

A STUDY IN SOCIOLOGY.

IN the usual discussion of social questions the cause of the weak gets excessive championship. New England ethics always pleads for the undermost dog. Labor is commiserated as being held in an unequal struggle with capital. But it has not yet occurred to the exponents of public feeling that their sympathetic philosophy may have neglected some of the prime factors of the problem. The relative positions of the two dogs have been misunderstood. Instead of a well-fed mastiff and a hungry greyhound in deadly grapple, we have, rather, two unequally developed animals engaged in a race, both panting and athirst, and both putting forth their best strength to keep pace with a tyrannical social ideal. This is the radical question: Do our institutions create conditions of antagonism or of natural competition? Do they not rather eliminate from the problem every factor except natural capacity? The moral function of the state really ends with the bestowal of freedom. Torture the language as we may, we cannot give the word "equal," as used in our "Declaration," any objective equivalent. Our national government gives self-ownership and the right to untrammelled self-development. Our local legislation confers supplementary privileges, whose aim is equality. For instance, our public-school system aims at equality of intelligence, but does not attain it, because the factor of unequal native capacity intrudes. There is no good within the gift of gods or men that equals the privilege of having been well born. Health and hereditary power are an assurance of fortune to a babe in the cradle. Talent can transmute itself into gold by the sure law of the correlation and equivalence of forces.

Among a speculative people like the

Germans, the labor reform voices itself in magnificent theories for national reconstruction; hence, socialism, with its claim of the state's responsibility for the material prosperity of the individual. In practical England, labor takes the attitude of belligerent resistance to capital, hits upon barbarous but ingenious methods of coercion, and finally materializes into trades unions, with membership and capital counted by millions, almost military organization, and a legal recognition which has been tardily won. In the United States the conditions of manual labor have been easier than in the Old World, although we need go back only fifty years to find the mill operatives of Massachusetts working fifteen hours a day. Until 1853 the usual work-time of manufactories was twelve hours. For several years ten and three quarters or eleven hours prevailed, and in 1867 the Atlantic Cotton Mills of Lawrence reduced their time to ten hours. Then ensued the agitation which asked for the legalization of the ten hours' system; but, as we have seen, the voluntary action of a corporation preceded the legal form. The constitution of Massachusetts is a very liberal document. It allows the making of any "orders, statutes, ordinances, laws, directions, or instructions, for the good and welfare of the commonwealth." A free interpretation of this charter would allow the conversion of the State into a great industrial community upon a socialistic basis; for the "good and welfare of the commonwealth" might be held to mean the security of material prosperity to all its citizens. Indeed, some of the German "Socialists of the Chair" maintained at the Eisenach Congress, as well as in numerous *brochures* addressed to the public, that the mere bestowal of liberty was like the gift of

a mortgaged farm, unless the state also pledged itself to secure the material prosperity of the citizen. This, then, is the next great political question which is evolving itself from modern civilization. What is the ultimate obligation of the state to the citizen? A philosophical conflict is inevitable in this country, and it will come within twenty years. It will be a struggle between the sympathetic and the scientific theories of government. The sympathetic party will urge the amelioration of the condition of the working-classes by palliative legislation; and the scientific party will defend the principle of competition, conformity to the law of supply and demand, and a fair field for the experiment of the survival of the fittest.

The sympathetic party has already an intense activity in the thousand philanthropic associations which make a voluntary consecration of the surplus strength and means of the strong to the service of the weak. It needs but the political formulation of this sentiment in order to transfer the burden to the state. The burden is already accepted, and the philosophy embodied, in our state charities, in the legal recognition of pauperism, and in the system of public instruction. But all direct help is looked upon as an exceptional necessity, a thing to be deplored and abolished as fast as people can be trained to self-help. The spirit and theory of American politics have always been the reduction of governmental interference with the individual to the lowest possible terms. We have "protected" our industries as a whole, yet no shadow of favor has been shown to any individual capitalist. But with the fast-succeeding waves of immigration has come an excessive urban population, the increase of disease and poverty, and the necessity that the benevolence and brain of the community should solve for the ignorant the problem which they could not solve for themselves. Our era of prosperity and

of happy immunity from those social diseases which are the danger and the humiliation of Europe is passing away. Optimistic as we are, we cannot fail to know that the increasing proportion of the incapable among us is repeating here the social problems of the Old World. Every year incompetence makes a larger demand upon capacity. The natural strain put upon the producing or bread-winning classes is very large, in the support of helpless families, or in aid to friends, and the added strain for official charities and for the thousand private philanthropies is something enormous. Philanthropy is indeed a fully established and recognized business in this country, with salaried offices, a system of taxation, and elaborate methods of administration. All these immense plans of coöperative benevolence are based on the voluntary system. Like our religious institutions, they stand or fall with the free action of the people. But they form the psychological preparation for a legalized and general habit of provision for the incompetent. For who shall assign limits to the altruistic principle, and who shall decide what particular shade of incompetence shall be excluded? It is a matter of statistics that the primitive, self-reliant, and self-respectful revolutionary stock bears a steadily diminishing ratio to that of more recent importation, and of inferior quality. This superimposed stratum of population has undergone political and industrial amalgamation, but not intellectual or social consolidation. The truly American spirit is only in the descendants of the men who founded our institutions. Even the foreigners who fought in our civil war were not lifted to a moral conception of its issues. There is and has always been among our foreign-born and foreign-descended population an impression that this is a country which will do great things for its citizens, rather than a country which needs that great things be done for it.

self. The immigrant not only looks for political hospitality, but regards himself as, in a sense, the guest of our institutions and the inheritor of our prosperity. We, too, have pleased ourselves by throwing wide our doors, and sending forth cordial invitations to our transatlantic guests. Nor can it be gainsaid that our material prosperity has been advanced by these workers, who have quickly found themselves involved in our hitherto good-natured struggle for existence.

But the period in which we have lived upon the interest of our accumulated prosperity is passing. We are driving on somewhat blindly, like the earth in its orbit, but less securely. The phenomena of strikes, which are growing disagreeably frequent, prove most undeniably that there is something rotten in our state. Let us see if we can get an intelligent view of the mutual positions of laborer and capitalist. The first thing that strikes us is the social gulf that separates the two. The wage-laborer has not the resources of his employer; he does not live in an elegant house; he does not make extensive pleasure-journeys, nor send his children to expensive schools. He is obliged to deny himself nearly everything except the simplest necessities; and his two or three luxuries are not likely to be of a kind to improve his sanitary condition. The most stinted imagination is elastic enough to picture his crowded home, wherein the same room must be used for kitchen, nursery, and parlor, into which no volume of poems ever finds its way, and where the problem of the application of small means to numerous ends gets but a helter-skelter sort of solution. In truth, the philanthropist who desires to ameliorate the laborer's condition is often effectually discouraged by his lack of spiritual and intellectual preparation. Small external resources can be manipulated to the accomplishment of remarkable results if sufficient intelligence

be applied to the problem. Small sums in political economy are often most artistically solved by men and women who are fine-grained and fine-brained enough to make such solutions a study. Where a high social ideal finds itself in alliance with narrow means, the whole business of life becomes an exercise of the art of economy; and to such perfection is this sometimes brought that, should the pursuit of such an art become the fashion, large incomes might be realized by those who have made it a life-long study. The lesson from such experiences is unmistakable, namely, that it is not so much the lack of means as the lack of high ideals and of intellectual consecration which explains the laborer's discomfort. Many a woman who marries her intellectual inferior appropriates his small means so far-sightedly as to secure an æsthetic comfort, while her next-door neighbor, with more means and less tact, makes an inglorious failure.

The possession of a large income is an indication of power. It may represent only ancestral industry or foresight, and the possessor may not have inherited the money-winning talent; but if he be a good economist, he will at least keep his fortune intact. If he be an improvident spendthrift, he will quickly bring himself to the status of the wage-laborer, unless some better intelligence than his own applies itself to his problem. In any case, intelligence is the main factor of success, both in the winning and spending of money. The capitalist who manages badly will gain no fortune; he may lose one and involve the fortunes of others. Consequently, a capitalist who distrusts his own power of management will substitute the intelligence of another man, and he will pay for this brain-service an enormous annual salary. In almost all large manufacturing properties, ownership is divided among many persons. Some of them are simply investors, who entrust their money without reserve to the care

of financial managers, while they themselves throw their energy in other directions. In certain cases the owner of paying property does not see it for a series of years, but lives easily upon its proceeds in a foreign land. Such a fact is usually cited to demonstrate the indifference of the owner, whereas it might as justly be cited as a triumph of the combined results of modern brain-power.

The advantage of capital over labor is an advantage which has been won and paid for by the intellectual discipline of centuries. Capital has never made a step of solid advance without giving an equivalent. The practical intellect which sees how to supply a want, or even to create a want, as well as to minister to it, certainly deserves to succeed. If all the stages of development are not apparent in the successful business man, the scientific judgment is still certain that all those stages are embodied in him. He stands for the accumulated and inherited energy of generations of enterprise and self-denial. His automatically-acting brain is the product of severe and long-sustained processes of refinement. He draws the interest upon ancestral cerebration, and is the physiological "heir of all the ages." Nor can he dare to dispense with ethical capital. He must have courage, tact, power of adaptation, honor, which will insure him commercial standing and credit, decision to act in an emergency, and caution to avoid rashness; he must be able to adjust the clashing of wills, and to act as a frequent arbitrator. Even the capitalist who is simply an investor, and not a manager, represents either inherited industry, personal ability, or high character, supposing the sum invested to be borrowed. It is rare that fortunes result from accident; still less rare that they come by dishonesty. Talent must be on the spot to take advantage of accident; and although a high moral ideal would decide some fortunes to be fruits of dishonor, legal ideals are the ones

applied by the fortune-maker; nor is it the usual aim of the money-getter to develop moral idealism. His materialism may not be the highest product of human nature, but, such as it is, it is an expensive and painfully developed faculty. If we could fully realize the immense capital invested in producing a capitalist, we could not begrudge him his gains. Fortunes are sometimes made by instinct, by penetration, by assiduous devotion to one purpose, by such an utter consecration of the whole man that the observer must declare them legitimately *earned*. But they are rarely accumulated by manual labor, unless in conjunction with good intellectual power. The master-workman learns to coördinate other labor with his own. He gives himself eight or ten pairs of hands instead of a single pair. He strikes a heavy blow instead of a light one, quadruples his product, and appeals to a larger market. This is the embryonic form of industrial capital. It begins when a single man has the courage and intelligence to employ another to carry out his thought.

There is no legal restriction in any country upon a man's becoming a capitalist, but caste and custom in older countries have erected difficulties. Yet difficulties are always relative, and are gauged by the strength or weakness of those who meet them. In this country there is absolutely no reason, except native incapacity, to prevent any man from becoming a capitalist. If this were not so, our institutions would be confessed failures. That it is so, our whole commercial and industrial record is a demonstration. Should any one attempt to count the number of fortunes acquired by personal effort, he would find one for every finger, without going out of a New England neighborhood. The reason why fortunes are so rarely acquired by manual labor is that manual labor is the smallest factor in economic success. Hitherto it has not been able

to raise itself above the tyranny of the primitive law of supply and demand; that is, it has been little better able to make terms with capital than the grass is able to make terms with the soil in which it grows. Labor bought at wholesale, to be sold again, as in great factories, is bargained for on the lowest terms possible, and becomes in effect like cotton purchased in the bale, whereby each unit of weight counts very little. There is certainly no agreement, tacit or expressed, on the part of American capitalists to grind labor down to an arbitrary rate of remuneration. On the contrary, there is an indulgent optimism, and a recognition of the natural right of every man to a comfortable living, which is an advance upon the formal concessions of our national charter. The American capitalist is usually a man who would be made uncomfortable by the knowledge of absolute physical privation. But it does not stir his sympathy that some thousands of his workmen are practicing severe lessons of self-denial, foresight, and the adaptation of means to ends. The workman strives to make small means cover large wants. He has graduated from the European hovel to the American tenement, but at the same time he has been smitten with American materialism; and there is no road to this material success except that which his employer, or the ancestry of his employer, has trodden with painful steps. Nature takes as long to make a capitalist as to make a philosopher; and, indeed, the capitalist is, in his own way, the most practical of philosophers, for he reasons from cause to effect with persistent zeal; and if he reasons at all upon the speculative aspects of labor and capital, he knows that the development of higher capacity in the workman is the natural and unalterable condition of advancement. The only way in which a wage-laborer who has not sufficient ambition or talent to become an employer can raise himself above his fel-

lows is to produce better work or more of it within a given time; that is, he must obey the universal law of success, which may be thus stated: *Make your demand upon yourself, not upon others.*

It will bear repeating that in this country there are no artificial conditions which doom a man to poverty, or even to mediocrity. In the lowest rank he can ameliorate his condition. If a gardener cannot lessen the number of gardeners, and so decrease general competition, he can improve the quality of his own work, and so make himself one of a select few, whose rarity will command an increase of wages. This simple condition, which we may call *the law of exceptional excellence*, is one which thousands of men and women in all countries have unconsciously obeyed, and which has been the source of more solid prosperity than all the strikes that were ever inaugurated. Socialists, trades-unionists, and internationalists have worked hard in order to bring the moral philosophy of strikes in line with that of religious and political freedom. "Why," they inquire, "is it not as legitimate to throw off the tyranny of capital as that of church or state?" They do not even aspire to become capitalists, but the ultraists desire that the right of private property shall be abrogated; that the state shall take possession of all the soil and shall conduct all industries. Thus employment and compensation are to be furnished to all. Each one can claim his share as he now claims the franchise, and each one will be defended by all the rest in his claim for support. This would be a practical realization of the doctrine that the world owes everybody a living, and an approximation to the incarnation of the doctrine of human brotherhood. This attractive philosophy has spread like an epidemic among the laborers of Europe, and here and there has found espousal from men of education. It is cherished like a religion by thousands in America. Yet it has crystallized into

few societies here, because of the easier conditions for the workingman. But every year brings to our shores more men, in whose brains this conception of an industrial republic is seething; and every year brings the conditions of American labor into closer likeness to those of the Old World. An American species of socialism is inevitable. It would seem as if in this country there had been a providential preparation of the ground. Our best men withdraw from politics, and a coarser and more unmanageable element continually creeps in. Economic questions have been clamorously agitated in all our recent campaigns. The workingman has stood, cap in hand, ready to shout for the orator who promised greenbacks and abundant employment to a successful ticket. It would be the easiest of tasks to import a larger view of the labor question into American politics, and keen ears can already hear mutterings of a coming storm. We are discovering that the way to national glory is not to be a rose-strewn path.

There is much risk of mistake in forecasting social phenomena among a people so numerous and so complex in development as that of the United States. As a relief to the dark side of the picture some lines of light may be drawn. The severest struggles of labor and capital have always arisen in manufacturing communities. But the substitution of machine for hand labor is gradually eliminating the human element from manufactures. The historic course of this process is easily traced. With the earlier machinery came the substitution of foreign and more unintelligent labor for trained native workmen; thus releasing the latter and their offspring for more intellectual avocations. Our "middle class," so far as we have one, is the undoubted descendant of a former generation of intelligent workingmen. Invention, trade, speculation, politics, Western enterprise, journalism, and a

thousand other forms of business have swallowed up the children of our early industrial classes. Next to the displacement of natives by foreigners has come the considerable substitution of women and children in place of men, showing that the improved machinery requires less strength and less intelligence than the earlier. Finally, automatic machinery dispenses almost entirely with muscle, and it is the study of the inventor to make the muscular factor superfluous. Already he has so subordinated the human agent to the mechanical that the hand or foot has frequently no more honorable function than some wheel or screw in the great structure. Applied science is to be the possible saviour of society; for, by throwing the human element entirely out of the problem, it will have solved it without a political convulsion. Recent newspapers come laden with statements of the grievances of the longshoremen of Boston wharves. We read sympathetically of the "grain trimmers," who must shovel for their lives in the dark hold of a steamer, amid the suffocating dust from grain poured through pipes. But of what avail is sympathy in such a matter? And how can the increased wages demanded be an equivalent for the certain loss of health and for the brevity of life caused by such occupation? There is absolutely no remedy for a trouble like this except the substitution of machinery for muscle. The problem would easily yield to the genius of a persistent inventor, and the man who is now sacrificing his life might be employed to tend the machine.

The indirect obligation of capital to labor is recognized in our financial legislation. Wealth shares with poverty on even terms in all our public works. In the public schools men of taxable property pay for the instruction of the children of the untaxed, and in the city evening schools and workingmen's schools they provide education for the laborer himself; thus helping to destroy arti-

ficial barriers, and giving a chance for more equable competition. Rich and poor share alike the benefit of the fire department, the convenience of public illumination, the use of public pleasure-grounds, public libraries, police protection, and the postal service; for although the postage-stamp costs as much for the poor man as for the rich, the large yearly deficit in this department must be made up from general taxation. But so accustomed are we to the principle of political communism that we rarely remind ourselves to whom we owe the actual dollars which pay for all this provision. Nevertheless, it may be said that it would be better and conduce to more self-respect if the wage-laborer were to receive higher wages and were at liberty to provide for his own wants, instead of standing a debtor to public or private charity. This revives the whole perplexity of politico-economical method. Must the rate of wages be regulated by the law of supply and demand? If so, the wage-laborer cannot hope to provide for his own educational and other needs so adequately as they are provided for in the common administration. But we have considerable evidence that *will* may become a factor of wages, and this evidence is furnished not only by the history of the English trades-unions, but by the municipal administration of every American city. For instance, the compensation of our public-school teachers and of the incumbents of most public positions is fixed in utter defiance of the law of supply and demand. The places of almost all city or town employees could be filled at a day's notice by hundreds of equally well-endowed and impatient applicants, yet the price of such labor is kept at a high figure by voluntary decision of the employers.

If it be said that the combination of employers induces indifference to the price, the principle will not explain the phenomena of varying wages; for are

not cities and manufacturing companies both corporations? And if one of these corporations has a soul which enters into the question of wages, why may not the other acquire one? The truth is that one of these corporations is a maker of money, and the other a simple disburser. The money-making corporation is governed by the orthodox system of political economy, and the money-appropriating one is governed by the higher law of generosity, of æsthetics, and of public honor. The city corporation spends as a beneficent father for the good and happiness of his family, while the manufacturing one has the simple aim of accumulation, and in not a few cases this accumulation is freely given for public ends. Is it, by utilitarian tests, better that a capitalist should found a library, lay out a public park, or establish a hospital or school than that he should pay so high rates to his workmen that he could do none of these things? Is it likely that the wages added to manual labor would be as wisely used, in the end, as the state and the capitalist can use these accumulated funds?

Whatever be the true solution of the labor question, it is certain that the philosophy of common socialism has not solved it. Nor does the historico-ethical method of the university socialists appear, on scrutiny, to be very different from the established economy; for what are we to understand by an adjustment of economic methods to times and situations but compliance with the old self-asserting law of local supply and demand? As nearly as we can discern, the law of supply and demand is the constant and invariable factor of wages, while *will* is a continually varying and inconstant factor. The rivalry between the sympathetic and scientific sociologists has arisen from the endeavor of the former to make *will* the sole regulator of wages. The modern state organizes society upon the principle of competi-

tion. Socialism would reorganize it on the plan of coöperation. Competition makes natural capacity the prime factor of success. Coöperation aims to save incompetence from the results of its own deficiencies. The former corresponds to the scientific school, the latter to the sympathetic. But the sympathetic school vindicates its position by arguing that it states things as they ought to be, while the scientific party states them as they are. As to the ideal of society, both agree. The happiness and prosperity of the whole social body is the conscious purpose of modern civilization. But while the sympathetic party believes in the attainability of this purpose, and is prolific in suggestion of short and easy methods, such as temperance, dietary reforms, universal suffrage, or the nationalization of land and capital, the scientific party puts approximation in the place of absolute realization, and studies more closely the relations of cause and effect. Although the security of fair terms for competition is the prominent social idea in the American state, the line is not closely drawn; for a considerable incorporation of the sympathetic principle has already taken place in local legislation, and we have seen that in the constitution of Massachusetts the language is vague enough to admit of almost any philanthropic interpretation.

As a people we have already suffered from having made the transcendental instead of the utilitarian morality the basis of our government. The emotional

predominated over the intellectual in the beginning. Being protesters against tyranny, our fathers made the natural mistake of an excessive liberality. Hence the difficulty of settling such questions as Chinese immigration and woman suffrage. There has grown up a gradual tendency to utilitarianism, or to scientific methods of dealing with all questions, while the old transcendental formulæ have been preserved. Argued upon the ground of utility, a strong case can be made against both woman suffrage and Chinese immigration. On the sympathetic or transcendental basis, the defenders of these measures have the best of the argument. A good deal of the confusion of past discussion on these and other questions has arisen, because the one party pursued the sympathetic and the other the scientific method; that is, the one party subordinated judgment to emotion, and the other emotion to judgment. It would seem that any increase of the emotional force in legislation would bring a still further complication, and that the element of sympathy, like that of religion and morality, should be left to work outside of the state. An over-sympathetic government may fall into weakness, and may defeat its ends as completely as the most oppressive tyranny. Those who wish to delay the hour of governmental disintegration will hesitate before asking for any easier conditions of development than those granted by our principle of republican freedom.

M. A. Hardaker.

THE GODS SAID LOVE IS BLIND.

THE gods said Love is blind. The earth was young:
 With foolish, youthful laughter, when it heard,
 It caught and spoke the letter of the word;
 And from that time till now has said, and sung,
 "Oh, Love is blind. The falsest face or tongue