there. So of these coal-mine shares. But for the multitude of wretched beings condemned by want to labor in living graves, of what value would have been these shares which yet make no mention of them? And see again how significant is the fact that it was deemed needless to make mention of and to enumerate by name these serfs of the field, of the loom, of the mine! Under systems of chattel slavery, such as had formerly prevailed, it was necessary to name and identify each chattel, that he might be recovered in case of escape, and an account made of the loss in case of death. But there was no danger of loss by the escape or the death of the serfs transferred by these documents. They would not run away, for there was nothing better to run to or any escape from the world-wide economic system which enthralled them; and if they died, that involved no loss to their owners, for there were always plenty more to take their places. Decidedly, it would have been a waste of paper to enumerate them.

"Just now at the breakfast table," continued the doctor, "I was explaining the modern view of the economic system of private capitalism as one based on the compulsory servitude of the masses to the capitalists, a servitude which the latter enforced by monopolizing the bulk of the world's resources and machinery, leaving the pressure of want to compel the masses to accept their yoke, the police and soldiers meanwhile defending them in their monopolies. These documents turn up in a very timely way to illustrate the ingenious and effectual methods by which the different sorts of workers were organized for the service of

the capitalists. To use a plain illustration, these various sorts of so-called securities may be described as so many kinds of human harness by which the masses, broken and tamed by the pressure of want, were yoked and strapped to the chariots of the capitalists.

"For instance, here is a bundle of farm mortgages on Kansas farms. Very good; by virtue of the operation of this security certain Kansas farmers worked for the owner of it, and though they might never know who he was nor he who they were, yet they were as securely and certainly his thralls as if he had stood over them with a whip instead of sitting in his parlor at Boston, New York, or London. This mortgage harness was generally used to hitch in the agricultural class of the population. Most of the farmers of the West were pulling in it toward the end of the nineteenth century.—Was it not so, Julian? Correct me if I am wrong."

"You are stating the facts very accurately," I answered. "I am beginning to understand more clearly the nature of my former property."

"Now let us see what this bundle is," pursued the doctor. "Ah! yes; these are shares in New England cotton factories. This sort of harness was chiefly used for women and children, the sizes ranging away down so as to fit girls and boys of eleven and twelve. It used to be said that it was only the margin of profit furnished by the almost costless labor of the little children that made these factories paying properties. The population of New England was largely broken in at a very tender age to work in this style of harness.

"Here, now, is a little different sort. These are railroad, gas, and water-works shares. They were a sort of comprehensive harness, by which not only a particular class of workers but whole communities were hitched in and made to work for the owner of the security.

"And, finally, we have here the strongest harness of all, the Government bond. This document, you see, is a bond of the United States Government. By it seventy million people—the whole nation, in fact—were harnessed to the coach of the owner of this bond; and, what was more, the driver in this case was the Government itself, against which the team would find it hard to kick. There was a great deal of kicking and balking in the other sorts of harness, and the capitalists were often inconvenienced and temporarily deprived of the labor of the men they had bought and paid for with good money. Naturally, therefore, the Government bond was greatly prized by them as an investment. They used every possible effort to induce the various governments to put more and more of this sort of harness on the people, and the governments, being carried on by the agents of the capitalists, of course kept on doing so, up to the very eve of the great Revolution, which was to turn the bonds and all the other harnesses into waste paper."

"As a representative of the nineteenth century," I said, "I can not deny the substantial correctness of your rather startling way of describing

our system of investments. Still, you will admit that, bad as the system was and bitter as was the condition of the masses under it, the function performed by the capitalists in organizing and directing such industry as we had was a service to the world of some value."

"Certainly, certainly," replied the doctor. "The same plea might be urged, and has been, in defense of every system by which men have ever made other men their servants from the beginning. There was always some service, generally valuable and indispensable, which the oppressors could urge and did urge as the ground and excuse of the servitude they enforced. As men grew wiser they observed that they were paying a ruinous price for the services thus rendered. So at first they said to the kings: 'To be sure, you help defend the state from foreigners and hang thieves, but it is too much to ask us to be your serfs in exchange; we can do better.' And so they established republics. So also, presently, the people said to the priests: 'You have done something for us, but you have charged too much for your services in asking us to submit our minds to you; we can do better.' And so they established religious liberty.

"And likewise, in this last matter we are speaking of, the people finally said to the capitalists: 'Yes, you have organized our industry, but at the price of enslaving us. We can do better.' And substituting national co-operation for capitalism, they established the industrial republic based on economic democracy. If it were true, Julian, that any consideration of service rendered to others, however valuable, could excuse the benefactors for making bondmen of the benefited, then there never was a despotism or slave system which could not excuse itself."

"Haven't you some real money to show us," said Edith, "something besides these papers—some gold and silver such as they have at the museum?"

It was not customary in the nineteenth century for people to keep large supplies of ready money in their houses, but for emergencies I had a little stock of it in my safe, and in response to Edith's request I took out a drawer containing several hundred dollars in gold and emptied it on the table.

"How pretty they are!" exclaimed Edith, thrusting her hands in the pile of yellow coins and clinking them together. "And is it really true that if you only had enough of these things, no matter how or where you got them, men and women would submit themselves to you and let you make what use you pleased of them?"

"Not only would they let you use them as you pleased, but they would be extremely grateful to you for being so good as to use them instead of others. The poor fought each other for the privilege of being the servants and underlings of those who had the money."

"Now I see," said Edith, "what the Masters of the Bread meant."

"What is that about Masters of the Bread?" I asked. "Who were they?"

"It was a name given to the capitalists in the revolutionary period," replied the doctor. "This thing Edith speaks of is a scrap of the literature of that time, when the people first began to fully wake up to the fact that class monopoly of the machinery of production meant slavery for the mass."

"Let me see if I can recall it," said Edith. "It begins this way: 'Everywhere men, women, and children stood in the market-place crying to the Masters of the Bread to take them to be their servants, that they might have bread. The strong men said: "O Lords of the Bread, feel our thews and sinews, our arms and our legs; see how strong we are. Take us and use us. Let us dig for you. Let us hew for you. Let us go down in the mine and delve for you. Let us freeze and starve in the forecastles of your ships. Send us into the hells of your steamship stokeholes. Do what you will with us, but let us serve you, that we may eat and not die!"

"Then spoke up also the learned men, the scribes and the lawyers, whose strength was in their brains and not in their bodies: "O Masters of the Bread," they said, "take us to be your servants and to do your will. See how fine is our wit, how great our knowledge; our minds are stored with the treasures of learning and the subtlety of all the philosophies. To us has been given clearer vision than to others, and the power of persuasion that we should be leaders of the people, voices to the voiceless, and eyes to the blind. But the people whom we should serve have no bread to give us. Therefore, Masters of the Bread, give us to eat, and we will betray the people to you, for we must live. We will plead for you in the courts against the widow and the fatherless. We will speak and write in your praise, and with cunning words confound those who speak against you and your power and state. And nothing that you require of us shall seem too much. But because we sell not only our bodies, but our souls also, give us more bread than these laborers receive, who sell their bodies only."

"And the priests and Levites also cried out as the Lords of the Bread passed through the market-place: "Take us, Masters, to be your servants and to do your will, for we also must eat, and you only have the bread. We are the guardians of the sacred oracles, and the people hearken unto us and reply not, for our voice to them is as the voice of God. But we must have bread to eat like others. Give us therefore plentifully of your bread, and we will speak to the people, that they be still and trouble you not with their murmurings because of hunger. In the name of God the Father will we forbid them to claim the rights of brothers, and in the name of the Prince of Peace will we preach your law of competition."

"And above all the clamor of the men were heard the voices of a multitude of women crying to the Masters of the Bread: "Pass us not by, for we must also eat. The men are stronger than we, but they eat much bread while we eat little, so that though we be not so strong yet in the

end you shall not lose if you take us to be your servants instead of them. And if you will not take us for our labor's sake, yet look upon us: we are women, and should be fair in your eyes. Take us and do with us according to your pleasure, for we must eat."

"And above all the chaffering of the market, the hoarse voices of the men, and the shrill voices of the women, rose the piping treble of the little children, crying: "Take us to be your servants, for the breasts of our mothers are dry and our fathers have no bread for us, and we hunger. We are weak, indeed, but we ask so little, so very little, that at last we shall be cheaper to you than the men, our fathers, who eat so much, and the women, our mothers, who eat more than we."

"And the Masters of the Bread, having taken for their use or pleasure such of the men, the women, and the little ones as they saw fit, passed by. And there was left a great multitude in the market-place for whom there was no bread."

"Ah!" said the doctor, breaking the silence which followed the ceasing of Edith's voice, "it was indeed the last refinement of indignity put upon human nature by your economic system that it compelled men to seek the sale of themselves. Voluntary in a real sense the sale was not, of course, for want or the fear of it left no choice as to the necessity of selling themselves to somebody, but as to the particular transaction there was choice enough to make it shameful. They had to seek those to whom to offer themselves and actively to procure their own purchase. In this respect the submission of men to other men through the relation of hire was more abject than under a slavery resting directly on force. In that case the slave might be compelled to yield to physical duress, but he could still keep a mind free and resentful toward his master; but in the relation of hire men sought for their masters and begged as a favor that they would use them, body and mind, for their profit or pleasure. To the view of us moderns, therefore, the chattel slave was a more dignified and heroic figure than the hireling of your day who called himself a free worker.

"It was possible for the slave to rise in soul above his circumstances and be a philosopher in bondage like Epictetus, but the hireling could not scorn the bonds he sought. The abjectness of his position was not merely physical but mental. In selling himself he had necessarily sold his independence of mind also. Your whole industrial system seems in this point of view best and most fitly described by a word which you oddly enough reserved to designate a particular phase of self-selling practiced by women.

"Labor for others in the name of love and kindness, and labor with others for a common end in which all are mutually interested, and labor for its own joy, are alike honorable, but the hiring out of our faculties to the selfish uses of others, which was the form labor generally took in your day, is unworthy of human nature. The Revolution for the first time in

history made labor truly honorable by putting it on the basis of fraternal co-operation for a common and equally shared result. Until then it was at best but a shameful necessity."

Presently I said: "When you have satisfied your curiosity as to these papers I suppose we might as well make a bonfire of them, for they seem to have no more value now than a collection of heathen fetiches after the former worshippers have embraced Christianity."

"Well, and has not such a collection a value to the student of history?" said the doctor. "Of course, these documents are scarcely now valuable in the sense they were, but in another they have much value. I see among them several varieties which are quite scarce in the historical collections, and if you feel disposed to present the whole lot to our museum I am sure the gift will be much appreciated. The fact is, the great bonfire our grandfathers made, while a very natural and excusable expression of jubilation over broken bondage, is much to be regretted from an archaeological point of view."

"What do you mean by the great bonfire?" I inquired.

"It was a rather dramatic incident at the close of the great Revolution. When the long struggle was ended and economic equality, guaranteed by the public administration of capital, had been established, the people got together from all parts of the land enormous collections of what you used to call the evidences of value, which, while purporting to be certificates of property in things, had been really certificates of the ownership of men, deriving, as we have seen, their whole value from the serfs attached to the things by the constraint of bodily necessities. These it pleased the people—exalted, as you may well imagine, by the afflatus of liberty—to collect in a vast mass on the site of the New York Stock Exchange, the great altar of Plutus, whereon millions of human beings had been sacrificed to him, and there to make a bonfire of them. A great pillar stands on the spot to-day, and from its summit a mighty torch of electric flame is always streaming, in commemoration of that event and as a testimony forever to the ending of the parchment bondage that was heavier than the scepters of kings. It is estimated that certificates of ownership in human beings, or, as you called them, titles to property, to the value of forty billion dollars, together with hundreds of millions of paper money, went up in that great blaze, which we devoutly consider must have been, of all the innumerable burnt sacrifices which have been offered up to God from the beginning, the one that pleased him best.

"Now, if I had been there, I can easily imagine that I should have rejoiced over that conflagration as much as did the most exultant of those who danced about it; but from the calmer point of view of the present I regret the destruction of a mass of historic material. So you see that your bonds and deeds and mortgages and shares of stock are really valuable still."

## CHAPTER XV.

### WHAT WE WERE COMING TO BUT FOR THE REVOLUTION.

"We read in the histories," said Edith's mother, "much about the amazing extent to which particular individuals and families succeeded in concentrating in their own hands the natural resources, industrial machinery, and products of the several countries. Julian had only a million dollars, but many individuals or families had, we are told, wealth amounting to fifty, a hundred, and even two or three hundred millions. We read of infants who in the cradle were heirs of hundreds of millions. Now, something I never saw mentioned in the books was the limit, for there must have been some limit fixed, to which one individual might appropriate the earth's surface and resources, the means of production, and the products of labor."

"There was no limit," I replied.

"Do you mean," exclaimed Edith, "that if a man were only clever and unscrupulous enough he might appropriate, say, the entire territory of a country and leave the people actually nothing to stand on unless by his consent?"

"Certainly," I replied. "In fact, in many countries of the Old World individuals owned whole provinces, and in the United States even vaster tracts had passed and were passing into private and corporate hands. There was no limit whatever to the extent of land which one person might own, and of course this ownership implied the right to evict every human being from the territory unless the owner chose to let individuals remain on payment of tribute."

"And how about other things besides land?" asked Edith.

"It was the same," I said. "There was no limit to the extent to which an individual might acquire the exclusive ownership of all the factories, shops, mines, and means of industry, and commerce of every sort, so that no person could find an opportunity to earn a living except as the servant of the owner and on his terms."

"If we are correctly informed," said the doctor, "the concentration of the ownership of the machinery of production and distribution, trade and industry, had already, before you fell asleep, been carried to a point in the United States through trusts and syndicates which excited general alarm."

"Certainly," I replied. "It was then already in the power of a score of men in New York city to stop at will every car-wheel in the United States, and the combined action of a few other groups of capitalists would have sufficed practically to arrest the industries and commerce of the entire country, forbid employment to everybody, and starve the entire population. The self-interest of these capitalists in keeping business going on was the only ground of assurance the rest of the people had for their livelihood from day to day. Indeed, when the capitalists desired to compel the people to vote as they wished, it was their regular custom to threaten to stop the industries of the country and produce a business crisis if the election did not go to suit them."

"Suppose, Julian, an individual or family or group of capitalists, having become sole owners of all the land and machinery of one nation, should wish to go on and acquire the sole ownership of all the land and economic means and machinery of the whole earth, would that have been inconsistent with your law of property?"

"Not at all. If one individual, as you suggest, through the effect of cunning and skill combined with inheritances, should obtain a legal title to the whole globe, it would be his to do what he pleased with as absolutely as if it were a garden patch, according to our law of property. Nor is your supposition about one person or family becoming owner of the whole earth a wholly fanciful one. There was, when I fell asleep, one family of European bankers whose world-wide power and resources were so vast and increasing at such a prodigious and accelerating rate that they had already an influence over the destinies of nations wider than perhaps any monarch ever exercised."

"And if I understand your system, if they had gone on and attained the ownership of the globe to the lowest inch of standing room at low tide, it would have been the legal right of that family or single individual, in the name of the sacred right of property, to give the people of the human race legal notice to move off the earth, and in case of their failure to comply with the requirement of the notice, to call upon them in the name of the law to form themselves into sheriffs' \_posses\_ and evict themselves from the earth's surface?"

"Unquestionably."

"O father," exclaimed Edith, "you and Julian are trying to make fun of us. You must think we will believe anything if you only keep straight faces. But you are going too far."

"I do not wonder you think so," said the doctor. "But you can easily satisfy yourself from the books that we have in no way exaggerated the possibilities of the old system of property. What was called under that system the right of property meant the unlimited right of anybody who was clever enough to deprive everybody else of any property whatever."

"It would seem, then," said Edith, "that the dream of world conquest by an individual, if ever realized, was more likely under the old regime to be realized by economic than by military means."

"Very true," said the doctor. "Alexander and Napoleon mistook their trade; they should have been bankers, not soldiers. But, indeed, the time was not in their day ripe for a world-wide money dynasty, such as we have been speaking of. Kings had a rude way of interfering with the so-called rights of property when they conflicted with royal prestige or produced dangerous popular discontent. Tyrants themselves, they did not willingly brook rival tyrants in their dominions. It was not till the kings had been shorn of power and the interregnum of sham democracy had set in, leaving no virile force in the state or the world to resist the money power, that the opportunity for a world-wide plutocratic despotism arrived. Then, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, when international trade and financial relations had broken down national barriers and the world had become one field of economic enterprise, did the idea of a universally dominant and centralized money power become not only possible, but, as Julian has said, had already so far materialized itself as to cast its shadow before. If the Revolution had not come when it did, we can not doubt that something like this universal plutocratic dynasty or some highly centered oligarchy, based upon the complete monopoly of all property by a small body, would long before this time have become the government of the world. But of course the Revolution must have come when it did, so we need not talk of what would have happened if it had not come."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### AN EXCUSE THAT CONDEMNED.

"I have read," said Edith, "that there never was a system of oppression so bad that those who benefited by it did not recognize the moral sense so far as to make some excuse for themselves. Was the old system of property distribution, by which the few held the many in servitude through fear of starvation, an exception to this rule? Surely the rich could not have looked the poor in the face unless they had some excuse to offer, some color of reason to give for the cruel contrast between their conditions."

"Thanks for reminding us of that point," said the doctor. "As you say, there never was a system so bad that it did not make an excuse for itself. It would not be strictly fair to the old system to dismiss it without considering the excuse made for it, although, on the other hand, it would really be kinder not to mention it, for it was an excuse that, far from excusing, furnished an additional ground of condemnation for the

system which it undertook to justify.”

”What was the excuse?” asked Edith.

”It was the claim that, as a matter of justice, every one is entitled to the effect of his qualities—that is to say, the result of his abilities, the fruit of his efforts. The qualities, abilities, and efforts of different persons being different, they would naturally acquire advantages over others in wealth seeking as in other ways; but as this was according to Nature, it was urged that it must be right, and nobody had any business to complain, unless of the Creator.

”Now, in the first place, the theory that a person has a right in dealing with his fellows to take advantage of his superior abilities is nothing other than a slightly more roundabout expression of the doctrine that might is right. It was precisely to prevent their doing this that the policeman stood on the corner, the judge sat on the bench, and the hangman drew his fees. The whole end and amount of civilization had indeed been to substitute for the natural law of superior might an artificial equality by force of statute, whereby, in disregard of their natural differences, the weak and simple were made equal to the strong and cunning by means of the collective force lent them.

”But while the nineteenth-century moralists denied as sharply as we do men’s right to take advantage of their superiorities in direct dealings by physical force, they held that they might rightly do so when the dealings were indirect and carried on through the medium of things. That is to say, a man might not so much as jostle another while drinking a cup of water lest he should spill it, but he might acquire the spring of water on which the community solely depended and make the people pay a dollar a drop for water or go without. Or if he filled up the spring so as to deprive the population of water on any terms, he was held to be acting within his right. He might not by force take away a bone from a beggar’s dog, but he might corner the grain supply of a nation and reduce millions to starvation.

”If you touch a man’s living you touch him, would seem to be about as plain a truth as could be put in words; but our ancestors had not the least difficulty in getting around it. ’Of course,’ they said, ’you must not touch the man; to lay a finger on him would be an assault punishable by law. But his living is quite a different thing. That depends on bread, meat, clothing, land, houses, and other material things, which you have an unlimited right to appropriate and dispose of as you please without the slightest regard to whether anything is left for the rest of the world.’

”I think I scarcely need dwell on the entire lack of any moral justification for the different rule which our ancestors followed in determining what use you might rightly make of your superior powers in dealing with your neighbor directly by physical force and indirectly by

economic duress. No one can have any more or other right to take away another's living by superior economic skill or financial cunning than if he used a club, simply because no one has any right to take advantage of any one else or to deal with him otherwise than justly by any means whatever. The end itself being immoral, the means employed could not possibly make any difference. Moralists at a pinch used to argue that a good end might justify bad means, but none, I think, went so far as to claim that good means justified a bad end; yet this was precisely what the defenders of the old property system did in fact claim when they argued that it was right for a man to take away the living of others and make them his servants, if only his triumph resulted from superior talent or more diligent devotion to the acquisition of material things.

"But indeed the theory that the monopoly of wealth could be justified by superior economic ability, even if morally sound, would not at all have fitted the old property system, for of all conceivable plans for distributing property, none could have more absolutely defied every notion of desert based on economic effort. None could have been more utterly wrong if it were true that wealth ought to be distributed according to the ability and industry displayed by individuals."

"All this talk started with the discussion of Julian's fortune. Now tell us, Julian, was your million dollars the result of your economic ability, the fruit of your industry?"

"Of course not," I replied. "Every cent of it was inherited. As I have often told you, I never lifted a finger in a useful way in my life."

"And were you the only person whose property came to him by descent without effort of his own?"

"On the contrary, title by descent was the basis and backbone of the whole property system. All land, except in the newest countries, together with the bulk of the more stable kinds of property, was held by that title."

"Precisely so. We hear what Julian says. While the moralists and the clergy solemnly justified the inequalities of wealth and reproved the discontent of the poor on the ground that those inequalities were justified by natural differences in ability and diligence, they knew all the time, and everybody knew who listened to them, that the foundation principle of the whole property system was not ability, effort, or desert of any kind whatever, but merely the accident of birth, than which no possible claim could more completely mock at ethics."

"But, Julian," exclaimed Edith, "you must surely have had some way of excusing yourself to your conscience for retaining in the presence of a needy world such an excess of good things as you had!"

"I am afraid," I said, "that you can not easily imagine how callous was

the cuticle of the nineteenth-century conscience. There may have been some of my class on the intellectual plane of little Jack Horner in Mother Goose, who concluded he must be a good boy because he pulled out a plum, but I did not at least belong to that grade. I never gave much thought to the subject of my right to an abundance which I had done nothing to earn in the midst of a starving world of toilers, but occasionally, when I did think of it, I felt like craving pardon of the beggar who asked alms for being in a position to give to him."

"It is impossible to get up any sort of a quarrel with Julian," said the doctor; "but there were others of his class less rational. Cornered as to their moral claim to their possessions, they fell back on that of their ancestors. They argued that these ancestors, assuming them to have had a right by merit to their possessions, had as an incident of that merit the right to give them to others. Here, of course, they absolutely confused the ideas of legal and moral right. The law might indeed give a person power to transfer a legal title to property in any way that suited the lawmakers, but the meritorious right to the property, resting as it did on personal desert, could not in the nature of moral things be transferred or ascribed to any one else. The cleverest lawyer would never have pretended that he could draw up a document that would carry over the smallest tittle of merit from one person to another, however close the tie of blood.

"In ancient times it was customary to hold children responsible for the debts of their fathers and sell them into slavery to make satisfaction. The people of Julian's day found it unjust thus to inflict upon innocent offspring the penalty of their ancestors' faults. But if these children did not deserve the consequences of their ancestors' sloth, no more had they any title to the product of their ancestors' industry. The barbarians who insisted on both sorts of inheritance were more logical than Julian's contemporaries, who, rejecting one sort of inheritance, retained the other. Will it be said that at least the later theory of inheritance was more humane, although one-sided? Upon that point you should have been able to get the opinion of the disinherited masses who, by reason of the monopolizing of the earth and its resources from generation to generation by the possessors of inherited property, were left no place to stand on and no way to live except by permission of the inheriting class."

"Doctor," I said, "I have nothing to offer against all that. We who inherited our wealth had no moral title to it, and that we knew as well as everybody else did, although it was not considered polite to refer to the fact in our presence. But if I am going to stand up here in the pillory as a representative of the inheriting class, there are others who ought to stand beside me. We were not the only ones who had no right to our money. Are you not going to say anything about the money makers, the rascals who raked together great fortunes in a few years by wholesale fraud and extortion?"

"Pardon me, I was just coming to them," said the doctor. "You ladies must remember," he continued, "that the rich, who in Julian's day possessed nearly everything of value in every country, leaving the masses mere scraps and crumbs, were of two sorts: those who had inherited their wealth, and those who, as the saying was, had made it. We have seen how far the inheriting class were justified in their holdings by the principle which the nineteenth century asserted to be the excuse for wealth—namely, that individuals were entitled to the fruit of their labors. Let us next inquire how far the same principle justified the possessions of these others whom Julian refers to, who claimed that they had made their money themselves, and showed in proof lives absolutely devoted from childhood to age without rest or respite to the piling up of gains. Now, of course, labor in itself, however arduous, does not imply moral desert. It may be a criminal activity. Let us see if these men who claimed that they made their money had any better title to it than Julian's class by the rule put forward as the excuse for unequal wealth, that every one has a right to the product of his labor. The most complete statement of the principle of the right of property, as based on economic effort, which has come down to us, is this maxim: 'Every man is entitled to his own product, his whole product, and nothing but his product.' Now, this maxim had a double edge, a negative as well as a positive, and the negative edge is very sharp. If everybody was entitled to his own product, nobody else was entitled to any part of it, and if any one's accumulation was found to contain any product not strictly his own, he stood condemned as a thief by the law he had invoked. If in the great fortunes of the stockjobbers, the railroad kings, the bankers, the great landlords, and the other moneyed lords who boasted that they had begun life with a shilling—if in these great fortunes of mushroom rapidity of growth there was anything that was properly the product of the efforts of any one but the owner, it was not his, and his possession of it condemned him as a thief. If he would be justified, he must not be more careful to obtain all that was his own product than to avoid taking anything that was not his product. If he insisted upon the pound of flesh awarded him by the letter of the law, he must stick to the letter, observing the warning of Portia to Shylock:

Nor cut thou less nor more  
But just a pound of flesh; if thou tak'st more  
Or less than a just pound, be it so much  
As makes light or heavy in the substance,  
Or the division of the twentieth part  
Of one poor scruple; nay, if the scale do turn  
But in the estimation of a hair,  
Thou diest, and thy goods are confiscate.

How many of the great fortunes heaped up by the self-made men of your day, Julian, would have stood that test?"

"It is safe to say," I replied, "that there was not one of the lot whose lawyer would not have advised him to do as Shylock did, and resign his

claim rather than try to push it at the risk of the penalty. Why, dear me, there never would have been any possibility of making a great fortune in a lifetime if the maker had confined himself to his own product. The whole acknowledged art of wealth-making on a large scale consisted in devices for getting possession of other people's product without too open breach of the law. It was a current and a true saying of the times that nobody could honestly acquire a million dollars. Everybody knew that it was only by extortion, speculation, stock gambling, or some other form of plunder under pretext of law that such a feat could be accomplished. You yourselves can not condemn the human cormorants who piled up these heaps of ill-gotten gains more bitterly than did the public opinion of their own time. The execration and contempt of the community followed the great money-getters to their graves, and with the best of reason. I have had nothing to say in defense of my own class, who inherited our wealth, but actually the people seemed to have more respect for us than for these others who claimed to have made their money. For if we inheritors had confessedly no moral right to the wealth we had done nothing to produce or acquire, yet we had committed no positive wrong to obtain it."

"You see," said the doctor, "what a pity it would have been if we had forgotten to compare the excuse offered by the nineteenth century for the unequal distribution of wealth with the actual facts of that distribution. Ethical standards advance from age to age, and it is not always fair to judge the systems of one age by the moral standards of a later one. But we have seen that the property system of the nineteenth century would have gained nothing by way of a milder verdict by appealing from the moral standards of the twentieth to those of the nineteenth century. It was not necessary, in order to justify its condemnation, to invoke the modern ethics of wealth which deduce the rights of property from the rights of man. It was only necessary to apply to the actual realities of the system the ethical plea put forth in its defense—namely, that everybody was entitled to the fruit of his own labor, and was not entitled to the fruit of anybody's else—to leave not one stone upon another of the whole fabric."

"But was there, then, absolutely no class under your system," said Edith's mother, "which even by the standards of your time could claim an ethical as well as a legal title to their possessions?"

"Oh, yes," I replied, "we have been speaking of the rich. You may set it down as a rule that the rich, the possessors of great wealth, had no moral right to it as based upon desert, for either their fortunes belonged to the class of inherited wealth, or else, when accumulated in a lifetime, necessarily represented chiefly the product of others, more or less forcibly or fraudulently obtained. There were, however, a great number of modest competencies, which were recognized by public opinion as being no more than a fair measure of the service rendered by their possessors to the community. Below these there was the vast mass of well-nigh wholly penniless toilers, the real people. Here there was indeed abundance of ethical title to property, for these were the

producers of all; but beyond the shabby clothing they wore, they had little or no property."

"It would seem," said Edith, "that, speaking generally, the class which chiefly had the property had little or no right to it, even according to the ideas of your day, while the masses which had the right had little or no property."

"Substantially that was the case," I replied. "That is to say, if you took the aggregate of property held by the merely legal title of inheritance, and added to it all that had been obtained by means which public opinion held to be speculative, extortionate, fraudulent, or representing results in excess of services rendered, there would be little property left, and certainly none at all in considerable amounts."

"From the preaching of the clergy in Julian's time," said the doctor, "you would have thought the corner stone of Christianity was the right of property, and the supreme crime was the wrongful appropriation of property. But if stealing meant only taking that from another to which he had a sound ethical title, it must have been one of the most difficult of all crimes to commit for lack of the requisite material. When one took away the possessions of the poor it was reasonably certain that he was stealing, but then they had nothing to take away."

"The thing that seems to me the most utterly incredible about all this terrible story," said Edith, "is that a system which was such a disastrous failure in its effects on the general welfare, which, by disinheriting the great mass of the people, had made them its bitter foes, and which finally even people like Julian, who were its beneficiaries, did not attempt to defend as having any ground of fairness, could have maintained itself a day."

"No wonder it seems incomprehensible to you, as now, indeed, it seems to me as I look back," I replied. "But you can not possibly imagine, as I myself am fast losing the power to do, in my new environment, how benumbing to the mind was the prestige belonging to the immemorial antiquity of the property system as we knew it and of the rule of the rich based on it. No other institution, no other fabric of power ever known to man, could be compared with it as to duration. No different economic order could really be said ever to have been known. There had been changes and fashions in all other human institutions, but no radical change in the system of property. The procession of political, social, and religious systems, the royal, imperial, priestly, democratic epochs, and all other great phases of human affairs, had been as passing cloud shadows, mere fashions of a day, compared with the hoary antiquity of the rule of the rich. Consider how profound and how widely ramified a root in human prejudices such a system must have had, how overwhelming the presumption must have been with the mass of minds against the possibility of making an end of an order that had never been known to have a beginning! What need for excuses or defenders had a system so deeply

based in usage and antiquity as this? It is not too much to say that to the mass of mankind in my day the division of the race into rich and poor, and the subjection of the latter to the former, seemed almost as much a law of Nature as the succession of the seasons—something that might not be agreeable, but was certainly unchangeable. And just here, I can well understand, must have come the hardest as well as, necessarily, the first task of the revolutionary leaders—that is, of overcoming the enormous dead weight of immemorial inherited prejudice against the possibility of getting rid of abuses which had lasted so long, and opening people’s eyes to the fact that the system of wealth distribution was merely a human institution like others, and that if there is any truth in human progress, the longer an institution had endured unchanged, the more completely it was likely to have become out of joint with the world’s progress, and the more radical the change must be which, should bring it into correspondence with other lines of social evolution.”

”That is quite the modern view of the subject,” said the doctor. ”I shall be understood in talking with a representative of the century which invented poker if I say that when the revolutionists attacked the fundamental justice of the old property system, its defenders were able on account of its antiquity to meet them with a tremendous bluff—one which it is no wonder should have been for a time almost paralyzing. But behind the bluff there was absolutely nothing. The moment public opinion could be nerved up to the point of calling it, the game was up. The principle of inheritance, the backbone of the whole property system, at the first challenge of serious criticism abandoned all ethical defense and shriveled into a mere convention established by law, and as rightfully to be disestablished by it in the name of anything fairer. As for the buccaneers, the great money-getters, when the light was once turned on their methods, the question was not so much of saving their booty as their bacon.

”There is historically a marked difference,” the doctor went on, ”between the decline and fall of the systems of royal and priestly power and the passing of the rule of the rich. The former systems were rooted deeply in sentiment and romance, and for ages after their overthrow retained a strong hold on the hearts and imaginations of men. Our generous race has remembered without rancor all the oppressions it has endured save only the rule of the rich. The dominion of the money power had always been devoid of moral basis or dignity, and from the moment its material supports were destroyed, it not only perished, but seemed to sink away at once into a state of putrescence that made the world hurry to bury it forever out of sight and memory.”

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE REVOLUTION SAVES PRIVATE PROPERTY FROM MONOPOLY.

"Really," said her mother, "Edith touched the match to quite a large discussion when she suggested that you should open the safe for us."

To which I added that I had learned more that morning about the moral basis of economic equality and the grounds for the abolition of private property than in my entire previous experience as a citizen of the twentieth century.

"The abolition of private property!" exclaimed the doctor. "What is that you say?"

"Of course," I said, "I am quite ready to admit that you have something—very much better in its place, but private property you have certainly abolished—have you not? Is not that what we have been talking about?"

The doctor turned as if for sympathy to the ladies. "And this young man," he said, "who thinks that we have abolished private property has at this moment in his pocket a card of credit representing a private annual income, for strictly personal use, of four thousand dollars, based upon a share of stock in the wealthiest and soundest corporation in the world, the value of his share, calculating the income on a four-per-cent basis, coming to one hundred thousand dollars."

I felt a little silly at being convicted so palpably of making a thoughtless observation, but the doctor hastened to say that he understood perfectly what had been in my mind. I had, no doubt, heard it a hundred times asserted by the wise men of my day that the equalization of human conditions as to wealth would necessitate destroying the institution of private property, and, without having given special thought to the subject, had naturally assumed that the equalization of wealth having been effected, private property must have been abolished, according to the prediction.

"Thanks," I said; "that is it exactly."

"The Revolution," said the doctor, "abolished private capitalism—that is to say, it put an end to the direction of the industries and commerce of the people by irresponsible persons for their own benefit and transferred that function to the people collectively to be carried on by responsible agents for the common benefit. The change created an entirely new system of property holding, but did not either directly or indirectly involve any denial of the right of private property. Quite on the contrary, the change in system placed the private and personal property rights of every

citizen upon a basis incomparably more solid and secure and extensive than they ever before had or could have had while private capitalism lasted. Let us analyze the effects of the change of systems and see if it was not so."

"Suppose you and a number of other men of your time, all having separate claims in a mining region, formed a corporation to carry on as one mine your consolidated properties, would you have any less private property than you had when you owned your claims separately? You would have changed the mode and tenure of your property, but if the arrangement were a wise one that would be wholly to your advantage, would it not?"

"No doubt."

"Of course, you could no longer exercise the personal and complete control over the consolidated mine which you exercised over your separate claim. You would have, with your fellow-corporators, to intrust the management of the combined property to a board of directors chosen by yourselves, but you would not think that meant a sacrifice of your private property, would you?"

"Certainly not. That was the form under which a very large part, if not the largest part, of private property in my day was invested and controlled."

"It appears, then," said the doctor, "that it is not necessary to the full possession and enjoyment of private property that it should be in a separate parcel or that the owner should exercise a direct and personal control over it. Now, let us further suppose that instead of intrusting the management of your consolidated property to private directors more or less rascally, who would be constantly trying to cheat the stockholders, the nation undertook to manage the business for you by agents chosen by and responsible to you; would that be an attack on your property interests?"

"On the contrary, it would greatly enhance the value of the property. It would be as if a government guarantee were obtained for private bonds."

"Well, that is what the people in the Revolution did with private property. They simply consolidated the property in the country previously held in separate parcels and put the management of the business into the hands of a national agency charged with paying over the dividends to the stockholders for their individual use. So far, surely, it must be admitted the Revolution did not involve any abolition of private property."

"That is true," said I, "except in one particular. It is or used to be a usual incident to the ownership of property that it may be disposed of at will by the owner. The owner of stock in a mine or mill could not indeed sell a piece of the mine or mill, but he could sell his stock in it; but

the citizen now can not dispose of his share in the national concern. He can only dispose of the dividend.”

”Certainly,” replied the doctor; ”but while the power of alienating the principal of one’s property was a usual incident of ownership in your time, it was very far from being a necessary incident or one which was beneficial to the owner, for the right of disposing of property involved the risk of being dispossessed of it by others. I think there were few property owners in your day who would not very gladly have relinquished the right to alienate their property if they could have had it guaranteed indefeasibly to them and their children. So to tie up property by trusts that the beneficiary could not touch the principal was the study of rich people who desired best to protect their heirs. Take the case of entailed estates as another illustration of this idea. Under that mode of holding property the possessor could not sell it, yet it was considered the most desirable sort of property on account of that very fact. The fact you refer to—that the citizen can not alienate his share in the national corporation which forms the basis of his income—tends in the same way to make it a more and not a less valuable sort of property. Certainly its quality as a strictly personal and private sort of property is intensified by the very indefeasibleness with which it is attached to the individual. It might be said that the reorganization of the property system which we are speaking of amounted to making the United States an entailed estate for the equal benefit of the citizens thereof and their descendants forever.”

”You have not yet mentioned” I said, ”the most drastic measure of all by which the Revolution affected private property, namely, the absolute equalizing of the amount of property to be held by each. Here was not perhaps any denial of the principle itself of private property, but it was certainly a prodigious interference with property holders.”

”The distinction is well made. It is of vital importance to a correct apprehension of this subject. History has been full of just such wholesale readjustments of property interests by spoliation, conquest, or confiscation. They have been more or less justifiable, but when least so they were never thought to involve any denial of the idea of private property in itself, for they went right on to reassert it under a different form. Less than any previous readjustment of property relations could the general equalizing of property in the Revolution be called a denial of the right of property. On the precise contrary it was an assertion and vindication of that right on a scale never before dreamed of. Before the Revolution very few of the people had any property at all and no economic provision save from day to day. By the new system all were assured of a large, equal, and fixed share in the total national principal and income. Before the Revolution even those who had secured a property were likely to have it taken from them or to slip from them by a thousand accidents. Even the millionaire had no assurance that his grandson might not become a homeless vagabond or his granddaughter be forced to a life of shame. Under the new system the title of every

citizen to his individual fortune became indefeasible, and he could lose it only when the nation became bankrupt. The Revolution, that is to say, instead of denying or abolishing the institution of private property, affirmed it in an incomparably more positive, beneficial, permanent, and general form than had ever been known before.

"Of course, Julian, it was in the way of human nature quite a matter of course that your contemporaries should have cried out against the idea of a universal right of property as an attack on the principle of property. There was never a prophet or reformer who raised his voice for a purer, more spiritual, and perfect idea of religion whom his contemporaries did not accuse of seeking to abolish religion; nor ever in political affairs did any party proclaim a juster, larger, wiser ideal of government without being accused of seeking to abolish government. So it was quite according to precedent that those who taught the right of all to property should be accused of attacking the right of property. But who, think you, were the true friends and champions of private property? those who advocated a system under which one man if clever enough could monopolize the earth—and a very small number were fast monopolizing it—turning the rest of the race into proletarians, or, on the other hand, those who demanded a system by which all should become property holders on equal terms?"

"It strikes me," I said, "that as soon as the revolutionary leaders succeeded in opening the eyes of the people to this view of the matter, my old friends the capitalists must have found their cry about 'the sacred right of property' turned into a most dangerous sort of boomerang."

"So they did. Nothing could have better served the ends of the Revolution, as we have seen, than to raise the issue of the right of property. Nothing was so desirable as that the people at large should be led to give a little serious consideration on rational and moral grounds to what that right was as compared with what it ought to be. It was very soon, then, that the cry of 'the sacred right of property,' first raised by the rich in the name of the few, was re-echoed with overwhelming effect by the disinherited millions in the name of all."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### AN ECHO OF THE PAST.

"Ah!" exclaimed Edith, who with her mother had been rummaging the drawers of the safe as the doctor and I talked, "here are some letters, if I am not mistaken. It seems, then, you used safes for something besides

money.”

It was, in fact, as I noted with quite indescribable emotion, a packet of letters and notes from Edith Bartlett, written on various occasions during our relation as lovers, that Edith, her great-granddaughter, held in her hand. I took them from her, and opening one, found it to be a note dated May 30, 1887, the very day on which I parted with her forever. In it she asked me to join her family in their Decoration-day visit to the grave at Mount Auburn where her brother lay, who had fallen in the civil war.

”I do not expect, Julian,” she had written, ”that you will adopt all my relations as your own because you marry me—that would be too much—but my hero brother I want you to take for yours, and that is why I would like you to go with us to-day.”

The gold and parchments, once so priceless, now carelessly scattered about the chamber, had lost their value, but these tokens of love had not parted with their potency through lapse of time. As by a magic power they called up in a moment a mist of memories which shut me up in a world of my own—a world in which the present had no part. I do not know for how long I sat thus tranced and oblivious of the silent, sympathizing group around me. It was by a deep involuntary sigh from my own lips that I was at last roused from my abstraction, and returned from the dream world of the past to a consciousness of my present environment and its conditions.

”These are letters,” I said, ”from the other Edith—Edith Bartlett, your great-grandmother. Perhaps you would be interested in looking them over. I don’t know who has a nearer or better claim to them after myself than you and your mother.”

Edith took the letters and began to examine them with reverent curiosity.

”They will be very interesting,” said her mother, ”but I am afraid, Julian, we shall have to ask you to read them for us.”

My countenance no doubt expressed the surprise I felt at this confession of illiteracy on the part of such highly cultivated persons.

”Am I to understand,” I finally inquired, ”that handwriting, and the reading of it, like lock-making, is a lost art?”

”I am afraid it is about so,” replied the doctor, ”although the explanation here is not, as in the other case, economic equality so much as the progress of invention. Our children are still taught to write and to read writing, but they have so little practice in after-life that they usually forget their acquirements pretty soon after leaving school; but really Edith ought still to be able to make out a nineteenth-century letter.—My dear, I am a little ashamed of you.”

"Oh, I can read this, papa," she exclaimed, looking up, with brows still corrugated, from a page she had been studying. "Don't you remember I studied out those old letters of Julian's to Edith Bartlett, which mother had?—though that was years ago, and I have grown rusty since. But I have read nearly two lines of this already. It is really quite plain. I am going to work it all out without any help from anybody except mother."

"Dear me, dear me!" said I, "don't you write letters any more?"

"Well, no," replied the doctor, "practically speaking, handwriting has gone out of use. For correspondence, when we do not telephone, we send phonographs, and use the latter, indeed, for all purposes for which you employed handwriting. It has been so now so long that it scarcely occurs to us that people ever did anything else. But surely this is an evolution that need surprise you little: you had the phonograph, and its possibilities were patent enough from the first. For our important records we still largely use types, of course, but the printed matter is transcribed from phonographic copy, so that really, except in emergencies, there is little use for handwriting. Curious, isn't it, when one comes to think of it, that the riper civilization has grown, the more perishable its records have become? The Chaldeans and Egyptians used bricks, and the Greeks and Romans made more or less use of stone and bronze, for writing. If the race were destroyed to-day and the earth should be visited, say, from Mars, five hundred years later or even less, our books would have perished, and the Roman Empire be accounted the latest and highest stage of human civilization."

## CHAPTER XIX.

"CAN A MAID FORGET HER ORNAMENTS?"

Presently Edith and her mother went into the house to study out the letters, and the doctor being so delightfully absorbed with the stocks and bonds that it would have been unkind not to leave him alone, it struck me that the occasion was favorable for the execution of a private project for which opportunity had hitherto been lacking.

From the moment of receiving my credit card I had contemplated a particular purchase which I desired to make on the first opportunity. This was a betrothal ring for Edith. Gifts in general, it was evident, had lost their value in this age when everybody had everything he wanted, but this was one which, for sentiment's sake, I was sure would still seem as desirable to a woman as ever.

Taking advantage, therefore, of the unusual absorption of my hosts in special interests, I made my way to the great store Edith had taken me to

on a former occasion, the only one I had thus far entered. Not seeing the class of goods which I desired indicated by any of the placards over the alcoves, I presently asked one of the young women attendants to direct me to the jewelry department.

"I beg your pardon," she said, raising her eyebrows a little, "what did I understand you to ask for?"

"The jewelry department," I repeated. "I want to look at some rings."

"Rings," she repeated, regarding me with a rather blank expression. "May I ask what kind of rings, for what sort of use?"

"Finger rings," I repeated, feeling that the young woman could not be so intelligent as she looked.

At the word she glanced at my left hand, on one of the fingers of which I wore a seal ring after a fashion of my day. Her countenance took on an expression at once of intelligence and the keenest interest.

"I beg your pardon a thousand times!" she exclaimed. "I ought to have understood before. You are Julian West?"

I was beginning to be a little nettled with so much mystery about so simple a matter.

"I certainly am Julian West," I said; "but pardon me if I do not see the relevancy of that fact to the question I asked you."

"Oh, you must really excuse me," she said, "but it is most relevant. Nobody in America but just yourself would ask for finger rings. You see they have not been used for so long a period that we have quite ceased to keep them in stock; but if you would like one made to order you have only to leave a description of what you want and it will be at once manufactured."

I thanked her, but concluded that I would not prosecute the undertaking any further until I had looked over the ground a little more thoroughly.

I said nothing about my adventure at home, not caring to be laughed at more than was necessary; but when after dinner I found the doctor alone in his favorite outdoor study on the housetop, I cautiously sounded him on the subject.

Remarking, as if quite in a casual way, that I had not noticed so much as a finger ring worn by any one, I asked him whether the wearing of jewelry had been disused, and, if so, what was the explanation of the abandonment of the custom?

The doctor said that it certainly was a fact that the wearing of jewelry had been virtually an obsolete custom for a couple of generations if not more. "As for the reasons for the fact," he continued, "they really go rather deeply into the direct and indirect consequences of our present economic system. Speaking broadly, I suppose the main and sufficient reason why gold and silver and precious stones have ceased to be prized as ornaments is that they entirely lost their commercial value when the nation organized wealth distribution on the basis of the indefeasible economic equality of all citizens. As you know, a ton of gold or a bushel of diamonds would not secure a loaf of bread at the public stores, nothing availing there except or in addition to the citizen's credit, which depends solely on his citizenship, and is always equal to that of every other citizen. Consequently nothing is worth anything to anybody nowadays save for the use or pleasure he can personally derive from it. The main reason why gems and the precious metals were formerly used as ornaments seems to have been the great convertible value belonging to them, which made them symbols of wealth and importance, and consequently a favorite means of social ostentation. The fact that they have entirely lost this quality would account, I think, largely for their disuse as ornaments, even if ostentation itself had not been deprived of its motive by the law of equality."

"Undoubtedly," I said; "yet there were those who thought them pretty quite apart from their value."

"Well, possibly," replied the doctor. "Yes, I suppose savage races honestly thought so, but, being honest, they did not distinguish between precious stones and glass beads so long as both were equally shiny. As to the pretension of civilized persons to admire gems or gold for their intrinsic beauty apart from their value, I suspect that was a more or less unconscious sham. Suppose, by any sudden abundance, diamonds of the first water had gone down to the value of bottle glass, how much longer do you think they would have been worn by anybody in your day?"

I was constrained to admit that undoubtedly they would have disappeared from view promptly and permanently.

"I imagine," said the doctor, "that good taste, which we understand even in your day rather frowned on the use of such ornaments, came to the aid of the economic influence in promoting their disuse when once the new order of things had been established. The loss by the gems and precious metals of the glamour that belonged to them as forms of concentrated wealth left the taste free to judge of the real aesthetic value of ornamental effects obtained by hanging bits of shining stones and plates and chains and rings of metal about the face and neck and fingers, and the view seems to have been soon generally acquiesced in that such combinations were barbaric and not really beautiful at all."

"But what has become of all the diamonds and rubies and emeralds, and gold and silver jewels?" I exclaimed.

"The metals, of course—silver and gold—kept their uses, mechanical and artistic. They are always beautiful in their proper places, and are as much used for decorative purposes as ever, but those purposes are architectural, not personal, as formerly. Because we do not follow the ancient practice of using paints on our faces and bodies, we use them not the less in what we consider their proper places, and it is just so with gold and silver. As for the precious stones, some of them have found use in mechanical applications, and there are, of course, collections of them in museums here and there. Probably there never were more than a few hundred bushels of precious stones in existence, and it is easy to account for the disappearance and speedy loss of so small a quantity of such minute objects after they had ceased to be prized."

"The reasons you give for the passing of jewelry," I said, "certainly account for the fact, and yet you can scarcely imagine what a surprise I find in it. The degradation of the diamond to the rank of the glass bead, save for its mechanical uses, expresses and typifies as no other one fact to me the completeness of the revolution which at the present time has subordinated things to humanity. It would not be so difficult, of course, to understand that men might readily have dispensed with jewel-wearing, which indeed was never considered in the best of taste as a masculine practice except in barbarous countries, but it would have staggered the prophet Jeremiah to have his query 'Can a maid forget her ornaments?' answered in the affirmative."

The doctor laughed.

"Jeremiah was a very wise man," he said, "and if his attention had been drawn to the subject of economic equality and its effect upon the relation of the sexes, I am sure he would have foreseen as one of its logical results the growth of a sentiment of quite as much philosophy concerning personal ornamentation on the part of women as men have ever displayed. He would not have been surprised to learn that one effect of that equality as between men and women had been to revolutionize women's attitude on the whole question of dress so completely that the most bilious of misogynists—if indeed any were left—would no longer be able to accuse them of being more absorbed in that interest than are men."

"Doctor, doctor, do not ask me to believe that the desire to make herself attractive has ceased to move woman!"

"Excuse me, I did not mean to say anything of the sort," replied the doctor. "I spoke of the disproportionate development of that desire which tends to defeat its own end by over-ornament and excess of artifice. If we may judge from the records of your time, this was quite generally the result of the excessive devotion to dress on the part of your women; was it not so?"

"Undoubtedly. Overdressing, overexertion to be attractive, was the

greatest drawback to the real attractiveness of women in my day.”

”And how was it with the men?”

”That could not be said of any men worth calling men. There were, of course, the dandies, but most men paid too little attention to their appearance rather than too much.”

”That is to say, one sex paid too much attention to dress and the other too little?”

”That was it.”

”Very well; the effect of economic equality of the sexes and the consequent independence of women at all times as to maintenance upon men is that women give much less thought to dress than in your day and men considerably more. No one would indeed think of suggesting that either sex is nowadays more absorbed in setting off its personal attractions than the other. Individuals differ as to their interest in this matter, but the difference is not along the line of sex.”

”But why do you attribute this miracle,” I exclaimed, ”for miracle it seems, to the effect of economic equality on the relation of men and women?”

”Because from the moment that equality became established between them it ceased to be a whit more the interest of women to make themselves attractive and desirable to men than for men to produce the same impression upon women.”

”Meaning thereby that previous to the establishment of economic equality between men and women it was decidedly more the interest of the women to make themselves personally attractive than of the men.”

”Assuredly,” said the doctor. ”Tell me to what motive did men in your day ascribe the excessive devotion of the other sex to matters of dress as compared with men’s comparative neglect of the subject?”

”Well, I don’t think we did much clear thinking on the subject. In fact, anything which had any sexual suggestion about it was scarcely ever treated in any other than a sentimental or jesting tone.”

”That is indeed,” said the doctor, ”a striking trait of your age, though explainable enough in view of the utter hypocrisy underlying the entire relation of the sexes, the pretended chivalric deference to women on the one hand, coupled with their practical suppression on the other, but you must have had some theory to account for women’s excessive devotion to personal adornment.”

"The theory, I think, was that handed down from the ancients—namely, that women were naturally vainer than men. But they did not like to hear that said: so the polite way of accounting for the obvious fact that they cared so much more for dress than did men was that they were more sensitive to beauty, more unselfishly desirous of pleasing, and other agreeable phrases."

"And did it not occur to you that the real reason why woman gave so much thought to devices for enhancing her beauty was simply that, owing to her economic dependence on man's favor, a woman's face was her fortune, and that the reason men were so careless for the most part as to their personal appearance was that their fortune in no way depended on their beauty; and that even when it came to commending themselves to the favor of the other sex their economic position told more potently in their favor than any question of personal advantages? Surely this obvious consideration fully explained woman's greater devotion to personal adornment, without assuming any difference whatever in the natural endowment of the sexes as to vanity."

"And consequently," I put in, "when women ceased any more to depend for their economic welfare upon men's favor, it ceased to be their main aim in life to make themselves attractive to men's eyes?"

"Precisely so, to their unspeakable gain in comfort, dignity, and freedom of mind for more important interests."

"But to the diminution, I suspect, of the picturesqueness of the social panorama?"

"Not at all, but most decidedly to its notable advantage. So far as we can judge, what claim the women of your period had to be regarded as attractive was achieved distinctly in spite of their efforts to make themselves so. Let us recall that we are talking about that excessive concern of women for the enhancement of their charms which led to a mad race after effect that for the most part defeated the end sought. Take away the economic motive which made women's attractiveness to men a means of getting on in life, and there remained Nature's impulse to attract the admiration of the other sex, a motive quite strong enough for beauty's end, and the more effective for not being too strong."

"It is easy enough to see," I said, "why the economic independence of women should have had the effect of moderating to a reasonable measure their interest in personal adornment; but why should it have operated in the opposite direction upon men, in making them more attentive to dress and personal appearance than before?"

"For the simple reason that their economic superiority to women having disappeared, they must henceforth depend wholly upon personal attractiveness if they would either win the favor of women or retain it when won."

## CHAPTER XX.

### WHAT THE REVOLUTION DID FOR WOMEN.

"It occurs to me, doctor," I said, "that it would have been even better worth the while of a woman of my day to have slept over till now than for me, seeing that the establishment of economic equality seems to have meant for more for women than for men."

"Edith would perhaps not have been pleased with the substitution," said the doctor; "but really there is much in what you say, for the establishment of economic equality did in fact mean incomparably more for women than for men. In your day the condition of the mass of men was abject as compared with their present state, but the lot of women was abject as compared with that of the men. The most of men were indeed the servants of the rich, but the woman was subject to the man whether he were rich or poor, and in the latter and more common case was thus the servant of a servant. However low down in poverty a man might be, he had one or more lower even than he in the persons of the women dependent on him and subject to his will. At the very bottom of the social heap, bearing the accumulated burden of the whole mass, was woman. All the tyrannies of soul and mind and body which the race endured, weighed at last with cumulative force upon her. So far beneath even the mean estate of man was that of woman that it would have been a mighty uplift for her could she have only attained his level. But the great Revolution not merely lifted her to an equality with man but raised them both with the same mighty upthrust to a plane of moral dignity and material welfare as much above the former state of man as his former state had been above that of woman. If men then owe gratitude to the Revolution, how much greater must women esteem their debt to it! If to the men the voice of the Revolution was a call to a higher and nobler plane of living, to woman it was as the voice of God calling her to a new creation."

"Undoubtedly," I said, "the women of the poor had a pretty abject time of it, but the women of the rich certainly were not oppressed."

"The women of the rich," replied the doctor, "were numerically too insignificant a proportion of the mass of women to be worth considering in a general statement of woman's condition in your day. Nor, for that matter, do we consider their lot preferable to that of their poorer sisters. It is true that they did not endure physical hardship, but were, on the contrary, petted and spoiled by their men protectors like over-indulged children; but that seems to us not a sort of life to be desired. So far as we can learn from contemporary accounts and social pictures, the women of the rich lived in a hothouse atmosphere of

adulation and affectation, altogether less favorable to moral or mental development than the harder conditions of the women of the poor. A woman of to-day, if she were doomed to go back to live in your world, would beg at least to be reincarnated as a scrub woman rather than as a wealthy woman of fashion. The latter rather than the former seems to us the sort of woman which most completely typified the degradation of the sex in your age."

As the same thought had occurred to me, even in my former life, I did not argue the point.

"The so-called woman movement, the beginning of the great transformation in her condition," continued the doctor, "was already making quite a stir in your day. You must have heard and seen much of it, and may have even known some of the noble women who were the early leaders."

"Oh, yes." I replied. "There was a great stir about women's rights, but the programme then announced was by no means revolutionary. It only aimed at securing the right to vote, together with various changes in the laws about property-holding by women, the custody of children in divorces, and such details. I assure you that the women no more than the men had at that time any notion of revolutionizing the economic system."

"So we understand," replied the doctor. "In that respect the women's struggle for independence resembled revolutionary movements in general, which, in their earlier stages, go blundering and stumbling along in such a seemingly erratic and illogical way that it takes a philosopher to calculate what outcome to expect. The calculation as to the ultimate outcome of the women's movement was, however, as simple as was the same calculation in the case of what you called the labor movement. What the women were after was independence of men and equality with them, while the workingmen's desire was to put an end to their vassalage to capitalists. Now, the key to the fetters the women wore was the same that locked the shackles of the workers. It was the economic key, the control of the means of subsistence. Men, as a sex, held that power over women, and the rich as a class held it over the working masses. The secret of the sexual bondage and of the industrial bondage was the same—namely, the unequal distribution of the wealth power, and the change which was necessary to put an end to both forms of bondage must obviously be economic equalization, which in the sexual as in the industrial relation would at once insure the substitution of co-operation for coercion.

"The first leaders of the women's revolt were unable to see beyond the ends of their noses, and consequently ascribed their subject condition and the abuses they endured to the wickedness of man, and appeared to believe that the only remedy necessary was a moral reform on his part. This was the period during which such expressions as the 'tyrant man' and 'man the monster' were watchwords of the agitation. The champions of the women fell into precisely the same mistake committed by a large proportion of the early leaders of the workingmen, who wasted good breath

and wore out their tempers in denouncing the capitalists as the willful authors of all the ills of the proletariat. This was worse than idle rant; it was misleading and blinding. The men were essentially no worse than the women they oppressed nor the capitalists than the workmen they exploited. Put workingmen in the places of the capitalists and they would have done just as the capitalists were doing. In fact, whenever workingmen did become capitalists they were commonly said to make the hardest sort of masters. So, also, if women could have changed places with the men, they would undoubtedly have dealt with the men precisely as the men had dealt with them. It was the system which permitted human beings to come into relations of superiority and inferiority to one another which was the cause of the whole evil. Power over others is necessarily demoralizing to the master and degrading to the subject. Equality is the only moral relation between human beings. Any reform which should result in remedying the abuse of women by men, or workingmen by capitalists, must therefore be addressed to equalizing their economic condition. Not till the women, as well as the workingmen, gave over the folly of attacking the consequences of economic inequality and attacked the inequality itself, was there any hope for the enfranchisement of either class.

”The utterly inadequate idea which the early leaders of the women had of the great salvation they must have, and how it must come, are curiously illustrated by their enthusiasm for the various so-called temperance agitations of the period for the purpose of checking drunkenness among men. The special interest of the women as a class in this reform in men’s manners—for women as a rule did not drink intoxicants—consisted in the calculation that if the men drank less they would be less likely to abuse them, and would provide more liberally for their maintenance; that is to say, their highest aspirations were limited to the hope that, by reforming the morals of their masters, they might secure a little better treatment for themselves. The idea of abolishing the mastership had not yet occurred to them as a possibility.

”This point, by the way, as to the efforts of women in your day to reform men’s drinking habits by law rather strikingly suggests the difference between the position of women then and now in their relation to men. If nowadays men were addicted to any practice which made them seriously and generally offensive to women, it would not occur to the latter to attempt to curb it by law. Our spirit of personal sovereignty and the rightful independence of the individual in all matters mainly self-regarding would indeed not tolerate any of the legal interferences with the private practices of individuals so common in your day. But the women would not find force necessary to correct the manners of the men. Their absolute economic independence, whether in or out of marriage, would enable them to use a more potent influence. It would presently be found that the men who made themselves offensive to women’s susceptibilities would sue for their favor in vain. But it was practically impossible for women of your day to protect themselves or assert their wills by assuming that attitude. It was economically a necessity for a woman to marry, or at

least of so great advantage to her that she could not well dictate terms to her suitors, unless very fortunately situated, and once married it was the practical understanding that in return for her maintenance by her husband she must hold herself at his disposal."

"It sounds horribly," I said, "at this distance of time, but I beg you to believe that it was not always quite as bad as it sounds. The better men exercised their power with consideration, and with persons of refinement the wife virtually retained her self-control, and for that matter in many families the woman was practically the head of the house."

"No doubt, no doubt," replied the doctor. "So it has always been under every form of servitude. However absolute the power of a master, it has been exercised with a fair degree of humanity in a large proportion of instances, and in many cases the nominal slave, when of strong character, has in reality exercised a controlling influence over the master. This observed fact is not, however, considered a valid argument for subjecting human beings to the arbitrary will of others. Speaking generally, it is undoubtedly true that both the condition of women when subjected to men, as well as that of the poor in subjection to the rich, were in fact far less intolerable than it seems to us they possibly could have been. As the physical life of man can be maintained and often thrive in any climate from the poles to the equator, so his moral nature has shown its power to live and even put forth fragrant flowers under the most terrible social conditions."

"In order to realize the prodigious debt of woman to the great Revolution," resumed the doctor, "we must remember that the bondage from which it delivered her was incomparably more complete and abject than any to which men had ever been subjected by their fellow-men. It was enforced not by a single but by a triple yoke. The first yoke was the subjection to the personal and class rule of the rich, which the mass of women bore in common with the mass of men. The other two yokes were peculiar to her. One of them was her personal subjection not only in the sexual relation, but in all her behavior to the particular man on whom she depended for subsistence. The third yoke was an intellectual and moral one, and consisted in the slavish conformity exacted of her in all her thinking, speaking, and acting to a set of traditions and conventional standards calculated to repress all that was spontaneous and individual, and impose an artificial uniformity upon both the inner and outer life.

"The last was the heaviest yoke of the three, and most disastrous in its effects both upon women directly and indirectly upon mankind through the degradation of the mothers of the race. Upon the woman herself the effect was so soul-stifling and mind-stunting as to be made a plausible excuse for treating her as a natural inferior by men not philosophical enough to see that what they would make an excuse for her subjection was itself the result of that subjection. The explanation of woman's submission in thought and action to what was practically a slave code—a code peculiar to her sex and scorned and derided by men—was the fact that the main

hope of a comfortable life for every woman consisted in attracting the favorable attention of some man who could provide for her. Now, under your economic system it was very desirable for a man who sought employment to think and talk as his employer did if he was to get on in life. Yet a certain degree of independence of mind and conduct was conceded to men by their economic superiors under most circumstances, so long as they were not actually offensive, for, after all, what was mainly wanted of them was their labor. But the relation of a woman to the man who supported her was of a very different and much closer character. She must be to him *persona grata*, as your diplomats used to say. To attract him she must be personally pleasing to him, must not offend his tastes or prejudices by her opinions or conduct. Otherwise he would be likely to prefer some one else. It followed from this fact that while a boy's training looked toward fitting him to earn a living, a girl was educated with a chief end to making her, if not pleasing, at least not displeasing to men.

"Now, if particular women had been especially trained to suit particular men's tastes—trained to order, so to speak—while that would have been offensive enough to any idea of feminine dignity, yet it would have been far less disastrous, for many men would have vastly preferred women of independent minds and original and natural opinions. But as it was not known beforehand what particular men would support particular women, the only safe way was to train girls with a view to a negative rather than a positive attractiveness, so that at least they might not offend average masculine prejudices. This ideal was most likely to be secured by educating a girl to conform herself to the customary traditional and fashionable habits of thinking, talking, and behaving—in a word, to the conventional standards prevailing at the time. She must above all things avoid as a contagion any new or original ideas or lines of conduct in any important respect, especially in religious, political, and social matters. Her mind, that is to say, like her body, must be trained and dressed according to the current fashion plates. By all her hopes of married comfort she must not be known to have any peculiar or unusual or positive notions on any subject more important than embroidery or parlor decoration. Conventionality in the essentials having been thus secured, the brighter and more piquant she could be in small ways and frivolous matters the better for her chances. Have I erred in describing the working of your system in this particular, Julian?"

"No doubt," I replied, "you have described to the life the correct and fashionable ideal of feminine education in my time, but there were, you must understand, a great many women who were persons of entirely original and serious minds, who dared to think and speak for themselves."

"Of course there were. They were the prototypes of the universal woman of to-day. They represented the coming woman, who to-day has come. They had broken for themselves the conventional trammels of their sex, and proved to the world the potential equality of women with men in every field of thought and action. But while great minds master their circumstances, the

mass of minds are mastered by them and formed by them. It is when we think of the bearing of the system upon this vast majority of women, and how the virus of moral and mental slavery through their veins entered into the blood of the race, that we realize how tremendous is the indictment of humanity against your economic arrangements on account of woman, and how vast a benefit to mankind was the Revolution that gave free mothers to the race-free not merely from physical but from moral and intellectual fetters.

"I referred a moment ago," pursued the doctor, "to the close parallelism existing in your time between the industrial and the sexual situation, between the relations of the working masses to the capitalists, and those of the women to men. It is strikingly illustrated in yet another way.

"The subjection of the workingmen to the owners of capital was insured by the existence at all times of a large class of the unemployed ready to underbid the workers and eager to get employment at any price and on any terms. This was the club with which the capitalist kept down the workers. In like manner it was the existence of a body of unappropriated women which riveted the yoke of women's subjection to men. When maintenance was the difficult problem it was in your day there were many men who could not maintain themselves, and a vast number who could not maintain women in addition to themselves. The failure of a man to marry might cost him happiness, but in the case of women it not only involved loss of happiness, but, as a rule, exposed them to the pressure or peril of poverty, for it was a much more difficult thing for women than for men to secure an adequate support by their own efforts. The result was one of the most shocking spectacles the world has ever known—nothing less, in fact, than a state of rivalry and competition among women for the opportunity of marriage. To realize how helpless were women in your day, to assume toward men an attitude of physical, mental, or moral dignity and independence, it is enough to remember their terrible disadvantage in what your contemporaries called with brutal plainness the marriage market.

"And still woman's cup of humiliation was not full. There was yet another and more dreadful form of competition by her own sex to which she was exposed. Not only was there a constant vast surplus of unmarried women desirous of securing the economic support which marriage implied, but beneath these there were hordes of wretched women, hopeless of obtaining the support of men on honorable terms, and eager to sell themselves for a crust. Julian, do you wonder that, of all the aspects of the horrible mess you called civilization in the nineteenth century, the sexual relation reeks worst?"

"Our philanthropists were greatly disturbed over what we called the social evil," said I—"that is, the existence of this great multitude of outcast women—but it was not common to diagnose it as a part of the economic problem. It was regarded rather as a moral evil resulting from the depravity of the human heart, to be properly dealt with by moral and

religious influences.”

”Yes, yes, I know. No one in your day, of course, was allowed to intimate that the economic system was radically wicked, and consequently it was customary to lay off all its hideous consequences upon poor human nature. Yes, I know there were, people who agreed that it might be possible by preaching to lessen the horrors of the social evil while yet the land contained millions of women in desperate need, who had no other means of getting bread save by catering to the desires of men. I am a bit of a phrenologist, and have often wished for the chance of examining the cranial developments of a nineteenth-century philanthropist who honestly believed this, if indeed any of them honestly did.”

”By the way,” I said, ”high-spirited women, even in my day, objected to the custom that required them to take their husbands’ names on marriage. How do you manage that now?”

”Women’s names are no more affected by marriage than men’s.”

”But how about the children?”

”Girls take the mother’s last name with the father’s as a middle name, while with boys it is just the reverse.”

”It occurs to me,” I said, ”that it would be surprising if a fact so profoundly affecting woman’s relations with man as her achievement of economic independence, had not modified the previous conventional standards of sexual morality in some respects.”

”Say rather,” replied the doctor, ”that the economic equalization of men and women for the first time made it possible to establish their relations on a moral basis. The first condition of ethical action in any relation is the freedom of the actor. So long as women’s economic dependence upon men prevented them from being free agents in the sexual relation, there could be no ethics of that relation. A proper ethics of sexual conduct was first made possible when women became capable of independent action through the attainment of economic equality.”

”It would have startled the moralists of my day,” I said, ”to be told that we had no sexual ethics. We certainly had a very strict and elaborate system of ’thou shalt nots.’”

”Of course, of course,” replied my companion. ”Let us understand each other exactly at this point, for the subject is highly important. You had, as you say, a set of very rigid rules and regulations as to the conduct of the sexes—that is, especially as to women—but the basis of it, for the most part, was not ethical but prudential, the object being the safeguarding of the economic interests of women in their relations

with men. Nothing could have been more important to the protection of women on the whole, although so often bearing cruelly upon them individually, than these rules. They were the only method by which, so long as woman remained an economically helpless and dependent person, she and her children could be even partially guarded from masculine abuse and neglect. Do not imagine for a moment that I would speak lightly of the value of this social code to the race during the time it was necessary. But because it was entirely based upon considerations not suggested by the natural sanctities of the sexual relation in itself, but wholly upon prudential considerations affecting economic results, it would be an inexact use of terms to call it a system of ethics. It would be more accurately described as a code of sexual economics—that is to say, a set of laws and customs providing for the economic protection of women and children in the sexual and family relation.

”The marriage contract was embellished by a rich embroidery of sentimental and religious fancies, but I need not remind you that its essence in the eyes of the law and of society was its character as a contract, a strictly economic *quid-pro-quo* transaction. It was a legal undertaking by the man to maintain the woman and future family in consideration of her surrender of herself to his exclusive disposal—that is to say, on condition of obtaining a lien on his property, she became a part of it. The only point which the law or the social censor looked to as fixing the morality or immorality, purity or impurity, of any sexual act was simply the question whether this bargain had been previously executed in accordance with legal forms. That point properly attended to, everything that formerly had been regarded as wrong and impure for the parties became rightful and chaste. They might have been persons unfit to marry or to be parents; they might have been drawn together by the basest and most sordid motives; the bride may have been constrained by need to accept a man she loathed; youth may have been sacrificed to decrepitude, and every natural propriety outraged; but according to your standard, if the contract had been legally executed, all that followed was white and beautiful. On the other hand, if the contract had been neglected, and a woman had accepted a lover without it, then, however great their love, however fit their union in every natural way, the woman was cast out as unchaste, impure, and abandoned, and consigned to the living death of social ignominy. Now let me repeat that we fully recognize the excuse for this social law under your atrocious system as the only possible way of protecting the economic interests of women and children, but to speak of it as ethical or moral in its view of the sex relation is certainly about as absurd a misuse of words as could be committed. On the contrary, we must say that it was a law which, in order to protect women’s material interests, was obliged deliberately to disregard all the laws that are written on the heart touching such matters.

”It seems from the records that there was much talk in your day about the scandalous fact that there were two distinct moral codes in sexual matters, one for men and another for women—men refusing to be bound by the law imposed on women, and society not even attempting to enforce it

against them. It was claimed by the advocates of one code for both sexes that what was wrong or right for woman was so for man, and that there should be one standard of right and wrong, purity and impurity, morality and immorality, for both. That was obviously the correct view of the matter; but what moral gain would there have been for the race even if men could have been induced to accept the women's code—a code so utterly unworthy in its central idea of the ethics of the sexual relation? Nothing but the bitter duress of their economic bondage had forced women to accept a law against which the blood of ten thousand stainless Marguerites, and the ruined lives of a countless multitude of women, whose only fault had been too tender loving, cried to God perpetually. Yes, there should doubtless be one standard of conduct for both men and women as there is now, but it was not to be the slave code, with its sordid basis, imposed upon the women by their necessities. The common and higher code for men and women which the conscience of the race demanded would first become possible, and at once thereafter would become assured when men and women stood over against each other in the sexual relation, as in all others, in attitudes of absolute equality and mutual independence.”

”After all, doctor,” I said, ”although at first it startled me a little to hear you say that we had no sexual ethics, yet you really say no more, nor use stronger words, than did our poets and satirists in treating the same theme. The complete divergence between our conventional sexual morality and the instinctive morality of love was a commonplace with us, and furnished, as doubtless you well know, the motive of a large part of our romantic and dramatic literature.”

”Yes,” replied the doctor, ”nothing could be added to the force and feeling with which your writers exposed the cruelty and injustice of the iron law of society as to these matters—a law made doubly cruel and unjust by the fact that it bore almost exclusively on women. But their denunciations were wasted, and the plentiful emotions they evoked were barren of result, for the reason that they failed entirely to point out the basic fact that was responsible for the law they attacked, and must be abolished if the law were ever to be replaced by a just ethics. That fact, as we have seen, was the system of wealth distribution, by which woman's only hope of comfort and security was made to depend on her success in obtaining a legal guarantee of support from some man as the price of her person.”

”It seems to me,” I observed, ”that when the women, once fairly opened their eyes to what the revolutionary programme meant for their sex by its demand of economic equality for all, self-interest must have made them more ardent devotees of the cause than even the men.”

”It did indeed,” replied the doctor. ”Of course the blinding, binding influence of conventionality, tradition, and prejudice, as well as the timidity bred of immemorial servitude, for a long while prevented the mass of women from understanding the greatness of the deliverance which

was offered them; but when once they did understand it they threw themselves into the revolutionary movement with a unanimity and enthusiasm that had a decisive effect upon the struggle. Men might regard economic equality with favor or disfavor, according to their economic positions, but every woman, simply because she was a woman, was bound to be for it as soon as she got it through her head what it meant for her half of the race.”

## CHAPTER XXI.

### AT THE GYMNASIUM.

Edith had come up on the house top in time to hear the last of our talk, and now she said to her father:

”Considering what you have been telling Julian about women nowadays as compared with the old days, I wonder if he would not be interested in visiting the gymnasium this afternoon and seeing something of how we train ourselves? There are going to be some foot races and air races, and a number of other tests. It is the afternoon when our year has the grounds, and I ought to be there anyway.”

To this suggestion, which was eagerly accepted, I owe one of the most interesting and instructive experiences of those early days during which I was forming the acquaintance of the twentieth-century civilization.

At the door of the gymnasium Edith left us to join her class in the amphitheater.

”Is she to compete in anything?” I asked.

”All her year—that is, all of her age—in this ward will be entered in more or less events.”

”What is Edith’s specialty?” I asked.

”As to specialties,” replied the doctor, ”our people do not greatly cultivate them. Of course, privately they do what they please, but the object of our public training is not so much to develop athletic specialties as to produce an all-around and well-proportioned physical development. We aim first of all to secure a certain standard of strength and measurement for legs, thighs, arms, loins, chest, shoulders, neck, etc. This is not the highest point of perfection either of physique or performance. It is the necessary minimum. All who attain it may be regarded as sound and proper men and women. It is then left to them as they please individually to develop themselves beyond that point in

special directions.

"How long does this public gymnastic education last?"

"It is as obligatory as any part of the educational course until the body is set, which we put at the age of twenty-four; but it is practically kept up through life, although, of course, that is according to just how one feels."

"Do you mean that you take regular exercise in a gymnasium?"

"Why should I not? It is no less of an object to me to be well at sixty than it was at twenty."

"Doctor," said I, "if I seem surprised you must remember that in my day it was an adage that no man over forty-five ought to allow himself to run for a car, and as for women, they stopped running at fifteen, when their bodies were put in a vise, their legs in bags, their toes in thumbscrews, and they bade farewell to health."

"You do indeed seem to have disagreed terribly with your bodies," said the doctor. "The women ignored theirs altogether, and as for the men, so far as I can make out, up to forty they abused their bodies, and after forty their bodies abused them, which, after all, was only fair. The vast mass of physical misery caused by weakness and sickness, resulting from wholly preventable causes, seems to us, next to the moral aspect of the subject, to be one of the largest single items chargeable to your system of economic inequality, for to that primal cause nearly every feature of the account appears directly or indirectly traceable. Neither souls nor bodies could be considered by your men in their mad struggle for a living, and for a grip on the livelihood of others, while the complicated system of bondage under which the women were held perverted mind and body alike, till it was a wonder if there were any health left in them."

On entering the amphitheater we saw gathered at one end of the arena some two or three hundred young men and women talking and lounging. These, the doctor told me, were Edith's companions of the class of 1978, being all those of twenty-two years of age, born in that ward or since coming there to live. I viewed with admiration the figures of these young men and women, all strong and beautiful as the gods and goddesses of Olympus.

"Am I to understand," I asked, "that this is a fair sample of your youth, and not a picked assembly of the more athletic?"

"Certainly," he replied; "all the youth in their twenty-third year who live in this ward are here to-day, with perhaps two or three exceptions on account of some special reason."

"But where are the cripples, the deformed, the feeble, the consumptive?"

"Do you see that young man yonder in the chair with so many of the others about him?" asked the doctor.

"Ah! there is then at least one invalid?"

"Yes," replied my companion: "he met with an accident, and will never be vigorous. He is the only sickly one of the class, and you see how much the others make of him. Your cripples and sickly were so many that pity itself grew weary and spent of tears, and compassion callous with use; but with us they are so few as to be our pets and darlings."

At that moment a bugle sounded, and some scores of young men and women dashed by us in a foot race. While they ran, the bugle continued to sound a nerve-bracing strain. The thing that astonished me was the evenness of the finish, in view of the fact that the contestants were not specially trained for racing, but were merely the group which in the round of tests had that day come to the running test. In a race of similarly unselected competitors in my day, they would have been strung along the track from the finish to the half, and the most of them nearest that.

"Edith, I see, was third in," said the doctor, reading from the signals. "She will be pleased to have done so well, seeing you were here."

The next event was a surprise. I had noticed a group of youths on a lofty platform at the far end of the amphitheater making some sort of preparations, and wondered what they were going to do. Now suddenly, at the sound of a trumpet, I saw them leap forward over the edge of the platform. I gave an involuntary cry of horror, for it was a deadly distance to the ground below.

"It's all right," laughed the doctor, and the next moment I was staring up at a score of young men and women charging through the air fifty feet above the race course.

Then followed contests in ball-throwing and putting the shot.

"It is plain where your women get their splendid chests and shoulders," said I.

"You have noticed that, then!" exclaimed the doctor.

"I have certainly noticed," was my answer, "that your modern women seem generally to possess a vigorous development and appearance of power above the waist which were only occasionally seen in our day."

"You will be interested, no doubt," said the doctor, "to have your impression corroborated by positive evidence. Suppose we leave the amphitheater for a few minutes and step into the anatomical rooms. It is indeed a rare fortune for an anatomical enthusiast like myself to have a pupil so well qualified to be appreciative, to whom to point out the

effect our principle of social equality, and the best opportunities of culture for all, have had in modifying toward perfection the human form in general, and especially the female figure. I say especially the female figure, for that had been most perverted in your day by the influences which denied woman a full life. Here are a group of plaster statues, based on the lines handed down to us by the anthropometric experts of the last decades of the nineteenth century, to whom we are vastly indebted. You will observe, as your remark just now indicated that you had observed, that the tendency was to a spindling and inadequate development above the waist and an excessive development below. The figure seemed a little as if it had softened and run down like a sugar cast in warm weather. See, the front breadth flat measurement of the hips is actually greater than across the shoulders, whereas it ought to be an inch or two less, and the bulbous effect must have been exaggerated by the bulging mass of draperies your women accumulated about the waist."

At his words I raised my eyes to the stony face of the woman figure, the charms of which he had thus disparaged, and it seemed to me that the sightless eyes rested on mine with an expression of reproach, of which my heart instantly confessed the justice. I had been the contemporary of this type of women, and had been indebted to the light of their eyes for all that made life worth living. Complete or not, as might be their beauty by modern standards, through them I had learned to know the stress of the ever-womanly, and been made an initiate of Nature's sacred mysteries. Well might these stony eyes reproach me for consenting by my silence to the disparagement of charms to which I owed so much, by a man of another age.

"Hush, doctor, hush!" I exclaimed. "No doubt you are right, but it is not for me to hear these words."

I could not find the language to explain what was in my mind, but it was not necessary. The doctor understood, and his keen gray eyes glistened as he laid his hand on my shoulder.

"Right, my boy, quite right! That is the thing for you to say, and Edith would like you the better for your words, for women nowadays are jealous for one another's honor, as I judge they were not in your day. But, on the other hand, if there were present in this room disembodied shades of those women of your day, they would rejoice more than any others could at the fairer, ampler temples liberty has built for their daughters' souls to dwell in.

"Look!" he added, pointing to another figure; "this is the typical woman of to-day, the lines not ideal, but based on an average of measurements for the purpose of scientific comparison. First, you will observe that the figure is over two inches taller than the other. Note the shoulders! They have gained two inches in width relatively to the hips, as compared with the figure we have been examining. On the other hand, the girth at the hips is greater, showing more powerful muscular development. The

chest is an inch and a half deeper, while the abdominal measure is fully two inches deeper. These increased developments are all over and above what the mere increase in stature would call for. As to the general development of the muscular system, you will see there is simply no comparison.

"Now, what is the explanation? Simply the effect upon woman of the full, free, untrammelled physical life to which her economic independence opened the way. To develop the shoulders, arms, chest, loins, legs, and body generally, exercise is needed—not mild and gentle, but vigorous, continuous exertion, undertaken not spasmodically but regularly. There is no dispensation of Providence that will or ever would give a woman physical development on any other terms than those by which men have acquired their development. But your women had recourse to no such means. Their work had been confined for countless ages to a multiplicity of petty tasks—hand work and finger work—tasks wearing to body and mind in the extreme, but of a sort wholly failing to provoke that reaction of the vital forces which builds up and develops the parts exercised. From time immemorial the boy had gone out to dig and hunt with his father, or contend for the mastery with other youths while the girl stayed at home to spin and bake. Up to fifteen she might share with her brother a few of his more insipid sports, but with the beginnings of womanhood came the end of all participation in active physical outdoor life. What could be expected save what resulted—a dwarfed and enfeebled physique and a semi-invalid existence? The only wonder is that, after so long a period of bodily repression and perversion, the feminine physique should have responded, by so great an improvement in so brief a period, to the free life opened up to woman within the last century."

"We had very many beautiful women; physically perfect they seemed at least to us," I said.

"Of course you did, and no doubt they were the perfect types you deemed them," replied the doctor. "They showed you what Nature meant the whole sex to be. But am I wrong in assuming that ill health was a general condition among your women? Certainly the records tell us so. If we may believe them, four fifths of the practice of doctors was among women, and it seemed to do them mighty little good either, although perhaps I ought not to reflect on my own profession. The fact is, they could not do anything, and probably knew they couldn't, so long as the social customs governing women remained unchanged."

"Of course you are right enough as to the general fact," I replied. "Indeed, a great writer had given currency to a generally accepted maxim when he said that invalidism was the normal condition of woman."

"I remember that expression. What a confession it was of the abject failure of your civilization to solve the most fundamental proposition of happiness for half the race! Woman's invalidism was one of the great tragedies of your civilization, and her physical rehabilitation is one of

the greatest single elements in the total increment of happiness which economic equality has brought the human race. Consider what is implied in the transformation of the woman's world of sighs and tears and suffering, as you know it, into the woman's world of to-day, with its atmosphere of cheer and joy and overflowing vigor and vitality!"

"But," said I, "one thing is not quite clear to me. Without being a physician, or knowing more of such matters than a young man might be supposed to, I have yet understood in a general way that the weakness and delicacy of women's physical condition had their causes in certain natural disabilities of the sex."

"Yes, I know it was the general notion in your day that woman's physical constitution doomed her by its necessary effect to be sick, wretched, and unhappy, and that at most her condition could not be rendered more than tolerable in a physical sense. A more blighting blasphemy against Nature never found expression. No natural function ought to cause constant suffering or disease; and if it does, the rational inference is that something is wrong in the circumstances. The Orientals invented the myth of Eve and the apple, and the curse pronounced upon her, to explain the sorrows and infirmities of the sex, which were, in fact, a consequence, not of God's wrath, but of man-made conditions and customs. If you once admit that these sorrows and infirmities are inseparable from woman's natural constitution, why, then there is no logical explanation but to accept that myth as a matter of history. There were, however, plentiful illustrations already in your day of the great differences in the physical conditions of women under different circumstances and different social environments to convince unprejudiced minds that thoroughly healthful conditions which should be maintained a sufficiently long period would lead to a physical rehabilitation for woman that would quite redeem from its undeserved obloquy the reputation of her Creator."

"Am I to understand that maternity now is unattended with risk or suffering?"

"It is not nowadays an experience which is considered at all critical either in its actual occurrence or consequences. As to the other supposed natural disabilities which your wise men used to make so much of as excuses for keeping women in economic subjection, they have ceased to involve any physical disturbance whatever.

"And the end of this physical rebuilding of the feminine physique is not yet in view. While men still retain superiority in certain lines of athletics, we believe the sexes will yet stand on a plane of entire physical equality, with differences only as between individuals."

"There is one question," said I, "which this wonderful physical rebirth of woman suggests. You say that she is already the physical equal of man, and that your physiologists anticipate in a few generations more her evolution to a complete equality with him. That amounts to saying, does

it not, that normally and potentially she always has been man's physical equal and that nothing but adverse circumstances and conditions have ever made her seem less than his equal?"

"Certainly."

"How, then, do you account for the fact that she has in all ages and countries since the dawn of history, with perhaps a few doubtful and transient exceptions, been his physical subject and thrall? If she ever was his equal, why did she cease to become so, and by a rule so universal? If her inferiority since historic times may be ascribed to unfavorable man-made conditions, why, if she was his equal, did she permit those conditions to be imposed upon her? A philosophical theory as to how a condition is to cease should contain a rational suggestion as to how it arose."

"Very true indeed," replied the doctor. "Your question is practical. The theory of those who hold that woman will yet be man's full equal in physical vigor necessarily implies, as you suggest, that she must probably once have been his actual equal, and calls for an explanation of the loss of that equality. Suppose man and woman actual physical equals at some point of the past. There remains a radical difference in their relation as sexes—namely, that man can passionately appropriate woman against her will if he can overpower her, while woman can not, even if disposed, so appropriate man without his full volition, however great her superiority of force. I have often speculated as to the reason of this radical difference, lying as it does at the root of all the sex tyranny of the past, now happily for evermore replaced by mutuality. It has sometimes seemed to me that it was Nature's provision to keep the race alive in periods of its evolution when life was not worth living save for a far-off posterity's sake. This end, we may say, she shrewdly secured by vesting the aggressive and appropriating power in the sex relation in that sex which had to bear the least part of the consequences resultant on its exercise. We may call the device a rather mean one on Nature's part, but it was well calculated to effect the purpose. But for it, owing to the natural and rational reluctance of the child-bearing sex to assume a burden so bitter and so seemingly profitless, the race might easily have been exposed to the risk of ceasing utterly during the darker periods of its upward evolution.

"But let us come back to the specific question we were talking about. Suppose man and woman in some former age to have been, on the whole, physically equal, sex for sex. Nevertheless, there would be many individual variations. Some of each sex would be stronger than others of their own sex. Some men would be stronger than some women, and as many women be stronger than some men. Very good; we know that well within historic times the savage method of taking wives has been by forcible capture. Much more may we suppose force to have been used wherever possible in more primitive periods. Now, a strong woman would have no object to gain in making captive a weaker man for any sexual purpose, and

would not therefore pursue him. Conversely, however, strong men would have an object in making captive and keeping as their wives women weaker than themselves. In seeking to capture wives, men would naturally avoid the stronger women, whom they might have difficulty in dominating, and prefer as mates the weaker individuals, who would be less able to resist their will. On the other hand, the weaker of the men would find it relatively difficult to capture any mates at all, and would be consequently less likely to leave progeny. Do you see the inference?"

"It is plain enough," I replied. "You mean that the stronger women and the weaker men would both be discriminated against, and that the types which survived would be the stronger of the men and the weaker of the women."

"Precisely so. Now, suppose a difference in the physical strength of the sexes to have become well established through this process in prehistoric times, before the dawn of civilization, the rest of the story follows very simply. The now confessedly dominant sex would, of course, seek to retain and increase its domination and the now fully subordinated sex would in time come to regard the inferiority to which it was born as natural, inevitable, and Heaven-ordained. And so it would go on as it did go on, until the world's awakening, at the end of the last century, to the necessity and possibility of a reorganization of human society on a moral basis, the first principle of which must be the equal liberty and dignity of all human beings. Since then women have been reconquering, as they will later fully reconquer, their pristine physical equality with men."

"A rather alarming notion occurs to me," said I. "What if woman should in the end not only equal but excel man in physical and mental powers, as he has her in the past, and what if she should take as mean an advantage of that superiority as he did?"

The doctor laughed. "I think you need not be apprehensive that such a superiority, even if attained, would be abused. Not that women, as such, are any more safely to be trusted with irresponsible power than men, but for the reason that the race is rising fast toward the plane already in part attained in which spiritual forces will fully dominate all things, and questions of physical power will cease to be of any importance in human relations. The control and leading of humanity go already largely, and are plainly destined soon to go wholly, to those who have the largest souls—that is to say, to those who partake most of the Spirit of the Greater Self; and that condition is one which in itself is the most absolute guarantee against the misuse of that power for selfish ends, seeing that with such misuse it would cease to be a power."

"The Greater Self—what does that mean?" I asked.

"It is one of our names for the soul and for God," replied the doctor, "but that is too great a theme to enter on now."

## CHAPTER XXII.

### ECONOMIC SUICIDE OF THE PROFIT SYSTEM.

The morning following, Edith received a call to report at her post of duty for some special occasion. After she had gone, I sought out the doctor in the library and began to ply him with questions, of which, as usual, a store had accumulated in my mind overnight.

"If you desire to continue your historical studies this morning," he said presently, "I am going to propose a change of teachers."

"I am very well satisfied with the one whom Providence assigned to me," I answered, "but it is quite natural you should want a little relief from such persistent cross-questioning."

"It is not that at all," replied the doctor. "I am sure no one could conceivably have a more inspiring task than mine has been, nor have I any idea of giving it up as yet. But it occurred to me that a little change in the method and medium of instruction this morning might be agreeable."

"Who is to be the new teacher?" I asked.

"There are to be a number of them, and they are not teachers at all, but pupils."

"Come, doctor," I protested, "don't you think a man in my position has enough riddles to guess, without making them up for him?"

"It sounds like a riddle, doesn't it? But it is not. However, I will hasten to explain. As one of those citizens to whom for supposed public services the people have voted the blue ribbon, I have various honorary functions as to public matters, and especially educational affairs. This morning I have notice of an examination at ten o'clock of the ninth grade in the Arlington School. They have been studying the history of the period before the great Revolution, and are going to give their general impressions of it. I thought that perhaps, by way of a change, you might be interested in listening to them, especially in view of the special topic they are going to discuss."

I assured the doctor that no programme could promise more entertainment. "What is the topic they discuss?" I inquired.

"The profit system as a method of economic suicide is their theme," replied the doctor. "In our talks hitherto we have chiefly touched on the

moral wrongfulness of the old economic order. In the discussion we shall listen to this morning there will be no reference unless incidentally to moral considerations. The young people will endeavor to show us that there were certain inherent and fatal defects in private capitalism as a machine for producing wealth which, quite apart from its ethical character, made its abolition necessary if the race was ever to get out of the mire of poverty."

"That is a very different doctrine from the preaching I used to hear," I said. "The clergy and moralists in general assured us that there were no social evils for which moral and religious medicine was not adequate. Poverty, they said, was in the end the result of human depravity, and would disappear if everybody would only be good."

"So we read," said the doctor. "How far the clergy and the moralists preached this doctrine with a professional motive as calculated to enhance the importance of their services as moral instructors, how far they merely echoed it as an excuse for mental indolence, and how far they may really have been sincere, we can not judge at this distance, but certainly more injurious nonsense was never taught. The industrial and commercial system by which the labor of a great population is organized and directed constitutes a complex machine. If the machine is constructed unscientifically, it will result in loss and disaster, without the slightest regard to whether the managers are the rarest of saints or the worst of sinners. The world always has had and will have need of all the virtue and true religion that men can be induced to practice; but to tell farmers that personal religion will take the place of a scientific agriculture, or the master of an unseaworthy ship that the practice of good morals will bring his craft to shore, would be no greater childishness than the priests and moralists of your day committed in assuring a world beggared by a crazy economic system that the secret of plenty was good works and personal piety. History gives a bitter chapter to these blind guides, who, during the revolutionary period, did far more harm than those who openly defended the old order, because, while the brutal frankness of the latter repelled good men, the former misled them and long diverted from the guilty system the indignation which otherwise would have sooner destroyed it.

"And just here let me say, Julian, as a most important point for you to remember in the history of the great Revolution, that it was not until the people had outgrown this childish teaching and saw the causes of the world's want and misery, not primarily in human depravity, but in the economic madness of the profit system on which private capitalism depended, that the Revolution began to go forward in earnest."

Now, although the doctor had said that the school we were to visit was in Arlington, which I knew to be some distance out of the city, and that the examination would take place at ten o'clock, he continued to sit comfortably in his chair, though the time was five minutes of ten.

"Is this Arlington the same town that was a suburb of the city in my time?" I presently ventured to inquire.

"Certainly."

"It was then ten or twelve miles from the city," I said.

"It has not been moved, I assure you," said the doctor.

"Then if not, and if the examination is to begin in five minutes, are we not likely to be late?" I mildly observed.

"Oh, no," replied the doctor, "there are three or four minutes left yet."

"Doctor," said I, "I have been introduced within the last few days to many new and speedy modes of locomotion, but I can't see how you are going to get me to Arlington from here in time for the examination that begins three minutes hence, unless you reduce me to an electrified solution, send me by wire, and have me precipitated back to my shape at the other end of the line; and even in that case I should suppose we had no time to waste."

"We shouldn't have, certainly, if we were intending to go to Arlington even by that process. It did not occur to me that you would care to go, or we might just as well have started earlier. It is too bad!"

"I did not care about visiting Arlington." I replied, "but I assumed that it would be rather necessary to do so if I were to attend an examination at that place. I see my mistake. I ought to have learned by this time not to take for granted that any of what we used to consider the laws of Nature are still in force."

"The laws of Nature are all right," laughed the doctor. "But is it possible that Edith has not shown you the electroscope?"

"What is that?" I asked.

"It does for vision what the telephone does for hearing," replied the doctor, and, leading the way to the music room, he showed me the apparatus.

"It is ten o'clock," he said, "and we have no time for explanations now. Take this chair and adjust the instrument as you see me do. Now!"

Instantly, without warning, or the faintest preparation for what was coming, I found myself looking into the interior of a large room. Some twenty boys and girls, thirteen to fourteen years of age, occupied a double row of chairs arranged in the form of a semicircle about a desk at which a young man was seated with his back to us. The rows of students were facing us, apparently not twenty feet away. The rustling of their

garments and every change of expression in their mobile faces were as distinct to my eyes and ears as if we had been directly behind the teacher, as indeed we seemed to be. At the moment the scene had flashed upon me I was in the act of making some remark to the doctor. As I checked myself, he laughed. "You need not be afraid of interrupting them," he said. "They don't see or hear us, though we both see and hear them so well. They are a dozen miles away."

"Good heavens!" I whispered—for, in spite of his assurance, I could not realize that they did not hear me—"are we here or there?"

"We are here certainly," replied the doctor, "but our eyes and ears are there. This is the electroscope and telephone combined. We could have heard the examination just as well without the electroscope, but I thought you would be better entertained if you could both see and hear. Fine-looking young people, are they not? We shall see now whether they are as intelligent as they are handsome."

#### HOW PROFITS CUT DOWN CONSUMPTION.

"Our subject this morning," said the teacher briskly, "is 'The Economic Suicide of Production for Profit,' or 'The Hopelessness of the Economic Outlook of the Race under Private Capitalism.'—Now, Frank, will you tell us exactly what this proposition means?"

At these words one of the boys of the class rose to his feet.

"It means," he said, "that communities which depended—as they had to depend, so long as private capitalism lasted—upon the motive of profit making for the production of the things by which they lived, must always suffer poverty, because the profit system, by its necessary nature, operated to stop limit and cripple production at the point where it began to be efficient."

"By what is the possible production of wealth limited?"

"By its consumption."

"May not production fall short of possible consumption? May not the demand for consumption exceed the resources of production?"

"Theoretically it may, but not practically—that is, speaking of demand as limited to rational desires, and not extending to merely fanciful objects. Since the division of labor was introduced, and especially since the great inventions multiplied indefinitely the powers of man, production has been practically limited only by the demand created by consumption."

"Was this so before the great Revolution?"

"Certainly. It was a truism among economists that either England, Germany, or the United States alone could easily have supplied the world's whole consumption of manufactured goods. No country began to produce up to its capacity in any line."

"Why not?"

"On account of the necessary law of the profit system, by which it operated to limit production."

"In what way did this law operate?"

"By creating a gap between the producing and consuming power of the community, the result of which was that the people were not able to consume as much as they could produce."

"Please tell us just how the profit system led to this result."

"There being under the old order of things," replied the boy Frank, "no collective agency to undertake the organization of labor and exchange, that function naturally fell into the hands of enterprising individuals who, because the undertaking called for much capital, had to be capitalists. They were of two general classes—the capitalist who organized labor for production; and the traders, the middlemen, and storekeepers, who organized distribution, and having collected all the varieties of products in the market, sold them again to the general public for consumption. The great mass of the people—nine, perhaps, out of ten—were wage-earners who sold their labor to the producing capitalists; or small first-hand producers, who sold their personal product to the middlemen. The farmers were of the latter class. With the money the wage-earners and farmers received in wages, or as the price of their produce, they afterward went into the market, where the products of all sorts were assembled, and bought back as much as they could for consumption. Now, of course, the capitalists, whether engaged in organizing production or distribution, had to have some inducement for risking their capital and spending their time in this work. That inducement was profit."

"Tell us how the profits were collected."

"The manufacturing or employing capitalists paid the people who worked for them, and the merchants paid the farmers for their products in tokens called money, which were good to buy back the blended products of all in the market. But the capitalists gave neither the wage-earner nor the farmer enough of these money tokens to buy back the equivalent of the product of his labor. The difference which the capitalists kept back for themselves was their profit. It was collected by putting a higher price on the products when sold in the stores than the cost of the product had been to the capitalists."

"Give us an example."

"We will take then, first, the manufacturing capitalist, who employed labor. Suppose he manufactured shoes. Suppose for each pair of shoes he paid ten cents to the tanner for leather, twenty cents for the labor of putting, the shoe together, and ten cents for all other labor in any way entering into the making of the shoe, so that the pair cost him in actual outlay forty cents. He sold the shoes to a middleman for, say, seventy-five cents. The middleman sold them to the retailer for a dollar, and the retailer sold them over his counter to the consumer for a dollar and a half. Take next the case of the farmer, who sold not merely his labor like the wage-earner, but his labor blended with his material. Suppose he sold his wheat to the grain merchant for forty cents a bushel. The grain merchant, in selling it to the flouring mill, would ask, say, sixty cents a bushel. The flouring mill would sell it to the wholesale flour merchant for a price over and above the labor cost of milling at a figure which would include a handsome profit for him. The wholesale flour merchant would add another profit in selling to the retail grocer, and the last yet another in selling to the consumer. So that finally the equivalent of the bushel of wheat in finished flour as bought back by the original farmer for consumption would cost him, on account of profit charges alone, over and above the actual labor cost of intermediate processes, perhaps twice what he received for it from the grain merchant."

"Very well," said the teacher. "Now for the practical effect of this system."

"The practical effect," replied the boy, "was necessarily to create a gap between the producing and consuming power of those engaged in the production of the things upon which profits were charged. Their ability to consume would be measured by the value of the money tokens they received for producing the goods, which by the statement was less than the value put upon those goods in the stores. That difference would represent a gap between what they could produce and what they could consume."

#### MARGARET TELLS ABOUT THE DEADLY GAP.

"Margaret," said the teacher, "you may now take up the subject where Frank leaves it, and tell us what would be the effect upon the economic system of a people of such a gap between its consuming and producing power as Frank shows us was caused by profit taking."

"The effect," said the girl who answered to the name of Margaret, "would depend on two factors: first, on how numerous a body were the wage-earners and first producers, on whose products the profits were charged; and, second, how large was the rate of profit charged, and the consequent discrepancy between the producing and consuming power of each individual of the working body. If the producers on whose product a

profit was charged were but a handful of the people, the total effect of their inability to buy back and consume more than a part of their product would create but a slight gap between the producing and consuming power of the community as a whole. If, on the other hand, they constituted a large proportion of the whole population, the gap would be correspondingly great, and the reactive effect to check production would be disastrous in proportion."

"And what was the actual proportion of the total population made up by the wage-earners and original producers, who by the profit system were prevented from consuming as much as they produced?"

"It constituted, as Frank has said, at least nine tenths of the whole people, probably more. The profit takers, whether they were organizers of production or of distribution, were a group numerically insignificant, while those on whose product the profits were charged constituted the bulk of the community."

"Very well. We will now consider the other factor on which the size of the gap between the producing and consuming power of the community created by the profit system was dependent—namely, the rate of profits charged. Tell us, then, what was the rule followed by the capitalists in charging profits. No doubt, as rational men who realized the effect of high profits to prevent consumption, they made a point of making their profits as low as possible."

"On the contrary, the capitalists made their profits as high as possible. Their maxim was, 'Tax the traffic all it will bear.'"

"Do you mean that instead of trying to minimize the effect of profit charging to diminish consumption, they deliberately sought to magnify it to the greatest possible degree?"

"I mean that precisely," replied Margaret. "The golden rule of the profit system, the great motto of the capitalists, was, 'Buy in the Cheapest Market, and sell in the Dearest.'"

"What did that mean?"

"It meant that the capitalist ought to pay the least possible to those who worked for him or sold him their produce, and on the other hand should charge the highest possible price for their product when he offered it for sale to the general public in the market."

"That general public," observed the teacher, "being chiefly composed of the workers to whom he and his fellow-capitalists had just been paying as nearly nothing as possible for creating the product which they were now expected to buy back at the highest possible price."

"Certainly."

"Well, let us try to realize the full economic wisdom of this rule as applied to the business of a nation. It means, doesn't it, Get something for nothing, or as near nothing as you can. Well, then, if you can get it for absolutely nothing, you are carrying out the maxim to perfection. For example, if a manufacturer could hypnotize his workmen so as to get them to work for him for no wages at all, he would be realizing the full meaning of the maxim, would he not?"

"Certainly; a manufacturer who could do that, and then put the product of his unpaid workmen on the market at the usual price, would have become rich in a very short time."

"And the same would be true, I suppose, of a grain merchant who was able to take such advantage of the farmers as to obtain their grain for nothing, afterward selling it at the top price."

"Certainly. He would become a millionaire at once."

"Well, now, suppose the secret of this hypnotizing process should get abroad among the capitalists engaged in production and exchange, and should be generally applied by them so that all of them were able to get workmen without wages, and buy produce without paying anything for it, then doubtless all the capitalists at once would become fabulously rich."

"Not at all."

"Dear me! why not?"

"Because if the whole body of wage-earners failed to receive any wages for their work, and the farmers received nothing for their produce, there would be nobody to buy anything, and the market would collapse entirely. There would be no demand for any goods except what little the capitalists themselves and their friends could consume. The working people would then presently starve, and the capitalists be left to do their own work."

"Then it appears that what would be good for the particular capitalist, if he alone did it, would be ruinous to him and everybody else if all the capitalists did it. Why was this?"

"Because the particular capitalist, in expecting to get rich by underpaying his employees, would calculate on selling his produce, not to the particular group of workmen he had cheated, but to the community at large, consisting of the employees of other capitalists not so successful in cheating their workmen, who therefore would have something to buy with. The success of his trick depended on the presumption that his fellow-capitalists would not succeed in practicing the same trick. If that presumption failed, and all the capitalists succeeded at once in dealing with their employees, as all were trying to do, the result would

be to stop the whole industrial system outright.”

”It appears, then, that in the profit system we have an economic method, of which the working rule only needed to be applied thoroughly enough in order to bring the system to a complete standstill and that all which kept the system going was the difficulty found in fully carrying out the working rule.

”That was precisely so,” replied the girl; ”the individual capitalist grew rich fastest who succeeded best in beggaring those whose labor or produce he bought; but obviously it was only necessary for enough capitalists to succeed in so doing in order to involve capitalists and people alike in general ruin. To make the sharpest possible bargain with the employer or producer, to give him the least possible return for his labor or product, was the ideal every capitalist must constantly keep before him, and yet it was mathematically certain that every such sharp bargain tended to undermine the whole business fabric, and that it was only necessary that enough capitalists should succeed in making enough such sharp bargains to topple the fabric over.”

”One question more. The bad effects of a bad system are always aggravated by the willfulness of men who take advantage of it, and so, no doubt, the profit system was made by selfish men to work worse than it might have done. Now, suppose the capitalists had all been fair-minded men and not extortioners, and had made their charges for their services as small as was consistent with reasonable gains and self-protection, would that course have involved such a reduction of profit charges as would have greatly helped the people to consume their products and thus to promote production?”

”It would not,” replied the girl. ”The antagonism of the profit system to effective wealth production arose from causes inherent in and inseparable from private capitalism; and so long as private capitalism was retained, those causes must have made the profit system inconsistent with any economic improvement in the condition of the people, even if the capitalists had been, angels. The root of the evil was not moral, but strictly economic.”

”But would not the rate of profits have been much reduced in the case supposed?”

”In some instances temporarily no doubt, but not generally, and in no case permanently. It is doubtful if profits, on the whole, were higher than they had to be to encourage capitalists to undertake production and trade.”

”Tell us why the profits had to be so large for this purpose.”

”Legitimate profits under private capitalism,” replied the girl Margaret—”that is, such profits as men going into production or trade

must in self-protection calculate upon, however well disposed toward the public—consisted of three elements, all growing out of conditions inseparable from private capitalism, none of which longer exist. First, the capitalist must calculate on at least as large a return on the capital he was to put into the venture as he could obtain by lending it on good security—that is to say, the ruling rate of interest. If he were not sure of that, he would prefer to lend his capital. But that was not enough. In going into business he risked the entire loss of his capital, as he would not if it were lent on good security. Therefore, in addition to the ruling rate of interest on capital, his profits must cover the cost of insurance on the capital risked—that is, there must be a prospect of gains large enough in case the venture succeeded to cover the risk of loss of capital in case of failure. If the chances of failure, for instance, were even, he must calculate on more than a hundred per cent profit in case of success. In point of fact, the chances of failure in business and loss of capital in those days were often far more than even. Business was indeed little more than a speculative risk, a lottery in which the blanks greatly outnumbered the prizes. The prizes to tempt investment must therefore be large. Moreover, if a capitalist were personally to take charge of the business in which he invested his capital, he would reasonably have expected adequate wages of superintendence—compensation, in other words, for his skill and judgment in navigating the venture through the stormy waters of the business sea, compared with which, as it was in that day, the North Atlantic in midwinter is a mill pond. For this service he would be considered justified in making a large addition to the margin of profit charged.”

”Then you conclude, Margaret, that, even if disposed to be fair toward the community, a capitalist of those days would not have been able safely to reduce his rate of profits sufficiently to bring the people much nearer the point of being able to consume their products than they were.”

”Precisely so. The root of the evil lay in the tremendous difficulties, complexities, mistakes, risks, and wastes with which private capitalism necessarily involved the processes of production and distribution, which under public capitalism have become so entirely simple, expeditious, and certain.”

”Then it seems it is not necessary to consider our capitalist ancestors moral monsters in order to account for the tragical outcome of their economic methods.”

”By no means. The capitalists were no doubt good and bad, like other people, but probably stood up as well as any people could against the depraving influences of a system which in fifty years would have turned heaven itself into hell.”

MARION EXPLAINS OVER-PRODUCTION.

”That will do, Margaret,” said the teacher. ”We will next ask you,

Marion, to assist us in further elucidating the subject. If the profit system worked according to the description we have listened to, we shall be prepared to learn that the economic situation was marked by the existence of large stores of consumable goods in the hands of the profit takers which they would be glad to sell, and, on the other hand, by a great population composed of the original producers of the goods, who were in sharp need of the goods but unable to purchase them. How does this theory agree with the facts stated in the histories?"

"So well," replied Marion, "that one might almost think you had been reading them." At which the class smiled, and so did I.

"Describe, without unnecessary infusion of humor—for the subject was not humorous to our ancestors—the condition of things to which you refer. Did our great-grandfathers recognize in this excess of goods over buyers a cause of economic disturbance?"

"They recognized it as the great and constant cause of such disturbance. The perpetual burden of their complaints was dull times, stagnant trade, glut of products. Occasionally they had brief periods of what they called good times, resulting from a little brisker buying, but in the best of what they called good times the condition of the mass of the people was what we should call abjectly wretched."

"What was the term by which they most commonly described the presence in the market of more products than could be sold?"

"Overproduction."

"Was it meant by this expression that there had been actually more food, clothing, and other good things produced than the people could use?"

"Not at all. The mass of the people were in great need always, and in more bitter need than ever precisely at the times when the business machine was clogged by what they called overproduction. The people, if they could have obtained access to the overproduced goods, would at any time have consumed them in a moment and loudly called for more. The trouble was, as has been said, that the profits charged by the capitalist manufacturers and traders had put them out of the power of the original producers to buy back with the price they had received for their labor or products."

"To what have our historians been wont to compare the condition of the community under the profit system?"

"To that of a victim of the disease of chronic dyspepsia so prevalent among our ancestors."

"Please develop the parallel."

"In dyspepsia the patient suffered from inability to assimilate food. With abundance of dainties at hand he wasted away from the lack of power to absorb nutriment. Although unable to eat enough to support life, he was constantly suffering the pangs of indigestion, and while actually starving for want of nourishment, was tormented by the sensation of an overloaded stomach. Now, the economic condition of a community under the profit system afforded a striking analogy to the plight of such a dyspeptic. The masses of the people were always in bitter need of all things, and were abundantly able by their industry to provide for all their needs, but the profit system would not permit them to consume even what they produced, much less produce what they could. No sooner did they take the first edge off of their appetite than the commercial system was seized with the pangs of acute indigestion and all the symptoms of an overloaded system, which nothing but a course of starvation would relieve, after which the experience would be repeated with the same result, and so on indefinitely."

"Can you explain why such an extraordinary misnomer as overproduction, should be applied to a situation that would better be described as famine; why a condition should be said to result from glut when it was obviously the consequence of enforced abstinence? Surely, the mistake was equivalent to diagnosing a case of starvation as one of gluttony."

"It was because the economists and the learned classes, who alone had a voice, regarded the economic question entirely from the side of the capitalists and ignored the interest of the people. From the point of view of the capitalist it was a case of overproduction when he had charged profits on products which took them beyond the power of the people to buy, and so the economist writing in his interest called it. From the point of view of the capitalist, and consequently of the economist, the only question was the condition of the market, not of the people. They did not concern themselves whether the people were famished or glutted; the only question was the condition of the market. Their maxim that demand governed supply, and supply would always meet demand, referred in no way to the demand representing human need, but wholly to an artificial thing called the market, itself the product of the profit system."

"What was the market?"

"The market was the number of those who had money to buy with. Those who had no money were non-existent so far as the market was concerned, and in proportion as people had little money they were a small part of the market. The needs of the market were the needs of those who had the money to supply their needs with. The rest, who had needs in plenty but no money, were not counted, though they were as a hundred to one of the moneyed. The market was supplied when those who could buy had enough,

though the most of the people had little and many had nothing. The market was glutted when the well-to-do were satisfied, though starving and naked mobs might riot in the streets.”

”Would such a thing be possible nowadays as full storehouses and a hungry and naked people existing at the same time?”

”Of course not. Until every one was satisfied there could be no such thing as overproduct now. Our system is so arranged that there can be too little nowhere so long as there is too much anywhere. But the old system had no circulation of the blood.”

”What name did our ancestors give to the various economic disturbances which they ascribed to overproduction?”

”They called them commercial crises. That is to say, there was a chronic state of glut which might be called a chronic crisis, but every now and then the arrears resulting from the constant discrepancy between consumption and production accumulated to such a degree as to nearly block business. When this happened they called it, in distinction from the chronic glut, a crisis or panic, on account of the blind terror which it caused.”

”To what cause did they ascribe the crises?”

”To almost everything besides the perfectly plain reason. An extensive literature seems to have been devoted to the subject. There are shelves of it up at the museum which I have been trying to go through, or at least to skim over, in connection with this study. If the books were not so dull in style they would be very amusing, just on account of the extraordinary ingenuity the writers display in avoiding the natural and obvious explanation of the facts they discuss. They even go into astronomy.”

”What do you mean?”

”I suppose the class will think I am romancing, but it is a fact that one of the most famous of the theories by which our ancestors accounted for the periodical breakdowns of business resulting from the profit system was the so-called ‘sun-spot theory.’ During the first half of the nineteenth century it so happened that there were severe crises at periods about ten or eleven years apart. Now, it happened that sun spots were at a maximum about every ten years, and a certain eminent English economist concluded that these sun spots caused the panics. Later on it seems this theory was found unsatisfactory, and gave place to the lack-of-confidence explanation.”

”And what was that?”

”I could not exactly make out, but it seemed reasonable to suppose that

there must have developed a considerable lack of confidence in an economic system which turned out such results."

"Marion, I fear you do not bring a spirit of sympathy to the study of the ways of our forefathers, and without sympathy we can not understand others."

"I am afraid they are a little too other, for me to understand."

The class tittered, and Marion was allowed to take her seat.

#### JOHN TELLS ABOUT COMPETITION.

"Now, John," said the teacher, "we will ask you a few questions. We have seen by what process a chronic glut of goods in the market resulted from the operation of the profit system to put products out of reach of the purchasing power of the people at large. Now, what notable characteristic and main feature of the business system of our forefathers resulted from the glut thus produced?"

"I suppose you refer to competition?" said the boy.

"Yes. What was competition and what caused it, referring especially to the competition between capitalists?"

"It resulted, as you intimate, from the insufficient consuming power of the public at large, which in turn resulted from the profit system. If the wage-earners and first-hand producers had received purchasing power sufficient to enable them to take up their numerical proportion of the total product offered in the market, it would have been cleared of goods without any effort on the part of sellers, for the buyers would have sought the sellers and been enough to buy all. But the purchasing power of the masses, owing to the profits charged on their products, being left wholly inadequate to take those products out of the market, there naturally followed a great struggle between the capitalists engaged in production and distribution to divert the most possible of the all too scanty buying each in his own direction. The total buying could not of course be increased a dollar without relatively, or absolutely increasing the purchasing power in the people's hands, but it was possible by effort to alter the particular directions in which it should be expended, and this was the sole aim and effect of competition. Our forefathers thought it a wonderfully fine thing. They called it the life of trade, but, as we have seen, it was merely a symptom of the effect of the profit system to cripple consumption."

"What were the methods which the capitalists engaged in production and exchange made use of to bring trade their way, as they used to say?"

"First was direct solicitation of buyers and a shameless vaunting of every one's wares by himself and his hired mouthpieces, coupled with a

boundless depreciation of rival sellers and the wares they offered. Unscrupulous and unbounded misrepresentation was so universally the rule in business that even when here and there a dealer told the truth he commanded no credence. History indicates that lying has always been more or less common, but it remained for the competitive system as fully developed in the nineteenth century to make it the means of livelihood of the whole world. According to our grandfathers—and they certainly ought to have known—the only lubricant which was adapted to the machinery of the profit system was falsehood, and the demand for it was unlimited.”

”And all this ocean of lying, you say, did not and could not increase the total of goods consumed by a dollar’s worth.”

”Of course not. Nothing, as I said, could increase that save an increase in the purchasing power of the people. The system of solicitation or advertising, as it was called, far from increasing the total sale, tended powerfully to decrease it.”

”How so?”

”Because it was prodigiously expensive and the expense had to be added to the price of the goods and paid by the consumer, who therefore could buy just so much less than if he had been left in peace and the price of the goods had been reduced by the saving in advertising.”

”You say that the only way by which consumption could have been increased was by increasing the purchasing power in the hands of the people relatively to the goods to be bought. Now, our forefathers claimed that this was just what competition did. They claimed that it was a potent means of reducing prices and cutting down the rate of profits, thereby relatively increasing the purchasing power of the masses. Was this claim well based?”

”The rivalry of the capitalists among themselves,” replied the lad, ”to tempt the buyers’ custom certainly prompted them to undersell one another by nominal reductions of prices, but it was rarely that these nominal reductions, though often in appearance very large, really represented in the long run any economic benefit to the people at large, for they were generally effected by means which nullified their practical value.”

”Please make that clear.”

”Well, naturally, the capitalist would prefer to reduce the prices of his goods in such a way, if possible, as not to reduce his profits, and that would be his study. There were numerous devices which he employed to this end. The first was that of reducing the quality and real worth of the goods on which the price was nominally cut down. This was done by adulteration and scamped work, and the practice extended in the nineteenth century to every branch of industry and commerce and affected pretty nearly all articles of human consumption. It came to that point,

as the histories tell us, that no one could ever depend on anything he purchased being what it appeared or was represented. The whole atmosphere of trade was mephitic with chicane. It became the policy of the capitalists engaged in the most important lines of manufacture to turn out goods expressly made with a view to wearing as short a time as possible, so as to need the speedier renewal. They taught their very machines to be dishonest, and corrupted steel and brass. Even the purblind people of that day recognized the vanity of the pretended reductions in price by the epithet 'cheap and nasty,' with which they characterized cheapened goods. All this class of reductions, it is plain, cost the consumer two dollars for every one it professed to save him. As a single illustration of the utterly deceptive character of reductions in price under the profit system, it may be recalled that toward the close of the nineteenth century in America, after almost magical inventions for reducing the cost of shoemaking, it was a common saying that although the price of shoes was considerably lower than fifty years before, when they were made by hand, yet that later-made shoes were so much poorer in quality as to be really quite as expensive as the earlier."

"Were adulteration and scamped work the only devices by which sham reductions of prices was effected?"

"There were two other ways. The first was where the capitalist saved his profits while reducing the price of goods by taking the reduction out of the wages he had paid his employees. This was the method by which the reductions in price were very generally brought about. Of course, the process was one which crippled the purchasing power of the community by the amount of the lowered wages. By this means the particular group of capitalists cutting down wages might quicken their sales for a time until other capitalists likewise cut wages. In the end nobody was helped, not even the capitalist. Then there was the third of the three main kinds of reductions in price to be credited to competition—namely, that made on account of labor-saving machinery or other inventions which enabled the capitalist to discharge his laborers. The reduction in price on the goods was here based, as in the former case, on the reduced amount of wages paid out, and consequently meant a reduced purchasing power on the part of the community, which, in the total effect, usually nullified the advantage of reduced price, and often more than nullified it."

"You have shown," said the teacher, "that most of the reductions of price effected by competition were reductions at the expense of the original producers or of the final consumers, and not reductions in profits. Do you mean to say that the competition of capitalists for trade never operated to reduce profits?"

"Undoubtedly it did so operate in countries where from the long operation of the profit system surplus capital had accumulated so as to compete under great pressure for investment; but under such circumstances reductions in prices, even though they might come from sacrifices of profits, usually came too late to increase the consumption of the

people.”

”How too late?”

”Because the capitalist had naturally refrained from sacrificing his profits in order to reduce prices so long as he could take the cost of the reduction out of the wages of his workmen or out of the first-hand producer. That is to say, it was only when the working masses had been reduced to pretty near the minimum subsistence point that the capitalist would decide to sacrifice a portion of his profits. By that time it was too late for the people to take advantage of the reduction. When a population had reached that point, it had no buying power left to be stimulated. Nothing short of giving commodities away freely could help it. Accordingly, we observe that in the nineteenth century it was always in the countries where the populations were most hopelessly poor that the prices were lowest. It was in this sense a bad sign for the economic condition of a community when the capitalist found it necessary to make a real sacrifice of profits, for it was a clear indication that the working masses had been squeezed until they could be squeezed no longer.”

”Then, on the whole, competition was not a palliative of the profit system?”

”I think that it has been made apparent that it was a grievous aggravation of it. The desperate rivalry of the capitalists for a share in the scanty market which their own profit taking had beggared drove them to the practice of deception and brutality, and compelled a hard-heartedness such as we are bound to believe human beings would not under a less pressure have been guilty of.”

”What was the general economic effect of competition?”

”It operated in all fields of industry, and in the long run for all classes, the capitalists as well as the non-capitalists, as a steady downward pull as irresistible and universal as gravitation. Those felt it first who had least capital, the wage-earners who had none, and the farmer proprietors who, having next to none, were under almost the same pressure to find a prompt market at any sacrifice of their product, as were the wage-earners to find prompt buyers for their labor. These classes were the first victims of the competition to sell in the glutted markets of things and of men. Next came the turn of the smaller capitalists, till finally only the largest were left, and these found it necessary for self-preservation to protect themselves against the process of competitive decimation by the consolidation of their interests. One of the signs of the times in the period preceding the Revolution was this tendency among the great capitalists to seek refuge from the destructive efforts of competition through the pooling of their undertakings in great trusts and syndicates.”

”Suppose the Revolution had not come to interrupt that process, would a

system under which capital and the control of all business had been consolidated in a few hands have been worse for the public interest than the effect of competition?"

"Such a consolidated system would, of course, have been an intolerable despotism, the yoke of which, once assumed, the race might never have been able to break. In that respect private capitalism under a consolidated plutocracy, such as impended at the time of the Revolution, would have been a worse threat to the world's future than the competitive system; but as to the immediate bearings of the two systems on human welfare, private capital in the consolidated form might have had some points of advantage. Being an autocracy, it would have at least given some chance to a benevolent despot to be better than the system and to ameliorate a little the conditions of the people, and that was something competition did not allow the capitalists to do."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that under competition there was no free play whatever allowed for the capitalist's better feelings even if he had any. He could not be better than the system. If he tried to be, the system would crush him. He had to follow the pace set by his competitors or fail in business. Whatever rascality or cruelty his rivals might devise, he must imitate or drop out of the struggle. The very wickedest, meanest, and most rascally of the competitors, the one who ground his employees lowest, adulterated his goods most shamefully, and lied about them most skillfully, set the pace for all the rest."

"Evidently, John, if you had lived in the early part of the revolutionary agitation you would have had scant sympathy with those early reformers whose fear was lest the great monopolies would put an end to competition."

"I can't say whether I should have been wiser than my contemporaries in that case," replied the lad, "but I think my gratitude to the monopolists for destroying competition would have been only equaled by my eagerness to destroy the monopolists to make way for public capitalism."

#### ROBERT TELLS ABOUT THE GLUT OF MEN.

"Now, Robert," said the teacher, "John has told us how the glut of products resulting from the profit system caused a competition among capitalists to sell goods and what its consequences were. There was, however, another sort of glut besides that of goods which resulted from the profit system. What was that?"

"A glut of men," replied the boy Robert. "Lack of buying power on the part of the people, whether from lack of employment or lowered wages, meant less demand for products, and that meant less work for producers. Clogged storehouses meant closed factories and idle populations of

workers who could get no work—that is to say, the glut in the goods market caused a corresponding glut in the labor or man market. And as the glut in the goods market stimulated competition among the capitalists to sell their goods, so likewise did the glut in the labor market stimulate an equally desperate competition among the workers to sell their labor. The capitalists who could not find buyers for their goods lost their money indeed, but those who had nothing to sell but their strength and skill, and could find none to buy, must perish. The capitalist, unless his goods were perishable, could wait for a market, but the workingman must find a buyer for his labor at once or die. And in respect to this inability to wait for a market, the farmer, while technically a capitalist, was little better off than the wage-earner, being, on account of the smallness of his capital, almost as unable to withhold his product as the workingman his labor. The pressing necessity of the wage-earner to sell his labor at once on any terms and of the small capitalist to dispose of his product was the means by which the great capitalists were able steadily to force down the rate of wages and the prices paid for their product to the first producers.”

”And was it only among the wage-earners and the small producers that this glut of men existed?”

”On the contrary, every trade, every occupation, every art, and every profession, including the most learned ones, was similarly overcrowded, and those in the ranks of each regarded every fresh recruit with jealous eyes, seeing in him one more rival in the struggle for life, making it just so much more difficult than it had been before. It would seem that in those days no man could have had any satisfaction in his labor, however self-denying and arduous, for he must always have been haunted by the feeling that it would have been kinder to have stood aside and let another do the work and take the pay, seeing that there was not work and pay for all.”

”Tell us, Robert, did not our ancestors recognize the facts of the situation you have described? Did they not see that this glut of men indicated something out of order in the social arrangements?”

”Certainly. They professed to be much distressed over it. A large literature was devoted to discussing why there was not enough work to go around in a world in which so much more work evidently needed to be done as indicated by its general poverty. The Congresses and Legislatures were constantly appointing commissions of learned men to investigate and report on the subject.”

”And did these learned men ascribe it to its obvious cause as the necessary effect of the profit system to maintain and constantly increase a gap between the consuming and producing power of the community?”

”Dear me, no! To have criticised the profit system would have been flat blasphemy. The learned men called it a problem—the problem of the

unemployed—and gave it up as a conundrum. It was a favorite way our ancestors had of dodging questions which they could not answer without attacking vested interests to call them problems and give them up as insolvable mysteries of Divine Providence.”

”There was one philosopher, Robert—an Englishman—who went to the bottom of this difficulty of the glut of men resulting from the profit system. He stated the only way possible to avoid the glut, provided the profit system was retained. Do you remember his name?”

”You mean Malthus, I suppose.”

”Yes. What was his plan?”

”He advised poor people, as the only way to avoid starvation, not to get born—that is, I mean he advised poor people not to have children. This old fellow, as you say, was the only one of the lot who went to the root of the profit system, and saw that there was not room for it and for mankind on the earth. Regarding the profit system as a God-ordained necessity, there could be no doubt in his mind that it was mankind which must, under the circumstances, get off the earth. People called Malthus a cold-blooded philosopher. Perhaps he was, but certainly it was only common humanity that, so long as the profit system lasted, a red flag should be hung out on the planet, warning souls not to land except at their own risk.”

#### EMILY SHOWS THE NECESSITY OF WASTE PIPES.

”I quite agree with you, Robert,” said the teacher, ”and now, Emily, we will ask you to take us in charge as we pursue a little further this interesting, if not very edifying theme. The economic system of production and distribution by which a nation lives may fitly be compared to a cistern with a supply pipe, representing production, by which water is pumped in; and an escape pipe, representing consumption, by which the product is disposed of. When the cistern is scientifically constructed the supply pipe and escape pipe correspond in capacity, so that the water may be drawn off as fast as supplied, and none be wasted by overflow. Under the profit system of our ancestors, however, the arrangement was different. Instead of corresponding in capacity with the supply pipe representing production, the outlet representing consumption was half or two thirds shut off by the water-gate of profits, so that it was not able to carry off more than, say, a half or a third of the supply that was pumped into the cistern through the feed pipe of production. Now, Emily, what would be the natural effect of such a lack of correspondence between the inlet and the outlet capacity of the cistern?”

”Obviously,” replied the girl who answered to the name of Emily, ”the effect would be to clog the cistern, and compel the pumps to slow down to half or one third of their capacity—namely, to the capacity of the

escape pipe.”

”But,” said the teacher, ”suppose that in the case of the cistern used by our ancestors the effect of slowing down the pump of production was to diminish still further the capacity of the escape pipe of consumption, already much too small, by depriving the working masses of even the small purchasing power they had before possessed in the form of wages for labor or prices for produce.”

”Why, in that case,” replied the girl, ”it is evident that since slowing down production only checked instead of hastening relief by consumption, there would be no way to avoid a stoppage of the whole service except to relieve the pressure in the cistern by opening waste pipes.”

”Precisely so. Well, now, we are in a position to appreciate how necessary a part the waste pipes played in the economic system of our forefathers. We have seen that under that system the bulk of the people sold their labor or produce to the capitalists, but were unable to buy back and consume but a small part of the result of that labor or produce in the market, the rest remaining in the hands of the capitalists as profits. Now, the capitalists, being a very small body numerically, could consume upon their necessities but a petty part of these accumulated profits, and yet, if they did not get rid of them somehow, production would stop, for the capitalists absolutely controlled the initiative in production, and would have no motive to increase accumulations they could not dispose of. In proportion, moreover, as the capitalists from lack of use for more profits should slacken production, the mass of the people, finding none to hire them, or buy their produce to sell again, would lose what little consuming power they had before, and a still larger accumulation of products be left on the capitalists’ hands. The question then is, How did the capitalists, after consuming all they could of their profits upon their own necessities, dispose of the surplus, so as to make room for more production?”

”Of course,” said the girl Emily, ”if the surplus products were to be so expended as to relieve the glut, the first point was that they must be expended in such ways that there should be no return, for them. They must be absolutely wasted—like water poured into the sea. This was accomplished by the use of the surplus products in the support of bodies of workers employed in unproductive kinds of labor. This waste labor was of two sorts—the first was that employed in wasteful industrial and commercial competition; the second was that employed in the means and services of luxury.”

”Tell us about the wasteful expenditure of labor in competition.”

”That was through the undertaking of industrial and commercial enterprises which were not called for by any increase in consumption, their object being merely the displacement of the enterprises of one capitalist by those of another.”

”And was this a very large cause of waste?”

”Its magnitude may be inferred from the saying current at the time that ninety-five per cent of industrial and commercial enterprises failed, which merely meant that in this proportion of instances capitalists wasted their investments in trying to fill a demand which either did not exist or was supplied already. If that estimate were even a remote suggestion of the truth, it would serve to give an idea of the enormous amounts of accumulated profits which were absolutely wasted in competitive expenditure. And it must be remembered also that when a capitalist succeeded in displacing another and getting away his business the total waste of capital was just as great as if he failed, only in the one case it was the capital of the previous investor that was destroyed instead of the capital of the newcomer. In every country which had attained any degree of economic development there were many times more business enterprises in every line than there was business for, and many times as much capital already invested as there was a return for. The only way in which new capital could be put into business was by forcing out and destroying old capital already invested. The ever-mounting aggregation of profits seeking part of a market that was prevented from increasing by the effect of those very profits, created a pressure of competition among capitalists which, by all accounts that come down to us, must have been like a conflagration in its consuming effects upon capital.

”Now tell us something about the other great waste of profits by which the pressure in the cistern was sufficiently relieved to permit production to go on—that is to say, the expenditure of profits for the employment of labor in the service of luxury. What was luxury?”

”The term luxury, in referring to the state of society before the Revolution, meant the lavish expenditure of wealth by the rich to gratify a refined sensualism, while the masses of the people were suffering lack of the primary necessities.”

”What were some of the modes of luxurious expenditure indulged in by the capitalists?”

”They were unlimited in variety, as, for example, the construction of costly palaces for residence and their decoration in royal style, the support of great retinues of servants, costly supplies for the table, rich equipages, pleasure ships, and all manner of boundless expenditure in fine raiment and precious stones. Ingenuity was exhausted in contriving devices by which the rich might waste the abundance the people were dying for. A vast army of laborers was constantly engaged in manufacturing an infinite variety of articles and appliances of elegance and ostentation which mocked the unsatisfied primary necessities of those who toiled to produce them.”

"What have you to say of the moral aspect of this expenditure for luxury?"

"If the entire community had arrived at that stage of economic prosperity which would enable all alike to enjoy the luxuries equally," replied the girl, "indulgence in them would have been merely a question of taste. But this waste of wealth by the rich in the presence of a vast population suffering lack of the bare necessities of life was an illustration of inhumanity that would seem incredible on the part of civilized people were not the facts so well substantiated. Imagine a company of persons sitting down with enjoyment to a banquet, while on the floors and all about the corners of the banquet hall were groups of fellow-beings dying with want and following with hungry eyes every morsel the feasters lifted to their mouths. And yet that precisely describes the way in which the rich used to spend their profits in the great cities of America, France, England, and Germany before the Revolution, the one difference being that the needy and the hungry, instead of being in the banquet room itself, were just outside on the street."

"It was claimed, was it not, by the apologists of the luxurious expenditure of the capitalists that they thus gave employment to many who would otherwise have lacked it?"

"And why would they have lacked employment? Why were the people glad to find employment in catering to the luxurious pleasures and indulgences of the capitalists, selling themselves to the most frivolous and degrading uses? It was simply because the profit taking of these same capitalists, by reducing the consuming power of the people to a fraction of its producing power, had correspondingly limited the field of productive employment, in which under a rational system there must always have been work for every hand until all needs were satisfied, even as there is now. In excusing their luxurious expenditure on the ground you have mentioned, the capitalists pleaded the results of one wrong to justify the commission of another."

"The moralists of all ages," said the teacher, "condemned the luxury of the rich. Why did their censures effect no change?"

"Because they did not understand the economics of the subject. They failed to see that under the profit system the absolute waste of the excess of profits in unproductive expenditure was an economic necessity, if production was to proceed, as you showed in comparing it with the cistern. The waste of profits in luxury was an economic necessity, to use another figure, precisely as a running sore is a necessary vent in some cases for the impurities of a diseased body. Under our system of equal sharing, the wealth of a community is freely and equally distributed among its members as is the blood in a healthy body. But when, as under the old system, that wealth was concentrated in the hands of a portion of the community, it lost its vitalizing quality, as does the blood when

congested in particular organs, and like that becomes an active poison, to be got rid of at any cost. Luxury in this way might be called an ulcer, which must be kept open if the profit system was to continue on any terms."

"You say," said the teacher, "that in order that production should go on it was absolutely necessary to get the excess of profits wasted in some sort of unproductive expenditure. But might not the profit takers have devised some way of getting rid of the surplus more intelligent than mere competition to displace one another, and more consistent with humane feeling than wasting wealth upon refinements of sensual indulgence in the presence of a needy multitude?"

"Certainly. If the capitalists had cared at all about the humane aspect of the matter, they could have taken a much less demoralizing method in getting rid of the obstructive surplus. They could have periodically made a bonfire of it as a burnt sacrifice to the god Profit, or, if they preferred, it might have been carried out in scows beyond soundings and dumped there."

"It is easy to see," said the teacher, "that from a moral point of view such a periodical bonfire or dump would have been vastly more edifying to gods and men than was the actual practice of expending it in luxuries which mocked the bitter want of the mass. But how about the economic operation of this plan?"

"It would have been as advantageous economically as morally. The process of wasting the surplus profits in competition and luxury was slow and protracted, and meanwhile productive industry languished and the workers waited in idleness and want for the surplus to be so far reduced as to make room for more production. But if the surplus at once, on being ascertained, were destroyed, productive industry would go right on."

"But how about the workmen employed by the capitalists in ministering to their luxuries? Would they not have been thrown out of work if luxury had been given up?"

"On the contrary, under the bonfire system there would have been a constant demand for them in productive employment to provide material for the blaze, and that surely would have been a far more worthy occupation than helping the capitalists to consume in folly the product of their brethren employed in productive industry. But the greatest advantage of all which would have resulted from the substitution of the bonfire for luxury remains to be mentioned. By the time the nation had made a few such annual burnt offerings to the principle of profit, perhaps even after the first one, it is likely they would begin to question, in the light of such vivid object lessons, whether the moral beauties of the profit system were sufficient compensation for so large an economic sacrifice."

#### CHARLES REMOVES AN APPREHENSION.

"Now, Charles," said the teacher, "you shall help us a little on a point of conscience. We have, one and another, told a very bad story about the profit system, both in its moral and its economic aspects. Now, is it not possible that we have done it injustice? Have we not painted too black a picture? From an ethical point of view we could indeed scarcely have done so, for there are no words strong enough to justly characterize the mock it made of all the humanities. But have we not possibly asserted too strongly its economic imbecility and the hopelessness of the world's outlook for material welfare so long as it should be tolerated? Can you reassure us on this point?"

"Easily," replied the lad Charles. "No more conclusive testimony to the hopelessness of the economic outlook under private capitalism could be desired than is abundantly given by the nineteenth-century economists themselves. While they seemed quite incapable of imagining anything different from private capitalism as the basis of an economic system, they cherished no illusions as to its operation. Far from trying to comfort mankind by promising that if present ills were bravely borne matters would grow better, they expressly taught that the profit system must inevitably result at some time not far ahead in the arrest of industrial progress and a stationary condition of production."

"How did they make that out?"

"They recognized, as we do, the tendency under private capitalism of rents, interest, and profits to accumulate as capital in the hands of the capitalist class, while, on the other hand, the consuming power of the masses did not increase, but either decreased or remained practically stationary. From this lack of equilibrium between production and consumption it followed that the difficulty of profitably employing capital in productive industry must increase as the accumulations of capital so disposable should grow. The home market having been first, glutted with products and afterward the foreign market, the competition of the capitalists to find productive employment for their capital would lead them, after having reduced wages to the lowest possible point, to bid for what was left of the market by reducing their own profits to the minimum point at which it was worth while to risk capital. Below this point more capital would not be invested in business. Thus the rate of wealth production would cease to advance, and become stationary."

"This, you say, is what the nineteenth-century economists themselves taught concerning the outcome of the profit system?"

"Certainly. I could, quote from their standard books any number of passages foretelling this condition of things, which, indeed, it required no prophet to foretell."

"How near was the world—that is, of course, the nations whose industrial

evolution had gone farthest—to this condition when the Revolution came?”

”They were apparently on its verge. The more economically advanced countries had generally exhausted their home markets and were struggling desperately for what was left of foreign markets. The rate of interest, which indicated the degree to which capital had become glutted, had fallen in England to two per cent and in America within thirty years had sunk from seven and six to five and three and four per cent, and was falling year by year. Productive industry had become generally clogged, and proceeded by fits and starts. In America the wage-earners were becoming proletarians, and the farmers fast sinking into the state of a tenantry. It was indeed the popular discontent caused by these conditions, coupled with apprehension of worse to come, which finally roused the people at the close of the nineteenth century to the necessity of destroying private capitalism for good and all.”

”And do I understand, then, that this stationary condition, after which no increase in the rate of wealth production could be looked for, was setting in while yet the primary needs of the masses remained unprovided for?”

”Certainly. The satisfaction of the needs of the masses, as we have abundantly seen, was in no way recognized as a motive for production under the profit system. As production approached the stationary point the misery of the people would, in fact, increase as a direct result of the competition among capitalists to invest their glut of capital in business. In order to do so, as has already been shown, they sought to reduce the prices of products, and that meant the reduction of wages to wage-earners and prices to first producers to the lowest possible point before any reduction in the profits of the capitalist was considered. What the old economists called the stationary condition of production meant, therefore, the perpetuation indefinitely of the maximum degree of hardship endurable by the people at large.”

”That will do, Charles; you have said enough to relieve any apprehension that possibly we were doing injustice to the profit system. Evidently that could not be done to a system of which its own champions foretold such an outcome as you have described. What, indeed, could be added to the description they give of it in these predictions of the stationary condition as a programme of industry confessing itself at the end of its resources in the midst of a naked and starving race? This was the good time coming, with the hope of which the nineteenth-century economists cheered the cold and hungry world of toilers—a time when, being worse off than ever, they must abandon forever even the hope of improvement. No wonder our forefathers described their so-called political economy as a dismal science, for never was there a pessimism blacker, a hopelessness more hopeless than it preached. Ill indeed had it been for humanity if it had been truly a science.

ESTHER COUNTS THE COST OF THE PROFIT SYSTEM.

"Now, Esther," the teacher pursued, "I am going to ask you to do a little estimating as to about how much the privilege of retaining the profit system cost our forefathers. Emily has given us an idea of the magnitude of the two great wastes of profits—the waste of competition and the waste of luxury. Now, did the capital wasted in these two ways represent all that the profit system cost the people?"

"It did not give a faint idea of it, much less represent it," replied the girl Esther. "The aggregate wealth wasted respectively in competition and luxury, could it have been distributed equally for consumption among the people, would undoubtedly have considerably raised the general level of comfort. In the cost of the profit system to a community, the wealth wasted by the capitalists was, however, an insignificant item. The bulk of that cost consisted in the effect of the profit system to prevent wealth from being produced, in holding back and tying down the almost boundless wealth-producing power of man. Imagine the mass of the population, instead of being sunk in poverty and a large part of them in bitter want, to have received sufficient to satisfy all their needs and give them ample, comfortable lives, and estimate the amount of additional wealth which it would have been necessary to produce to meet this standard of consumption. That will give you a basis for calculating the amount of wealth which the American people or any people of those days might and would have produced but for the profit system. You may estimate that this would have meant a fivefold, sevenfold, or tenfold increase of production, as you please to guess.

"But tell us this: Would it have been possible for the people of America, say, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, to have multiplied their production at such a rate if consumption had demanded it?"

"Nothing is more certain than that they could easily have done so. The progress of invention had been so great in the nineteenth century as to multiply from twentyfold to many hundredfold the productive power of industry. There was no time during the last quarter of the century in America or in any of the advanced countries when the existing productive plants could not have produced enough in six months to have supplied the total annual consumption as it actually was. And those plants could have been multiplied indefinitely. In like manner the agricultural product of the country was always kept far within its possibility, for a plentiful crop under the profit system meant ruinous prices to the farmers. As has been said, it was an admitted proposition of the old economists that there was no visible limit to production if only sufficient demand for consumption could be secured."

"Can you recall any instance in history in which it can be argued that a people paid so large a price in delayed and prevented development for the privilege of retaining any other tyranny as they did for keeping the profit system?"

"I am sure there never was such another instance, and I will tell you why I think so. Human progress has been delayed at various stages by oppressive institutions, and the world has leaped forward at their overthrow. But there was never before a time when the conditions had been so long ready and waiting for so great and so instantaneous a forward movement all along the line of social improvement as in the period preceding the Revolution. The mechanical and industrial forces, held in check by the profit system, only required to be unleashed to transform the economic condition of the race as by magic. So much for the material cost of the profit system to our forefathers; but, vast as that was, it is not worth considering for a moment in comparison with its cost in human happiness. I mean the moral cost in wrong and tears and black negations and stifled moral possibilities which the world paid for every day's retention of private capitalism: there are no words adequate to express the sum of that."

#### NO POLITICAL ECONOMY BEFORE THE REVOLUTION.

"That will do, Esther.—Now, George, I want you to tell us just a little about a particular body among the learned class of the nineteenth century, which, according to the professions of its members, ought to have known and to have taught the people all that we have so easily perceived as to the suicidal character of the profit system and the economic perdition it meant for mankind so long as it should be tolerated. I refer to the political economists."

"There were no political economists before the Revolution," replied the lad.

"But there certainly was a large class of learned men who called themselves political economists."

"Oh, yes; but they labeled themselves wrongly."

"How do you make that out?"

"Because there was not, until the Revolution—except, of course, among those who sought to bring it to pass—any conception whatever of what political economy is."

"What is it?"

"Economy," replied the lad, "means the wise husbandry of wealth in production and distribution. Individual economy is the science of this husbandry when conducted in the interest of the individual without regard to any others. Family economy is this husbandry carried on for the advantage of a family group without regard to other groups. Political economy, however, can only mean the husbandry of wealth for the greatest advantage of the political or social body, the whole number of the citizens constituting the political organization. This sort of husbandry

necessarily implies a public or political regulation of economic affairs for the general interest. But before the Revolution there was no conception of such an economy, nor any organization to carry it out. All systems and doctrines of economy previous to that time were distinctly and exclusively private and individual in their whole theory and practice. While in other respects our forefathers did in various ways and degrees recognize a social solidarity and a political unity with proportionate rights and duties, their theory and practice as to all matters touching the getting and sharing of wealth were aggressively and brutally individualistic, antisocial, and unpolitical.”

”Have you ever looked over any of the treatises which our forefathers called political economies, at the Historical Library?”

”I confess,” the boy answered, ”that the title of the leading work under that head was enough for me. It was called *The Wealth of Nations*. That would be an admirable title for a political economy nowadays, when the production and distribution of wealth are conducted altogether by and for the people collectively; but what meaning could it conceivably have had as applied to a book written nearly a hundred years before such a thing as a national economic organization was thought of, with the sole view of instructing capitalists how to get rich at the cost of, or at least in total disregard of, the welfare of their fellow-citizens? I noticed too that quite a common subtitle used for these so-called works on political economy was the phrase ’*The Science of Wealth*.’ Now what could an apologist of private capitalism and the profit system possibly have to say about the science of wealth? The A B C of any science of wealth production is the necessity of co-ordination and concert of effort; whereas competition, conflict, and endless cross-purposes were the sum and substance of the economic methods set forth by these writers.”

”And yet,” said the teacher, ”the only real fault of these so-called books on Political Economy consists in the absurdity of the title. Correct that, and their value as documents of the times at once becomes evident. For example, we might call them ’*Examinations into the Economic and Social Consequences of trying to get along without any Political Economy*.’ A title scarcely less fit would perhaps be ’*Studies into the Natural Course of Economic Affairs when left to Anarchy by the Lack of any Regulation in the General Interest*.’ It is, when regarded in this light, as painstaking and conclusive expositions of the ruinous effects of private capitalism upon the welfare of communities, that we perceive the true use and value of these works. Taking up in detail the various phenomena of the industrial and commercial world of that day, with their reactions upon the social status, their authors show how the results could not have been other than they were, owing to the laws of private capitalism, and that it was nothing but weak sentimentalism to suppose that while those laws continued in operation any different results could be obtained, however good men’s intentions. Although somewhat heavy in style for popular reading, I have often thought that during the revolutionary period no documents could have been better calculated to

convince rational men who could be induced to read them, that it was absolutely necessary to put an end to private capitalism if humanity were ever to get forward.

”The fatal and quite incomprehensible mistake of their authors was that they did not themselves see this, conclusion and preach it. Instead of that they committed the incredible blunder of accepting a set of conditions that were manifestly mere barbaric survivals as the basis of a social science when they ought easily to have seen that the very idea of a scientific social order suggested the abolition of those conditions as the first step toward its realization.

”Meanwhile, as to the present lesson, there are two or three points to clear up before leaving it. We have been talking altogether of profit taking, but this was only one of the three main methods by which the capitalists collected the tribute from the toiling world by which their power was acquired and maintained. What were the other two?”

”Rent and interest.”

”What was rent?”

”In those days,” replied George, ”the right to a reasonable and equal allotment of land for private uses did not belong as a matter of course to every person as it does now. No one was admitted to have any natural right to land at all. On the other hand, there was no limit to the extent of land, though it were a whole province, which any one might not legally possess if he could get hold of it. By natural consequence of this arrangement the strong and cunning had acquired most of the land, while the majority of the people were left with none at all. Now, the owner of the land had the right to drive any one off his land and have him punished for entering on it. Nevertheless, the people who owned n required to have it and to use it and must needs go to the capitalists for it. Rent was the price charged by capitalists for not driving people off their land.”

”Did this rent represent any economic service of any sort rendered to the community by the rent receiver?”

”So far as regards the charge for the use of the land itself apart from improvements it represented no service of any sort, nothing but the waiver for a price of the owner’s legal right of ejecting the occupant. It was not a charge for doing anything, but for not doing something.”

”Now tell us about interest; what was that?”

”Interest was the price paid for the use of money. Nowadays the collective administration directs the industrial forces of the nation for the general welfare, but in those days all economic enterprises were for private profit, and their projectors had to hire the labor they needed

with money. Naturally, the loan of so indispensable a means as this commanded a high price; that price was interest."

"And did interest represent any economic service to the community on the part of the interest taker in lending his money?"

"None whatever. On the contrary, it was by the very nature of the transaction, a waiver on the part of the lender of the power of action in favor of the borrower. It was a price charged for letting some one else do what the lender might have done but chose not to. It was a tribute levied by inaction upon action."

"If all the landlords and money lenders had died over night, would it have made any difference to the world?"

"None whatever, so long as they left the land and the money behind. Their economic role was a passive one, and in strong contrast with that of the profit-seeking capitalists, which, for good or bad, was at least active."

"What was the general effect of rent and interest upon the consumption and consequently the production of wealth by the community?"

"It operated to reduce both."

"How?"

"In the same way that profit taking did. Those who received rent were very few, those who paid it were nearly all. Those who received interest were few, and those who paid it many. Rent and interest meant, therefore, like profits, a constant drawing away of the purchasing power of the community at large and its concentration in the hands of a small part of it."

"What have you to say of these three processes as to their comparative effect in destroying the consuming power of the masses, and consequently the demand for production?"

"That differed in different ages and countries according to the stage of their economic development. Private capitalism has been compared to a three-horned bull, the horns being rent, profit, and interest, differing in comparative length and strength according to the age of the animal. In the United States, at the time covered by our lesson, profits were still the longest of the three horns, though the others were growing terribly fast."

"We have seen, George," said his teacher, "that from a period long before the great Revolution it was as true as it is now that the only limit to the production of wealth in society was its consumption. We have seen that what kept the world in poverty under private capitalism was the effect of profits, aided by rent and interest to reduce consumption and

thus cripple production, by concentrating the purchasing power of the people in the hands of a few. Now, that was the wrong way of doing things. Before leaving the subject I want you to tell us in a word what is the right way. Seeing that production is limited by consumption, what rule must be followed in distributing the results of production to be consumed in order to develop consumption to the highest possible point, and thereby in turn to create the greatest possible demand for production.”

”For that purpose the results of production must be distributed equally among all the members of the producing community.”

”Show why that is so.”

”It is a self-evident mathematical proposition. The more people a loaf of bread or any given thing is divided among, and the more equally it is divided, the sooner it will be consumed and more bread be called for. To put it in a more formal way, the needs of human beings result from the same natural constitution and are substantially the same. An equal distribution of the things needed by them is therefore that general plan by which the consumption of such things will be at once enlarged to the greatest possible extent and continued on that scale without interruption to the point of complete satisfaction for all. It follows that the equal distribution of products is the rule by which the largest possible consumption can be secured, and thus in turn the largest production be stimulated.”

”What, on the other hand, would be the effect on consumption of an unequal division of consumable products?”

”If the division were unequal, the result would be that some would have more than they could consume in a given time, and others would have less than they could have consumed in the same time, the result meaning a reduction of total consumption below what it would have been for that time with an equal division of products. If a million dollars were equally divided among one thousand men, it would presently be wholly expended in the consumption of needed things, creating a demand for the production of as much more; but if concentrated in one man’s hands, not a hundredth part of it, however great his luxury, would be likely to be so expended in the same period. The fundamental general law in the science of social wealth is, therefore, that the efficiency of a given amount of purchasing power to promote consumption is in exact proportion to its wide distribution, and is most efficient when equally distributed among the whole body of consumers because that is the widest possible distribution.”

”You have not called attention to the fact that the formula of the greatest wealth production—namely, equal sharing of the product among the community—is also that application of the product which will cause the greatest sum of human happiness.”

"I spoke strictly of the economic side of the subject."

"Would it not have startled the old economists to hear that the secret of the most efficient system of wealth production was conformity on a national scale to the ethical idea of equal treatment for all embodied by Jesus Christ in the golden rule?"

"No doubt, for they falsely taught that there were two kinds of science dealing with human conduct—one moral, the other economic; and two lines of reasoning as to conduct—the economic, and the ethical; both right in different ways. We know better. There can be but one science of human conduct in whatever field, and that is ethical. Any economic proposition which can not be stated in ethical terms is false. Nothing can be in the long run or on a large scale sound economics which is not sound ethics. It is not, therefore, a mere coincidence, but a logical necessity, that the supreme word of both ethics and economics should be one and the same—equality. The golden rule in its social application is as truly the secret of plenty as of peace."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

"THE PARABLE OF THE WATER TANK."

"That will do, George. We will close the session here. Our discussion, I find, has taken a broader range than I expected, and to complete the subject we shall need to have a brief session this afternoon.—And now, by way of concluding the morning, I propose to offer a little contribution of my own. The other day, at the museum, I was delving among the relics of literature of the great Revolution, with a view to finding something that might illustrate our theme. I came across a little pamphlet of the period, yellow and almost undecipherable, which, on examination, I found to be a rather amusing skit or satirical take-off on the profit system. It struck me that probably our lesson might prepare us to appreciate it, and I made a copy. It is entitled "The Parable of the Water Tank," and runs this way:

"There was a certain very dry land, the people whereof were in sore need of water. And they did nothing but to seek after water from morning until night, and many perished because they could not find it.

"Howbeit, there were certain men in that land who were more crafty and diligent than the rest, and these had gathered stores of water where others could find none, and the name of these men was called capitalists. And it came to pass that the people of the land came unto the capitalists and prayed them that they would give them of the water they had gathered

that they might drink, for their need was sore. But the capitalists answered them and said:

””Go to, ye silly people! why should we give you of the water which we have gathered, for then we should become even as ye are, and perish with you? But behold what we will do unto you. Be ye our servants and ye shall have water.”

”’And the people said, ”Only give us to drink and we will be your servants, we and our children.” And it was so.

”’Now, the capitalists were men of understanding, and wise in their generation. They ordered the people who were their servants in bands with captains and officers, and some they put at the springs to dip, and others did they make to carry the water, and others did they cause to seek for new springs. And all the water was brought together in one place, and there did the capitalists make a great tank for to hold it, and the tank was called the Market, for it was there that the people, even the servants of the capitalists, came to get water. And the capitalists said unto the people:

””For every bucket of water that ye bring to us, that we may pour it into the tank, which is the Market, behold! we will give you a penny, but for every bucket that we shall draw forth to give unto you that ye may drink of it, ye and your wives and your children, ye shall give to us two pennies, and the difference shall be our profit, seeing that if it were not for this profit we would not do this thing for you, but ye should all perish.”

”’And it was good in the people’s eyes, for they were dull of understanding, and they diligently brought water unto the tank for many days, and for every bucket which they did bring the capitalists gave them every man a penny; but for every bucket that the capitalists drew forth from the tank to give again unto the people, behold! the people rendered to the capitalists two pennies.

”’And after many days the water tank, which was the Market, overflowed at the top, seeing that for every bucket the people poured in they received only so much as would buy again half of a bucket. And because of the excess that was left of every bucket, did the tank overflow, for the people were many, but the capitalists were few, and could drink no more than others. Therefore did the tank overflow.

”’And when the capitalists saw that the water overflowed, they said to the people:

””See ye not the tank, which is the Market, doth overflow? Sit ye down, therefore and be patient, for ye shall bring us no more water till the tank be empty.”

”But when the people no more received the pennies of the capitalists for the water they brought, they could buy no more water from the capitalists, having naught wherewith to buy. And when the capitalists saw that they had no more profit because no man bought water of them, they were troubled. And they sent forth men in the highways, the byways, and the hedges, crying, ”If any thirst let him come to the tank and buy water of us, for it doth overflow.” For they said among themselves, ”Behold, the times are dull; we must advertise.”

”But the people answered, saying: ”How can we buy unless ye hire us, for how else shall we have wherewithal to buy? Hire ye us, therefore, as before, and we will gladly buy water, for we thirst, and ye will have no need to advertise.” But the capitalists said to the people: ”Shall we hire you to bring water when the tank, which is the Market, doth already overflow? Buy ye, therefore, first water, and when the tank is empty, through your buying, will we hire you again.” And so it was because the capitalists hired them no more to bring water that the people could not buy the water they had brought already, and because the people could not buy the water they had brought already, the capitalists no more hired them to bring water. And the saying went abroad, ”It is a crisis.”

”And the thirst of the people was great, for it was not now as it had been in the days of their fathers, when the land was open before them, for every one to seek water for himself, seeing that the capitalists had taken all the springs, and the wells, and the water wheels, and the vessels and the buckets, so that no man might come by water save from the tank, which was the Market. And the people murmured against the capitalists and said: ”Behold, the tank runneth over, and we die of thirst. Give us, therefore, of the water, that we perish not.”

”But the capitalists answered: ”Not so. The water is ours. Ye shall not drink thereof unless ye buy it of us with pennies.” And they confirmed it with an oath, saying, after their manner, ”Business is business.”

”But the capitalists were disquieted that the people bought no more water, whereby they had no more any profits, and they spake one to another, saying: ”It seemeth that our profits have stopped our profits, and by reason of the profits we have made, we can make no more profits. How is it that our profits are become unprofitable to us, and our gains do make us poor? Let us therefore send for the soothsayers, that they may interpret this thing unto us,” and they sent for them.

”Now, the soothsayers were men learned in dark sayings, who joined themselves to the capitalists by reason of the water of the capitalists, that they might have thereof and live, they and their children. And they spake for the capitalists unto the people, and did their embassies for them, seeing that the capitalists were not a folk quick of understanding neither ready of speech.

”And the capitalists demanded of the soothsayers that they should

interpret this thing unto them, wherefore it was that the people bought no more water of them, although the tank was full. And certain of the soothsayers answered and said, "It is by reason of overproduction," and some said, "It is glut"; but the signification of the two words is the same. And others said, "Nay, but this thing is by reason of the spots on the sun." And yet others answered, saying, "It is neither by reason of glut, nor yet of spots on the sun that this evil hath come to pass, but because of lack of confidence."

"And while the soothsayers contended among themselves, according to their manner, the men of profit did slumber and sleep, and when they awoke they said to the soothsayers: "It is enough. Ye have spoken comfortably unto us. Now go ye forth and speak comfortably likewise unto this people, so that they be at rest and leave us also in peace."

"But the soothsayers, even the men of the dismal science—for so they were named of some—were loath to go forth to the people lest they should be stoned, for the people loved them not. And they said to the capitalists:

"Masters, it is a mystery of our craft that if men be full and thirst not but be at rest, then shall they find comfort in our speech even as ye. Yet if they thirst and be empty, find they no comfort therein but rather mock us, for it seemeth that unless a man be full our wisdom appeareth unto him but emptiness." But the capitalists said: "Go ye forth. Are ye not our men to do our embassies?"

"And the soothsayers went forth to the people and expounded to them the mystery of overproduction, and how it was that they must needs perish of thirst because there was overmuch water, and how there could not be enough because there was too much. And likewise spoke they unto the people concerning the sun spots, and also wherefore it was that these things had come upon them by reason of lack of confidence. And it was even as the soothsayers had said, for to the people their wisdom seemed emptiness. And the people reviled them, saying: "Go up, ye bald-heads! Will ye mock us? Doth plenty breed famine? Doth nothing come out of much?" And they took up stones to stone them.

"And when the capitalists saw that the people still murmured and would not give ear to the soothsayers, and because also they feared lest they should come upon the tank and take of the water by force, they brought forth to them certain holy men (but they were false priests), who spake unto the people that they should be quiet and trouble not the capitalists because they thirsted. And these holy men, who were false priests, testified to the people that this affliction was sent to them of God for the healing of their souls, and that if they should bear it in patience and lust not after the water, neither trouble the capitalists, it would come to pass that after they had given up the ghost they would come to a country where there should be no capitalists but an abundance of water. Howbeit, there were certain true prophets of God also, and these had

compassion on the people and would not prophesy for the capitalists, but rather spake constantly against them.

”Now, when the capitalists saw that the people still murmured and would not be still, neither for the words of the soothsayers nor of the false priests, they came forth themselves unto them and put the ends of their fingers in the water that overflowed in the tank and wet the tips thereof, and they scattered the drops from the tips of their fingers abroad upon the people who thronged the tank, and the name of the drops of water was charity, and they were exceeding bitter.

”And when the capitalists saw yet again that neither for the words of the soothsayers, nor of the holy men who were false priests, nor yet for the drops that were called charity, would the people be still, but raged the more, and crowded upon the tank as if they would take it by force, then took they counsel together and sent men privily forth among the people. And these men sought out the mightiest among the people and all who had skill in war, and took them apart and spake craftily with them, saying:

””Come, now, why cast ye not your lot in with the capitalists? If ye will be their men and serve them against the people, that they break not in upon the tank, then shall ye have abundance of water, that ye perish not, ye and your children.”

”And the mighty men and they who were skilled in war hearkened unto this speech and suffered themselves to be persuaded, for their thirst constrained them, and they went within unto the capitalists and became their men, and staves and swords were put in their hands and they became a defense unto the capitalists and smote the people when they thronged upon the tank.

”And after many days the water was low in the tank, for the capitalists did make fountains and fish ponds of the water thereof, and did bathe therein, they and their wives and their children, and did waste the water for their pleasure.

”And when the capitalists saw that the tank was empty, they said, ”The crisis is ended”; and they sent forth and hired the people that they should bring water to fill it again. And for the water that the people brought to the tank they received for every bucket a penny, but for the water which the capitalists drew forth from the tank to give again to the people they received two pennies, that they might have their profit. And after a time did the tank again overflow even as before.

”And now, when many times the people had filled the tank until it overflowed and had thirsted till the water therein had been wasted by the capitalists, it came to pass that there arose in the land certain men who were called agitators, for that they did stir up the people. And they spake to the people, saying that they should associate, and then would

they have no need to be servants of the capitalists and should thirst no more for water. And in the eyes of the capitalists were the agitators pestilent fellows, and they would fain have crucified them, but durst not for fear of the people.

”’And the words of the agitators which they spake to the people were on this wise:

””Ye foolish people, how long will ye be deceived by a lie and believe to your hurt that which is not? for behold all these things that have been said unto you by the capitalists and by the soothsayers are cunningly devised fables. And likewise the holy men, who say that it is the will of God that ye should always be poor and miserable and athirst, behold! they do blaspheme God and are liars, whom he will bitterly judge though he forgive all others. How cometh it that ye may not come by the water in the tank? Is it not because ye have no money? And why have ye no money? Is it not because ye receive but one penny for every bucket that ye bring to the tank, which is the Market, but must render two pennies for every bucket ye take out, so that the capitalists may have their profit? See ye not how by this means the tank must overflow, being filled by that ye lack and made to abound out of your emptiness? See ye not also that the harder ye toil and the more diligently ye seek and bring the water, the worse and not the better it shall be for you by reason of the profit, and that forever?”

”’After this manner spake the agitators for many days unto the people, and none heeded them, but it was so that after a time the people hearkened. And they answered and said unto the agitators:

””Ye say truth. It is because of the capitalists and of their profits that we want, seeing that by reason of them and their profits we may by no means come by the fruit of our labor, so that our labor is in vain, and the more we toil to fill the tank the sooner doth it overflow, and we may receive nothing because there is too much, according to the words of the soothsayers. But behold, the capitalists are hard men and their tender mercies are cruel. Tell us if ye know any way whereby we may deliver ourselves out of our bondage unto them. But if ye know of no certain way of deliverance we beseech you to hold your peace and let us alone, that we may forget our misery.”

”’And the agitators answered and said, ”We know a way.”

”’And the people said: ”Deceive us not, for this thing hath been from the beginning, and none hath found a way of deliverance until now, though many have sought it carefully with tears. But if ye know a way, speak unto us quickly.”

”’Then the agitators spake unto the people of the way. And they said:

””Behold, what need have ye at all of these capitalists, that ye should

yield them profits upon your labor? What great thing do they wherefore ye render them this tribute? Lo! it is only because they do order you in bands and lead you out and in and set your tasks and afterward give you a little of the water yourselves have brought and not they. Now, behold the way out of this bondage! Do ye for yourselves that which is done by the capitalists—namely, the ordering of your labor, and the marshaling of your bands, and the dividing of your tasks. So shall ye have no need at all of the capitalists and no more yield to them any profit, but all the fruit of your labor shall ye share as brethren, every one having the same; and so shall the tank never overflow until every man is full, and would not wag the tongue for more, and afterward shall ye with the overflow make pleasant fountains and fish ponds to delight yourselves withal even as did the capitalists; but these shall be for the delight of all.”

”’And the people answered, ”How shall we go about to do this thing, for it seemeth good to us?”

”’And the agitators answered: ”Choose ye discreet men to go in and out before you and to marshal your bands and order your labor, and these men shall be as the capitalists were; but, behold, they shall not be your masters as the capitalists are, but your brethren and officers who do your will, and they shall not take any profits, but every man his share like the others, that there may be no more masters and servants among you, but brethren only. And from time to time, as ye see fit, ye shall choose other discreet men in place of the first to order the labor.”

”’And the people hearkened, and the thing was very good to them. Likewise seemed it not a hard thing. And with one voice they cried out, ”So let it be as ye have said, for we will do it!”

”’And the capitalists heard the noise of the shouting and what the people said, and the soothsayers heard it also, and likewise the false priests and the mighty men of war, who were a defense unto the capitalists; and when they heard they trembled exceedingly, so that their knees smote together, and they said one to another, ”It is the end of us!”

”’Howbeit, there were certain true priests of the living God who would not prophesy for the capitalists, but had compassion on the people; and when they heard the shouting of the people and what they said, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy, and gave thanks to God because of the deliverance.

”’And the people went and did all the things that were told them of the agitators to do. And it came to pass as the agitators had said, even according to all their words. And there was no more any thirst in that land, neither any that was ahungered, nor naked, nor cold, nor in any manner of want; and every man said unto his fellow, ”My brother,” and every woman said unto her companion, ”My sister,” for so were they with one another as brethren and sisters which do dwell together in unity. And

the blessing of God rested upon that land forever.”

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### I AM SHOWN ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE EARTH.

The boys and girls of the political-economy class rose to their feet at the teacher's word of dismissal, and in the twinkling of an eye the scene which had been absorbing my attention disappeared, and I found myself staring at Dr. Leete's smiling countenance and endeavoring to imagine how I had come to be where I was. During the greater part and all the latter part of the session of the class so absolute had been the illusion of being actually present in the schoolroom, and so absorbing the interest of the theme, that I had quite forgotten the extraordinary device by which I was enabled to see and hear the proceedings. Now, as I recalled it, my mind reverted with an impulse of boundless curiosity to the electroscope and the processes by which it performed its miracles.

Having given me some explanation of the mechanical operation of the apparatus and the way in which it served the purpose of a prolonged optic nerve, the doctor went on to exhibit its powers on a large scale. During the following hour, without leaving my chair, I made the tour of the earth, and learned by the testimony of my senses that the transformation which had come over Boston since my former life was but a sample of that which the whole world of men had undergone. I had but to name a great city or a famous locality in any country to be at once present there so far as sight and hearing were concerned. I looked down on modern New York, then upon Chicago, upon San Francisco, and upon New Orleans, finding each of these cities quite unrecognizable but for the natural features which constituted their setting. I visited London. I heard the Parisians talk French and the Berlinese talk German, and from St. Petersburg went to Cairo by way of Delhi. One city would be bathed in the noonday sun; over the next I visited, the moon, perhaps, was rising and the stars coming out; while over the third the silence of midnight brooded. In Paris, I remember, it was raining hard, and in London fog reigned supreme. In St. Petersburg there was a snow squall. Turning from the contemplation of the changing world of men to the changeless face of Nature, I renewed my old-time acquaintance with the natural wonders of the earth—the thundering cataracts, the stormy ocean shores, the lonely mountain tops, the great rivers, the glittering splendors of the polar regions, and the desolate places of the deserts.

Meanwhile the doctor explained to me that not only the telephone and electroscope were always connected with a great number of regular stations commanding all scenes of special interest, but that whenever in any part of the world there occurred a spectacle or accident of

particular interest, special connections were instantly made, so that all mankind could at once see what the situation was for themselves without need of actual or alleged special artists on the spot.

With all my conceptions of time and space reduced to chaos, and well-nigh drunk with wonder, I exclaimed at last:

"I can stand no more of this just now! I am beginning to doubt seriously whether I am in or out of the body."

As a practical way of settling that question the doctor proposed a brisk walk, for we had not been out of the house that morning.

"Have we had enough of economics for the day?" he asked as we left the house, "or would you like to attend the afternoon session the teacher spoke of?"

I replied that I wished to attend it by all means.

"Very good," said the doctor; "it will doubtless be very short, and what do you say to attending it this time in person? We shall have plenty of time for our walk and can easily get to the school before the hour by taking a car from any point. Seeing this is the first time you have used the electroscope, and have no assurance except its testimony that any such school or pupils really exist, perhaps it would help to confirm any impressions you may have received to visit the spot in the body."

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE STRIKERS.

Presently, as we were crossing Boston Common, absorbed in conversation, a shadow fell athwart the way, and looking up, I saw towering above us a sculptured group of heroic size.

"Who are these?" I exclaimed.

"You ought to know if any one," said the doctor. "They are contemporaries of yours who were making a good deal of disturbance in your day."

But, indeed, it had only been as an involuntary expression of surprise that I had questioned what the figures stood for.