

COMMUNISM.

SINCE the great awakening of the Renaissance and the Reformation, each century has been entrusted with a special task, and with a special science to accomplish it. In the sixteenth century that science was theology, and the task it enjoined, religious reform. In the seventeenth the science was moral philosophy, and the task the Cartesian renovation of moral philosophy. The eighteenth century was given over to the study of politics, and found its correlative task in proclaiming throughout Europe those natural rights already inaugurated by the Puritans of New England. While the nineteenth century has devoted itself to political economy, and has set before itself the amelioration of the lot of the greater number.

The sixteenth century says to man: "Thou shalt no longer submit to the decisions of Popes, but thyself search the Scriptures for Truth." The seventeenth century says: "Thou shalt no longer bow before traditional authority, but seek out truth by the light of reason." The eighteenth century says: "Thou shalt cease to be the slave of nobles and despots who oppress thee; thou art free and sovereign." While the nineteenth century argues: "It is a grand thing to be free and sovereign, but how is it that the sovereign often starves? how is it that those who are held to be the source of power often cannot, even by hard work, provide themselves with the necessaries of life?" This is the problem which now lies before us—a problem which men have endeavoured to solve by books, by lectures, by rude violence, and have hitherto endeavoured in vain. Yet for any fresh endeavour, for any new light upon the problem—Justice among men—we must turn to that recent science, by some called political economy, by others social science, whose object is to analyze the production and distribution of wealth. When Voltaire was studying history, with Madame de

Châtelet, and attempting to discover the laws which rule the rise and fall of empires, he fully realized that for his object a knowledge of political economy was necessary, a science, at that period, barely outlined. In the present day it is sufficiently advanced to materially aid our researches with lessons from the past. All social problems are certainly not by any means new. In all ages the unequal distribution of the good things of the earth has excited the astonishment of the wise and the complaints of the poor:—to some leisure, luxury, and power; to others labour, misery, and servitude. In the introduction to his excellent *Histoire de l'Économie Politique*, Blanqui writes: "In all revolutions there are never more than two parties; those who wish to live on the produce of their own labour, and those who would live on the labour of others." This very true remark is expressed in another way by Aristotle, who says: "The weak are ever clamouring for equality and justice, the strong do not trouble themselves about the matter." It is obvious, then, that though no verdict has yet been reached, the case has been in court a long time. Inequalities date from the earliest stages of society, though the most cursory glance over history shows that it has been the constant effort of humanity to combat these inequalities, and that the effort has been increasingly successful. In our own time, however, new circumstances have arisen, which have totally changed the conditions of the fight, and of these circumstances I will mention three.

In the first place, those who live by manual labour, who were in the beginning slaves, then serfs, and are now but the "lower orders," are, theoretically at least, recognized as the equals of the non-worker, and in many countries have already legislative rights. Secondly, political economy has discovered to us the causes of inequality by explaining how wealth is distributed. Lastly, thanks to the press, and the spread of education, the workers are themselves mastering the mysteries of political economy, a weapon which will be formidable enough. These circumstances, and many others which I cannot enumerate here, endow the old problem of inequality with a gravity which it never previously possessed, and which is now appreciated by all. The problem therefore calls for most persevering study, for so long as the old conservative forces exhibit blind terror at all change, and the new radical spirit frets foolishly at all that is, we shall be swayed continuously between despotism and anarchy. Careful study is the more requisite, too, because no remedy has yet been found for that evil inequality, the source of which we have discovered. It is true that remedies have been invented, and each patentee, so to speak, has been convinced that his alone was the universal panacea, just as not infrequently the confidence of a raw physician is in proportion to his ignorance. Some of these remedies are worthless, but others certainly repay examination, as there is often a soul of truth in things

erroneous, and one may possibly pluck out a jewel, and set it in conspicuous daylight. When the improvement of the condition of our fellow-men is at stake, attentive and patient examination becomes the strict duty of humanity. Let us, then, examine Communism, the remedy which is offered in an engaging and seemingly scientific form well calculated to seduce the public.

The importance of Communism lies in the fact, that it is specially attractive to two classes of men of mutual sympathies, reformers and workers. The former are drawn to it by a sentiment of justice; the latter by their own necessities. The two broad facts at the base of Communism which account for its persistence are, a resentment of the inequality of conditions, and a faith in the principle of universal brotherhood, a principle which is just in itself, but has unhappily been misapplied. Not in vain were the watchwords, *Equality* and *Fraternity*, sounded in the ears of enthusiasts of the new ideas; once graven in their hearts, they could not be effaced. But how are these principles to be applied? How is society to be reformed in accordance with justice? Communism is offered as the solution of this difficulty; Communism, that dream of so many great men, the indefinite organization of the earliest human societies. Its simplicity seems to make it feasible; its apparent regularity takes the imagination; its colour of benevolence wins the pitiful. It is adopted without reflection, and without knowledge; and naturally, for it necessitates neither. It is golden-mouthed, and draws delightful pictures; its descriptions are no less fascinating than its contrasts are striking; but it reasons little; it does not appeal to the intellect. Of the difficulties in the way of all economic reform it has nothing to say; it simply ignores them.

As for the workers, is it likely they would refuse to follow this path strewn with the flowers of Utopia? Their lot is often very hard, always uncertain, and appears all the harder in contrast with the luxury in their midst. The eighteenth century tells them of a time when land was unappropriated, when man was a proud free agent, virtuous and upright, earning his substance by the strength of his arms, not as a serf, or a paid servant, but as a warrior, the darling son of nature, whose exhaustless benefits he enjoyed. They are told now of a happy future, when evil shall be banished from the earth, and injustice from society, when there shall be no laws nor restraints save those of love, no limits to enjoyment but desire, no labour but such as they have taste for; when life, in a word, shall become the long and pleasant feast that poets sing of. Is it strange that they rise up and rush forward with outstretched arms, and hearts full of hope, to embrace these visions of happiness presented to their excited imaginations? They would have these dreams realities; they would make these phantom fancies texts for legislation; this happiness, of which they have caught a glimpse, they want actually to enjoy; and

if society, in its present conditions, resists them, and rejects their ideal, they stand up and attack it. You may tell those who have not the wherewithal to live, that their lot is inevitable, that the majority must ever suffer so that the minority may enjoy; they will not believe you. In the heart of suffering man hope dies hard; and it is well so, for when hope is dead, what is there left but revolt?

Should you bind youth down to the present by bonds of interest or ambition, it will yet escape you, for it believes it has a mission to fulfil, a certain progress to realize. It were vain to attempt to detain it, yet you may perhaps guide its flight. So it is useless to tell these enthusiasts of brotherhood, that humanity falls again and again into the same errors all ending in ruin. The reply will be an affirmation of indefinite perfectibility, an article of faith bequeathed to us by the eighteenth century, and an enumeration of the startling evidences of progress writ large on the page of modern history: the printing-press, and steam, religious liberty and equality before the law, the wonders of industry, and the wonders of thought. It is vain, too, to add that while we think we are advancing, we are but moving in a circle, blindly turning the treadmill of our centuries as of our lives. Their answer is: "It is true we are moving in circles, but they are the circles of a vast spiral ascent starting from the mire of the diluvian period, and reaching to that invisible sun, which Plato called Truth. Coarse clay, at the outset, we are ever perfecting ourselves, as our reason grows, and grasps new principles." It were wiser did you say to these impatient enthusiasts: "The evil is indeed great, and it becomes all lovers of justice to fight against it. Analyse it, discover its cause, that you may find also its remedy. Do not listen to the voice of instinct, about which so much is talked; it is the voice, not of mind, but of matter. Do not trust the imagination; its impressions are all embellished by the senses. Feeling will not suffice; you must have knowledge. Cease to dream, and learn to know. Your Communistic plans are merely the delusions of your heart; see if they can satisfy your reason. You desire liberty, equality and fraternity; they would crush liberty, violate equality and impose fraternity." This is the attitude, and the argument that I have adopted in the following pages. Before, however, putting a system to the test, it is necessary clearly to determine its nature and its object.

Communism, as generally understood, includes any and every idea of reform or social progress.) Infatuated with the prevailing order of things, in this view every novelty and every pioneer of reform are tainted with this heretical Communism. It is the spirit of evil, disguised and metamorphosed in numberless ways. Like the recluses of the Middle Ages, these fanatical Conservatives, disturbed by the phantoms of their imaginations, see the Black Monster everywhere. Communism is the Satan of political

economy. Any intervention of the State to assist the needy classes, and to lessen social inequality, is condemned as imbued with this detestable error. Free education, public libraries, the housing of the poor, agrarian laws for Ireland, limitation of the hours of labour—all this is said to affect liberty of contract, and free competition, and to be Communism more or less pronounced, which, if once admitted, will spread throughout the body politic. But the principle of Communism, it must be remembered, is this: that the individual works for the profit of the State, to which he hands over the produce of his labour for equal division among all; so that all shall receive the same amount of wages, or rather remuneration corresponding to their requirements. The maxim which sums up the whole system is well known: *From each according to his strength, to each according to his needs*, as in the case of a family. This is the basis of the social order advocated by Mr. Bellamy. Communism must not be confused with collectivism. In the collectivist system, all the materials of production belong to the State, but the production itself is in the hands of co-operative societies, under hierarchical rule, each man being paid in proportion to his labour. Such a system may offer egregious difficulties, but, as it admits of the incentive of individual interest, it is not of itself an impossibility. In Belgium the State holds and works the railways, in Prussia, many mines and collieries, and in France, the forests. There is nothing to object to in the principle of this.

The first Christians condemning the world, its prides, its distinctions and its laws, fled to the deserts, where they lived in common. In the same spirit, Rousseau, disgusted by the inequalities in the society of his time, condemned the individual possession of property, and even ventured to find his ideal in primitive society, and advocate a return to this. The social condition of these primitive savages is pretty clearly indicated by him when he says: "Beware of forgetting that the fruits belong to all, and the earth to no one." Unhappily, the enthusiasm of the eighteenth century in regard to the "natural man" has been completely chilled by the accounts of modern travellers, who have found him frequently more ferocious than the wolf, who does not slay and eat his fellows, and more treacherous than the tiger, who, at least, makes no protestation of friendship before despatching you. Contemporary reformers have therefore abandoned their search for the ideal community among primeval forests, and have preferred to study conventual life, and the Moravian brotherhood. The organization of a communistic society is exceedingly simple. All the means of production belong to the State; the citizen may work as much as he chooses, and also consume as much as he pleases. This is pretty well a summary of Communism, but all its advocates from Plato to Mr. Bellamy have adorned it with more or less ingenious details, and fictions of one sort or another.

I should like here to glance at the errors on which Communism is founded. It seems to me that it springs up in turn from two principles, just in themselves, but misunderstood or misapplied—fraternity and equality. [There are thus two sorts of Communism: one which is based on the idea of fraternity, the other on that of equality. Let us first examine the former kind, to which alone I shall refer in the ensuing section.

I.

If I look down into the innermost depths of my consciousness, I become aware of two sentiments from which all others spring. I feel in the first place that I exist and love myself. I seek my own happiness primarily in the acquisition of material objects, finally, as my reasoning powers grow, in the acquisition of truth. Here then is the first of these two feelings—*selfishness*. Moreover, I am in the midst of other beings like myself, and if they do not attack me and there be nothing to excite conflict or rivalry between us, I tend to like them. This then is the second of the two feelings. It has been called *sociability*, because it is the basis of every sort of society, *altruism* because it involves affection for one's fellows, and *fraternity*, because it is the link which unites the great human family together. You may analyze the feelings in all their infinite degrees of intensity, and you will find they all have their source in the two primary sentiments. Even in our love for others there is something of self-love. We can never lose consciousness of our own individual and personal vitality, which is the source of all our ideas, and the arbiter of all our desires. (But self-love assumes a disinterested character when we rejoice in the pleasure of others or grieve over their sorrows. *Amare est alterius felicitate delectari*, says Leibnitz, and this is the finest definition of love that has ever been given. All our actions are guided by love of self, and love for others under the names of *pity*, *charity*, *sociability*, *altruism* or *fraternity*. These two principles are the motive powers of the mind, I might almost say the pivots of life. Yet Communism ignores one of them, it would indeed abolish self-love, and leave only love for others, or altruism. Fraternal love in universal brotherhood is the sacred theme which has been the inspiration of Communism in all its intoxicating madness.) I say madness, because the attempt to uproot from the human heart all self-ward feeling is of the idlest. It will thus be seen that Communism bears some resemblance to Quietism, and still more to Pantheism, in that it tends to absorb individuals in humanity and humanity in God. So far from loosing the passions it would completely subject them to the reason, for its creed is that in spirit alone can men be united. Thus it calls on all men to live the rational life, which it maintains is the only true one. It aims, moreover, at the deletion of the individual with his

individual view and his individual existence; he is to be merged in the collectiveness of the social body. It recognizes no distinct or separate interests, talks of duties, knows nothing of rights; for my right is in what I own, and if no one owns anything, there can be no rights.

Let us break the fetters of the material, cries the Communist, and soar upwards into the realm of the spiritual, where in true unity we may worship in common the true, the beautiful and the good. Private property would sever us, distinction of interests would be a bar to union. All happiness is increased by being shared; to enjoy together is double enjoyment. This maxim should be the source of all effort, for effort without it is but selfishness. Meals, too, should be eaten in common, that the social life may be cemented. Let us institute *phidicies* as in Crete, *andries* as in Sparta, *syssities* as in Athens, or *agapes* as among the early Christians. These common meals will be at once a means of communion and the symbol of brotherhood. Men are merely members of that collective being called Humanity; there is neither *I*, nor *thou*, nor *we*. Why should we ephemeral sojourners here bring war into the world by setting barriers in the road of the hot natural impulses? Love should admit no divisions, everything should belong to everyone. Appropriation engenders selfishness; let selfishness be uprooted from the earth, with the very name of property it has originated. "God," says St. Ambrose, "created all things for the enjoyment of all men, and the earth for a common possession." Nature herself, therefore, is the author of Communism; property is a fraudulent usurpation. As the earth is mankind's common property no one may make a claim in excess of his requirements in the name of property diverted from the common possessions, and held only by violence. Being one vast family, why should we not follow the laws of the family? The earth is our common mother; why divide her? Why cause bloodshed by our fratricidal quarrels? Is not her provision sufficient for our needs? And as we share her blessings in common, and thrill together in the breath of her harmonies, why not enjoy together her boundless fecundity also?

Self-sacrifice makes man superior to beasts. Self-sacrifice should be our rule of life, and our highest ambition. Let us work for the good of others, without reckoning the pains or counting the cost. The well-being of humanity is our own. Whoso considers himself fails in his duty to his fellow. Selfishness should be punished with dishonour. No unit in the community should be allowed to suffer from defects in his individual organization, for which he is not responsible. If the health or other requirements of a unit necessitate a greater allowance, it must be given. Fraternity knows nothing of the parsimony of individualism. *Need is the measure of right*. On the other hand, if

you have been endowed with greater strength or higher intelligence than others, you may not use these gifts to your personal advantage. Is it a provision of Providence? Sovereign justice wills that you render an account of it to your brethren. Is it a faculty developed casually? That constitutes no right in itself; you owe others the use of your superior gifts. To devote one's ability, one's time, in fine, oneself body and mind to the service of one's neighbour, that is the whole law of love. Duty is limited only by capacity; *from each according to his power.*

For two people who love each other, the greatest happiness lies in proving their mutual attachment. The recipient of a service is not indebted to the donor, but rather is the donor under an obligation, for his happiness consists in giving pleasure to the object of his affections. One cannot even conceive gratitude from the recipient; it would be an insult to friendship. Gratitude is rather the natural feeling of the giver, who is delighted in the indulgence of his heart's impulse. All the members of the Community will be animated by this temper.

Why speak of justice? Justice is a measure, and love needs and will have no measures. Love is infinite, inexhaustible. It throws a veil over faults and negligences: it sets aside all obligations to give to each according to his deserts. In its effusion it wipes out all differences. Does not the father of the prodigal son do likewise? Let this be the type and model of society. As things now are, a man's affections are limited to a narrow circle, within which he suffers and enjoys. His intercourse with people at large is rare, distant, and reserved, and is usually tinged with distrust and indifference. It is this condition that fraternity is to destroy. Man must feel himself to be a part of a whole, must realize that his interest is so bound up with that of society that he suffers or rejoices with it. The entire community should live in each one of its members, and each one of its members in the entire community. When each believes that the interests of others are identical with his own, all will have the same end in view, and joys and sorrows will be in common.

Under these circumstances all control becomes superfluous. The conflict of selfish interests is at an end, or, rather, self-interest rightly understood fashions them to the common weal. Government is then based upon "the persuasion and voluntary consent of hearts." All power, in fact, becomes useless; for power is merely force employed to impose justice on the relations between man and man, and that will no longer be necessary when private interest works sympathetically with abstract love of justice. To love my neighbour is to benefit myself; to devote myself to him is to increase the sum of public happiness, of which my own is a part. Love of self is absorbed in

love of others, and I can only love myself in the person of others, and seek my own happiness in theirs. What use, then, is there for the State in this contest of self-abnegation? The State is the power that enforces the performance of duty; but duty is now synonymous with interest, and there is need of no incentive to its performance.

Such are some of the familiar arguments of Communism in its most spiritual form. We find this view in Plato, and in all the authors of Utopias, who took their cue from him; we find it, too, in the Gospel, and in most of the Christian writers. Listen to Bossuet's comments on the beautiful words spoken by Christ in His last prayer, and given to us by St. John:—

"As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they'also may be one in Us. That there may be between them, as between Us, perfect equality, from the first amongst them to the last; that there may be complete friendship and community; that each may say as it were to his brother, 'all that is mine is thine, and all that is thine is mine.' This, it is often necessary to repeat, was in reality the case in the early days of the church. 'And they were of one heart and one mind; neither said any man that anything he possessed was his own, for they had all things in common.' This system was effectual in the primitive church, showing that a disposition to such an arrangement must be at the bottom of all hearts. Let us therefore encourage this disposition, let us commune together, let us be charitable and compassionate, looking on none with disdain. In reality all are equal; we have all been created from the same dust, and we all alike bear the image of God in our hearts. Let charity equalize all, according to St. Paul, who says that all should be equal. And to that end he writes: 'that your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want;' and he repeats: 'that there may be equality as it is written; he that had gathered much had nothing over, and he that had gathered little had no lack' (2 Cor. viii. 14, 15). It is the Divine Will that there should be equality amongst men, that is to say, that none should be in want; but that all should have what they need, and that there should be compensation for inequality. When shall we say with our whole heart to our suffering brother 'all that is mine is thine,' and to our more wealthy brother 'all that is thine is mine.' Alas! we shall never see such a perfect state of things in this world. Yet this is what Christ holds forth as an example. Let us seek for this Divine unity. My God, I open wide my arms to my brethren, my heart warms to them and my bowels are filled with compassion; I would be to them father, mother, brother and sister, friend and defender, all in fact that they require to make them happy."*

These are eloquent words, springing from a heart sincerely afflicted by the evils which weigh down the great mass of mankind. It is this feeling of humanity which nearly always gives birth to Communist systems. Those who pretend that these "detestable follies" spring up in our age, from the disturbance of men's minds and the licence given to their passions, quite forget that both the sages of antiquity and the saints of Christianity advocated the same doctrines, and that the first in the gardens of the Academy, where nought save words of justice and virtue were heard, and the second in their solitary cells,

* "Meditations on the Gospel of St. John," 157th day.

whose walls were the sole witnesses of their piety, alike preached the necessity of community, seeing no other remedy for the evils of society. These great men were distressed and indignant at the manifold iniquities under which the human race groaned. They conceived a state of society where justice should reign supreme, and where mutual affection should unite together all men, henceforth brothers. From the heights of this great ideal they emptied the vials of their wrath upon luxury, pride, distinctions of class and private property. They quite forgot the obstacles that personal interest and the instinctive desire for independence placed in the way of the realization of these schemes inspired by feelings of charity.

Yet, as is known, these plans and visions were not wholly and entirely day dreams. Associations founded for the abolition of property have existed, and have even thrived and prospered. But in what circumstances? At the time of the French Revolution (1789), religious communities owned about one-third of the land; towards the close of the eighteenth century, they possessed about the same proportion in Spain, Italy, and Belgium. At the present day, in the last named country, there are over 2000 convents and religious establishments, almost as many as there are communes, and it is, I think, universally admitted, that if these absolutely communistic associations had the rights of possession as corporations, in less than a century the entire country would be in their hands. If once religious Communism be granted a legal existence and power of inheritance, it will certainly triumph over the individualist principle, even with respect to the accumulation of wealth. During the last few centuries the Jesuits have been engaged in trade. Several convents on the Continent do business successfully; so that if the members of these orders were to live what may be called a spiritual rather than a material life, and were ever ready to sacrifice their interests to what they consider their duty, they might yet realize Mr. Bellamy's Utopia.

Between pure spirits community is natural; between brutes it is an impossibility. All that satisfies the tastes of the mind—*i.e.*, the possession of knowledge, the sight of the beautiful in nature and art, may be enjoyed by a number in common! Many nations and successive generations can be gladdened by fine works of art. The beautiful and the true, and all appertaining thereto, have the divine privilege of being enjoyed by all simultaneously, of being the entire possession of each, and of losing none of their charms by an increase in the number of their possessors. The more, then, men rise to the appreciation of pure ideas, the greater is their serenity, and the greater their capacity of intimate union with their fellows. Whereas, on the other hand, all things which satisfy the senses can only be possessed by one person at a time; the desire of two, for the same thing, is at once a source of dispute and conflict. The more therefore men

live the sensual life, the less capable they will be of harmony and of a life "in community."

All great men who advocated Communism realized this fact. It was their desire to awaken in mankind a taste for "spiritual" things, which could be possessed in common, and to restrict the appetite for tangible things, the possession of which is naturally exclusive. Read Plato and listen to St. Paul. The former tells us the body is an oppressor, a tyrant, a weight holding us down to the lower regions; the latter, that it is the source of all evil, a tomb, containing nothing but decay. "Who will deliver us from the body of this death?" The possession of a wife engenders jealousies and quarrels; marriage is an exclusive and personal contract. Therefore St. Paul extols virginity, which would obviate a great discord. Plato thinks that wives should be held in common, and establishes a sort of chaste promiscuity, so as to make the union between men complete. Platonism and Asceticism both sacrifice personality and marriage. A man must sacrifice not only his interest but his will to live "in community"; he must renounce self entirely, and yield implicit obedience to his superior, who has sole control of him, his physical powers and his tastes. This superior may be society in general, as represented by *plébiscite*, or it may be an individual. Monastic communities well understood the indispensable conditions for life in common. Their chief object was to root out from men's hearts pride, concupiscence, and love of earthly things, hence the three vows of chastity, poverty, and humility. But to attain this, the mainspring of the human organization was so strained that it sometimes snapped. These communities, however, survived, are still in existence, and even multiply. But when once they descend from the cultivation of the "spiritual," their fall is sad enough.

Briefly, fraternal Communism was conceived by men of genius in their disgust at the vices of society, and out of an absorbing and ardent love of justice. Its chief characteristic is "spirituality," its principle of organization is authority, its object fraternity. It has founded some lasting associations, but always by taking religious feeling as a basis, and often by stifling the most natural affections as well as all individual initiative.

II.

We must now consider that species of Communism which has for its object the establishment of universal equality. All ancient politicians were of opinion that a democracy could not exist if there were too great inequality between the conditions of citizens, and the object of nearly all the Greek legislators was to reduce this inequality. Aristotle, that great observer, held this view. "Inequality," he says, "is the source of all revolution, for no sort of compensations can atone for

inequality." It is necessary, he thinks, that there should be equality of condition throughout the same order, for it would be difficult to maintain a government based on injustice; and he explains in detail all the means that have been from time to time employed for the maintenance of equality. Minos and Lycurgus attempted to solve the problem by establishing a sort of Communism, and the institutions they founded lasted sufficiently long to excite the ill-justified admiration of both ancients and moderns; but inequality finally invaded Sparta, and the Greek Republics ended in anarchy. Montesquieu shared the views of the Greek statesmen, for he says the basis of a republic should be *virtue*, which he defines as love of equality. "As what I call virtue," he writes in his introduction to the *Spirit of Laws*, "is love of country, that is to say, love of equality." Again, in Book vii. chap. 2, "Equality in the distribution of riches makes the excellence of republics." These are maxims which have been too much lost sight of in our day, as they have not been considered applicable to the present age. I think this is an error. It is true that they were certainly more applicable to ancient cities, where the citizens were comparatively few in number, and where all considered themselves as equals; but at the present time precisely the same feeling of equality is spreading throughout all classes. I am quite aware that the opinions of Montesquieu are not wholly reliable, because, having studied ancient society much more than modern, he thought more of artificial than of natural organizations. Nevertheless, I think that he is right when he says that a certain equality of condition is essential to the continuance of a democracy, even though that democracy be a modern one. The events of these later years have given still further proof of this. When those, who by their labour can only secure to themselves insufficient or, at all events, precarious sustenance, have a voice in the government, it is more than probable that, sooner or later, they will do their utmost to alter laws which sanction the inequality from which they suffer. Those, on the other hand, who are better off, support the laws already in existence, and, to maintain them, are willing to have recourse to a dictatorship. So that democracy terminates in either anarchy or despotism, and usually in the one as a result of the other. Under any circumstances, inequality is the cause of its downfall. Such has been the lesson of history from the earliest times, and such also was the lesson of history but yesterday. It cannot be denied that the opinion of Aristotle and Montesquieu is supported by facts. Historical changes of this sort formerly took place within the limits of a city, or at most, of a realm; they never occurred everywhere simultaneously, because each city and each realm had its own peculiar faith, ideas and institutions. In our day this is no longer the case. The spread of Christianity, the facilities of communication, the activity of trade and commerce, and

many other circumstances have brought all Christian nations to share the same general views, and to face the same social problem, modified in each case by local influences. The result is that the difficulty which disturbed these ancient cities within their narrow limits, at present agitates, and threatens still further to agitate, all the nations of Europe; and that, by the extension of its sphere, it has now acquired an importance which cannot fail to strike every one, and the more so, that we have lately seen an Emperor taking the lead of the Socialist movement. I will endeavour to demonstrate by what process this difficulty has grown so in modern times, and how certain reformers have sought to solve it by Communism.

During the Middle Ages men's minds, being still slaves to custom, were not vigorous enough to attain to any conception of the rights of humanity. With the Reformation, that bold insurrection against religious despotism, a new era of things commenced. Holland took up arms in support of liberty of conscience; England shook off the yoke of the Stuarts and proclaimed the sovereignty of the people; beyond the seas Puritans and Quakers founded democracies based on principles of universal suffrage, of direct government by the people, and of universal equality. Finally, the eighteenth century adopted all these principles and arranged them in systems, and, as is well known, the French Revolution promulgated them through the world. Since that time, the idea of equality has penetrated everywhere into men's minds, and become the foundation of many societies. The process is as follows: By an energetic effort of self-assertion man comes to consider himself independent of the institutions under the domination of which history would place him. This call upon nature, or rather upon reason, gives him a glimpse of the essential rights of man. In fact it is quite impossible to conceive the bare idea of man, without a glance at that goal of perfection, whither it is the law of his being to tend. "Thou art a man, thou must therefore be all that thy name implies; thy development is thy destiny." But certain conditions are indispensable for the accomplishment of this destiny, and these may be summed up in the one word Liberty—liberty of thought, freedom of action, and property, as a free sphere in which to exercise that liberty. These are essential rights. They belong to all, for all are of one kind. The man therefore who claims freedom for himself must admit to his fellows the enjoyment of the same right. An abstract idea of equality thus becomes the basis of the new social order. The root of the words equity and equality is *æquus*. Justice and equity could never be conceived without the idea of equality. *Justum æquale est*, says the old definition. Aristotle was the first to write: "Right consists in an equal proportion" (*Polit.* iii. 6). In Greek *dikaion* means "just and equal." It is inscribed in the written constitutions in the following words: "All citizens are equal before the law," and in England this is admitted as a

fact. But in reality all men are not in enjoyment of their primitive rights, and the greater number lack the means of development. They have no opportunity for culture of the mind. Their whole time is taken up by manual labour. They are not free, for they have nothing on which they can employ their vital energy; others hold the land and capital, and themselves non-workers, exact from the workers payment for the right of retaining a portion of the bread they earn by their labour. Private property is an essential condition of liberty, and consequently of the development of human destiny. As Sir Louis Mallet recently remarked, with his usual penetration, without private property freedom can have but a merely nominal existence. But how can property be assured to all, it being of itself an exclusive appropriation? And here we come to the formidable incongruity between the right to live by working for one's livelihood, which it appears ought certainly to be the right of all, and the right to private property, which seems to offer an invincible obstacle to the exercise of the former right. This difficulty requires a few words of explanation.

A man is born. He can invoke the rights that this incident confers on him, and therefore the right to procure himself food; otherwise society must either take upon herself to feed him, or let him starve to death. Everything is already appropriated. The exclusive private domain of those already in existence refuses to receive the newcomer or to give him sustenance. What is to be done? Do you deny that he has certain rights, and foremost among them the right to live? Even you yourself enjoy all you possess merely by the same title that he appeals to, that is to say, your birthright as a man. To deny him similar rights would be to transgress the law. Would you dispute his exercise of these rights? In that case the very conception of rights, resulting from the earliest notions of individuality, would fade away, and nothing would remain but chance and strength. But neither strength, chance, occupation, nor conquest, are titles to adduce; they may all be summed up in one word—facts. To-day facts may be in your favour, but will they be so to-morrow? Who say strength say numbers; and it is obvious to which side these belong.

The progress of the human species seems to be arrested at this point; how overcome the obstacle in the way? How ensure to every man education, property, and even work without attacking the privileges of those already enjoying all these? Which of the two ideas—equality or exclusive possession—will gain the victory? The future destinies of the civilized world depend on the issue of these conflicting interests. What indeed is civilization if it does not enable the greater number to enjoy their necessary rights, and to have a share in the general well-being, education, and social and political freedom? But, once again, how is this end to be attained? The problem is as complex and difficult to solve, as it is serious. As a rule, economists

have not stopped to consider it, and the majority of Socialists have answered it too thoughtlessly. During the eighteenth century it was acknowledged by all thoughtful men, though its component factors could not be as clearly perceived as they are now, thanks to the progress made in economic science. The majority of those, who, during the last century and the present, became conscious of the difficulty were satisfied with calling attention to it, and setting it forth with more or less precision and eloquence; other more daring reformers sought to do away with it, after the manner of Minos and Lycurgus, by Communism. But as the majority of them were Materialists, they have given this creed a new characteristic, which it is essential to note here. They denied the existence of evil instincts in man. According to them, man is essentially good. All the evil proceeds from established institutions. If these were reformed, evil would wholly disappear. All the passions are holy. They are excellent springs which must be wisely controlled and worked for the common happiness. Nature is our mother, they argue; why resist her voice? Instinct is her voice; to satisfy it is our right, and since it is an equal right for all, all must enjoy equally, as enjoyment is our destiny. The only way to effect this equality of enjoyment is to institute community of possessions. These materialistic Communists, therefore, instead of seeking for means to realize equality of rights, endeavour to establish absolute equality of possessions. According to their view, man is no longer a free agent, possessed of certain rights, and responsible for the way in which he uses them, but a simple unit to be placed in a line with other units, so that none may exceed the uniform level. The system, as has been said, would turn society into a sort of bed of Procrustes.

For rights to be thoroughly respected, or in other words, for all to enjoy complete equality, society as a body should eat with the same mouth, work with the same members, and feel successive sensations with the same senses. In default of this perfect unity of society, which alone would realize the absolute idea of equal rights as conceived by the Materialists, it is possible to have at least meals, work, and pleasures in common. All care should be taken to prevent one having a larger share of enjoyment than another. If necessary, the aid of despotism must be called in to hinder this. The principle of equality demands it, if there is to be an equality of sensations. The individual possession of implements of labour necessarily entails certain differences which the principle of responsibility sanctions. Individual possession, a necessary condition of all labour, and individual responsibility, an essential condition of all morality, must therefore both be abolished. Can there be any greater inequalities than those which result from the institution of marriage? Woman has ever been the object of the most ardent desire, and the source of the greatest joys.

These must be the same for all, says the Materialist. What then is to prevent complete promiscuity? Logic points directly to it, and there is no moral law to forbid it. Is not indeed the voice of instinct in its favour? Therefore the Communists of the eighteenth century added to their doctrines, community of wives as well as of goods.

Nature herself differentiates between man and man. Strength of muscle, or of limb, quickness, vigour, or special intelligence prevent uniformity in the same race. All are differently endowed. But these varieties of faculties are to be arrested in their development. Phrenology must be consulted that means may be found to efface these differences, by modelling the tender heads of infants in the same mould. Such a course would effect material equality. The uniformity would be complete. Obviously, too, the culture of the mind and the various talents, constitute sources of serious inequality by developing those tendencies which date from birth. Let all culture be prohibited, and all progress arrested. The cultivation of the soil suffices for the maintenance of life. Any other occupation would become a cause of inequality; let it therefore be prohibited. The distribution of labour, in itself so great a good, would be wholly incompatible too with justice, thus understood; for labour, if distributed, would not be the same for all. Let each then cultivate the common soil for himself, and draw from it what he needs for the satisfaction of his wants. Freedom of thought is not compatible with this *régime*; its whole tendency would be to destroy anything of the kind. The greatest possible care must be taken that the laws are properly executed, and any budding superiority must be at once nipped with an iron hand; for superiority of any description would constitute a public danger, and an attack on the established order of things. This doctrine is very clearly explained in the *Manifeste des Egaux* drawn up by Sylvain Maréchal at the time of the conspiracy of Babeuf in 1769: "Equality of condition before the law is a mere day-dream; if there be one single man in the world in the least degree richer or more powerful than his fellows, the equilibrium is upset; there must be no other difference amongst them but that of age and sex; the soil belongs to no one, the fruits of the earth are for all alike; it behoves the State to distribute them equally amongst all men, who in return must give enforced labour, the description, quality, and quantity of which are regulated by the State alone. Luxury, which bears in itself the stamp of inequality must disappear, and, with it, all great cities, hotbeds of agitation and immorality. Equality implies the common education of children beyond the pale of their parents' supervision, and their instruction is to be limited to useful and practical knowledge, to the exclusion of any speculative information. When this system is once established, no one will have the right to express an opinion opposed to the sacred

principles of equality, and the frontier will be inexorably closed to all foreign produce or foreign ideas. Finally, in order to assist the establishment of the new state of things public and private debts will be abolished." (*Hist. du Social.* par B. Malon, ch. vii.) Absolute and necessary despotism is then the last stage of this system which invokes liberty, promises happiness, and swears by equality. It recognizes the independence of man, and makes a slave of him. It gives free vent to his appetite, but ties up labour. It liberates him from the obligations of the moral law, but introduces the inquisition. Respect the principle of evil; it is an instinct of nature. Let concupiscence spread unchecked; pleasure is the great aim of life. Woe to him who rises superior to his fellows in either genius or virtue; he is infringing the rights of others, and violating equality. Why proscribe Aristides? Because he is a just man. Dissolute brutes under an iron yoke is the ideal communism which materialism dreams of. Herein is summarized the entire doctrine. Man is desirous of family joys, and of the supreme charm of liberty. Instead of these he is allotted compulsory labour and promiscuity of intercourse. Society must arrive at a state of organization, where the greatest activity can be displayed under a reign of the most perfect order; the materialists offer a dead level of uniformity and general servitude.

It should be observed that this latter theory is in total opposition to primitive communism. Rousseau's scheme was to let loose man as a free being in an isolated condition. Babeuf, on the contrary, wished a Communism of equality organized by the State. Instead of an aggregate of persons in a state of freedom which knows no laws, you have laws cramping individuals into a condition where liberty is wholly unknown. In the one instance the realization of Hobbe's *homo homini lupus*; in the other Loyola's maxim, *homo perinde ac cadaver*; either life without order, or order without life. In both cases alike justice must perish, and individuality be entirely lost.

The doctrine here explained is in reality, with the exception of a few trifling details, that of the communists of the last and the present century. It entirely differs from that of Plato, the ascetics, and Bossuet, who all, nevertheless, extolled community of possessions. The one school would have all the passions fully satisfied, while the object of the other is to stifle them. The one reinstates the flesh, denying the soul; the other abhors the body while exalting the mind. The one is political, and calculates on attaining its object by authoritative measures and by the power of the State; the other is religious, and relies for its success on conversion and the advancement of morality. The one has its origin in a conception of rights, appeals to self-interest, and aims at the establishment of equality; the other originates in a conception of duty, appeals to charity, and seeks to establish universal fraternity. Finally, if the one be the better calculated to fire the

masses by a perspective of material enjoyment, the other is more suited to captivate generous and enthusiastic minds by the vision of a terrestrial Eden, and by the ideas of justice on which these day-dreams are based.

III.

Let us now briefly inquire if Communism be suitable to men as they now are, and as they seem likely to be for some time to come. Before pronouncing a judgment on this point, we cannot do better than look at Stuart Mill's opinion on the subject. He writes as follows:

"The restraints of Communism would be freedom in comparison with the present condition of the majority of the human race. The generality of labourers in this and most other countries have as little choice of occupation or freedom of locomotion, are practically as dependent on fixed rules, and on the will of others, as they could be on any system short of actual slavery. If therefore, the choice were to be made between Communism and all its chances, and the present state of society with all its sufferings and injustices; if the institution of private property necessarily carried with it as a consequence, that the produce of labour should be apportioned, as we now see it, almost in an inverse ratio to the labour—the largest portions to those who have never worked at all, the next largest to those whose work is almost nominal, and so in a descending scale, the remuneration dwindling as the work grows harder and more disagreeable, until the most fatiguing and exhausting bodily labour cannot count with certainty on being able to earn even the necessaries of life; if this or Communism were the alternative, all the difficulties, great or small, of Communism would be but as dust in the balance."

Mill's opinion should put us on our guard against hasty judgments, and precipitate denunciation of Communism. Nevertheless there are, in my opinion, strong objections to it, so strong as to quite suffice for its unhesitating rejection. Mr. Bellamy, and communists of his stamp, blinded by their utopian visions, will not see what is daily proved by experience. *From each according to his strength* they say, but who is to be judge of this? The State. The State, then, is to set me my task, and condemn me to an amount of labour which is to be settled solely by its arbitrary judgment. What is the difference between this and the galleys?

To each according to his wants. But who is to limit these? Each individual? No; for this would be making caprice or gluttony the measure of the allotment. The State then; that is to say, the daily rations, shall be fixed by law; there shall be a national "pot au feu," a sort of enforced mess for all time. This is no longer a feast of equals, a family banquet, or the evangelical love-feast. In the *Agape* the State had no part, love reigned supreme; it was in consecration of their unity that the members of one great family gathered together, a communistic institution rendered possible by evil overcome. But away from this ideal, the memory of a foregone or the forecast of a very far off future age, no such institution is possible save by constraint. Communism may also be reproached with weakening the springs of activity and with enervating instead of

stimulating the will. It is certain that man can only draw his sustenance from the earth by dint of labour. Labour necessitates an effort against the instinct of idleness, a certain degree of trouble, of which want is the incentive, and the satisfaction of want the reward. If you take away the reward for the trouble, you remove the stimulus. There must be direct and immediate connection between labour and its produce; in other words, the labourer must feel that the produce of his labour is his own. If the produce be entirely, or even partially absorbed by another, the intensity of labour will be impaired. This is what actually takes place in the society of to-day; and it would take place to a far greater degree in a state of society where the producer had only a certain share of the produce allotted him; activity would certainly decrease, as there would be no immediate connection between the effort and its object, between labour and the produce destined to satisfy the need. The producer would not have the full enjoyment of his own creation.

The larger a community is, the less direct is the connection between labour and its produce, and the less intense is the activity born of real want. It may easily be conceived that in a society of some millions of persons this force would be reduced to a mere minimum. Religious communities, in order to compensate for this inevitable inertia, offered—as a reward for labour—happiness in a future state, which acted as an incentive to work, in the place of want or a desire to enjoy the good things of the world! In this way industry was encouraged in their midst, and work did not come to a standstill. But could any one with a full knowledge of men of the present day reasonably suggest that they should go down into mines, dig out ore, work in factories or workshops, drive engines; in a word, accomplish any of the multitudinous duties involved in our industrial and commercial life, with a view to securing happiness beyond the grave, and the joys of Paradise?

On the contrary it is most highly essential to respect in every way and stimulate the incentive of personal interest. Give it the amplest satisfaction by ensuring to the worker the full enjoyment of his produce; justice wills that this should be so. Guarantee to all free scope for their energy; equality would have this so. Let the excitement of want and the desire for legitimate enjoyment reign in the sphere of labour; they will give a prodigious impetus to industry. But do not attempt to impose an artificial "fraternity"; it would engender hatred, and would be productive only of misery. If the rights of each be clearly defined and guaranteed, the feelings of affection uniting men together will develop beyond the region of material interests. If any object of common envy be in dispute these brothers become absolute wolves or sharks, but if dispensatory justice render conflict impossible they will live in friendship. If I am

bound to work for my neighbour, I shall, more than probably, dislike him; all that is oppression entails hatred of the oppressor; but if both of us enjoy the fruit of our own personal exertions, I shall be animated by feelings of affection, and ready even to make sacrifices for him.

It is very important to keep the two primitive sentiments of man within the compass of their spheres. The sting of want may incite to the struggle with the barrenness and parsimony of Nature, so that ease and comfort may be wrenched from her; but such elevated feelings and aspirations as love, abnegation, and brotherhood must not be invoked for the production of riches. They are wholly out of place. Love must no more be a speculation than labour a sacrifice or appetite a right.

If every man in his own legitimate sphere of action were free to produce for himself, and if the tax of idleness were abolished, a spirit of fruitful emulation would inspire all workers, and the welfare of one would not spring from the poverty of another. What more than this could be desired?

But the chief objection to Communism is that it destroys responsibility, and consequently sacrifices either justice or liberty. Justice, in its practical sense, means giving to each his due, *cuique suum*. To each according to his merit and work, is a very old maxim, which the consciences of all nations have ever accepted. It is the very principle of responsibility, and the basis of the moral law. If thou doest well thou shalt reap thy reward, if evil thy punishment, for these are the sequels of thine own actions, good or evil.

It follows, then, that the fundamental precept of social economy should be: "*To each worker his produce, his entire produce, and nothing but his produce.*" The great problem of social organization is to realize this formula of justice. If this were once applied, pauperism and *divitism*, misery and idleness, vice and spoliation, pride and servitude would disappear as if by magic from our midst. Communism entirely ignores these first principles, the perception and realization of which are the constant effort and crowning glory of civilization. Zeal or cowardice, cupidity or abnegation, it recognizes no difference. Each one has his work appointed him; one does it ill, another not at all—it matters not; meals are served to all alike, all are treated in the same way, the idle and the industrious; brotherly feeling is tender over such slight delinquencies. It is quite clear that with this system it is to a man's advantage to do as little work as possible, all his wants being attended to under any circumstances. Vice is rewarded and virtue sacrificed. Abnegation offers a premium to laziness.

When two persons, out of politeness, debate as to which shall not accept a service each is anxious to render the other, the less scrupulous will have the best of the generous contest. It is precisely the

same in Communism, which is the dominance of the weak by the strong, of the active and industrious, by the greedy and self-indulgent. Without responsibility morality becomes a word devoid of signification. How then is such a system as Communism to be maintained? There is but one way. Stringently to enforce the penal code, that is to say, arrange an entire scale of penalties and punishments, regulate all the actions of private life, divide the workers into brigades under the arbitrary orders of an overseer, or submit all the questions of produce to the general votes, to punish any wilful idleness; substitute, in fact, for the incentive to work the fear of the gaol.

Instead of emulation and personal responsibility, constantly stimulating to increased vigour and activity, there would be then constraint in balance with indolence, disgust and weariness with law, and "fraternity" with justice. If you once do away with individual responsibility, society becomes one vast wheel, kept in motion by force. But, let us listen to what Stuart Mill says on this subject:

"The objection ordinarily made to a system of community of property and equal distribution of the produce, that each person would be incessantly occupied in evading his fair share of the work, points, undoubtedly, to a real difficulty; but those who urge this objection, forget to how great an extent the same difficulty exists under the system on which nine-tenths of the business of society is now conducted. The objection supposes that honest and efficient labour is only to be had from those who are themselves individually to reap the benefit of their own exertions. But how small a part of all the labour performed in England, from the lowest paid to the highest, is done by persons working for their own benefit."

These statements of the eminent economist certainly possess a value which we will not contest; their application to the present system is undoubted, but they are no justification of Communism, which would merely extend the same lamentable defect that exists in our present social organization.

Moreover, at the present time, the ill-effects of the wages' system on the quantity and quality of work are considerably mitigated by the workman being closely overlooked by his master, whose interest it is to see that he works as well and as quickly as possible. When this superintendence is too difficult to be effectually carried out, work is done "by the job" instead; in this way the force of responsibility acts either directly or indirectly on the workman through the medium of the master. This is generally the case with most agricultural labour, with mines and small industries. It is quite true, as Mill observes, that there are very many cases in which the stimulus of private interest is not called into action. For instance, many functionaries and officials in large companies have a fixed stipend, in no way dependent on the way they do their duty. In such cases, it must of course be admitted, that the principle of responsibility is less direct in its action, and yet it seems to me that it has more influence than

in a Communist association. The superintendent of the labourers has the hope of rising to a higher post and of receiving higher wages; in addition to this he generally belongs to a class somewhat above the workmen under him; and he is thus better able to understand that his interest lies in doing his duty conscientiously; finally he knows that if he does not work well, he may be dismissed, and that he would thus lose a position superior to that of the great majority of those who have to live by their own exertions. All these stimulants to activity are lacking in Communism. The superintendent or overseer is not urged to display the utmost zeal in his power by any hope of better pay, or fear of losing what he already enjoys. True, he has a certain interest in the prosperity of society, his own being dependent on it, an interest which the hired workman has not; but this stimulus, which might be efficacious in a small communistic association competing with other contractors, would be of no possible avail in a universal association for governmental purposes, for there would be no proportion whatever between his disposition to neglect, and the benefit he could obtain from the addition of his personal produce to the general produce of some millions of co-associates. Nowadays, when a workman is idle he is dismissed; as the Communist workshop would comprise the whole country, dismissal would mean exile, a punishment so severe that it would probably be replaced by imprisonment. So that, not self-sacrifice, but the gaoler would be the pivot of the new state of society. I am of opinion, therefore, that Mill goes too far when he sums up his conclusion as follows:

"I consider that at the present time it is an open question as to what extent the power of labour would be decreased by Communism, and even whether it would be so at all."

I believe, on the other hand, that at the present time it is perfectly certain that nothing but very fervent religious feeling can induce men to give up entirely their private interests and their own free-will for the benefit of society. The experiment has been made several times. Those who have made religious conviction the basis of the association have sometimes been successful; the others have invariably failed.

Communism is a protest against the existing order rather than a system of organization in itself. As we have seen, it owes its birth to an erroneous inference from the principle of fraternity or from that of equality, but in neither case does it offer any hope of a new social order. Real study of man's instincts is entirely lacking in its doctrines and precepts. It disdains to study because it only recognizes in our present state of society spoliation and injustice, and the order of things it dreams of is the exact reverse of what it sees. It troubles itself nought with the laws of production and distribution; they are unessential, and are to be entirely set aside. There is no

transition between the forests primeval and paradise, between the wandering savage and angels united in bonds of ineffable love. It does not understand the onward march of civilization, and fails to perceive the slow and arduous, but none the less sure and glorious, progress of reason.

The problem set by socialism—that is to say, by the science of society and civilization—is the following: Since men are equal by right, and possess divers aptitudes and inclinations, how shall the right of each to his means of production be secured to him, and how, at the same time, shall labour be stimulated by responsibility? In other words, in what manner should the association of mankind be so organized that equity may govern all social relations? Communism has not answered this question, because it has never even asked it. Its aspiration is generous, but it in no way solves the difficulty before us. Since Campanella, Communism has not made one step forwards, and since More, it has gone backward. Two thousand years ago it was at its zenith. Plato was its inspired advocate, and St. Paul its austere apostle; while the days of primitive Christianity were its period of religious enthusiasm, of daring proselytism, and of practical realization. Mr. Bellamy's Utopia, in spite of the charm of the pictures he draws, and the skill of his economic arguments seems to me inferior to More's.

Though I have thus pointed out some of the chief objections to Communism, I am well aware that they are not all equally important. But I think we may draw this conclusion from them, as a whole, that as long as men are such as they now are, and seem likely to remain for some time to come, generous minds may sigh for Communism as an enchanting picture of regenerate humanity, but that it is not in its present shape, a scheme suitable for men. In the sphere of economy it would snap asunder the spring of all work and effort, while in the judgment seat it would not respect justice, seeing that it fails to ensure to each the fruit of his labour. The second defect is more serious than the first, for there is just a remote chance that some sort of motive power might become developed in man, to act as a stimulus to production with the same force as does private interest; but men will never willingly submit to a system which rewards good and bad workmen alike.

The sole advantage to be gained by studying communistic programmes lies in the fact that they criticize with more or less eloquence and with a good deal of truth, the abuses of our social organization, and that they stir up an enthusiasm for reform.

If we may judge by the past it may safely be affirmed that the future is not for Communism. The system of property is rather making progress than losing ground; it has always had the advantage of possessing a principle of organization superior to that of Commu-

nism. Property will not perish ; but there will be gradual modifications in the manner in which it is held. It will become more and more a personal, and less and less an hereditary right. Every institution which is essentially stationary by nature, is condemned to disappear, sooner or later, because all things change, and more particularly the thoughts and faiths of men.

On the other hand, principles which form the necessary basis of society subsist always, being accounted for and justified by our very nature ; only they are gradually modified and perfected in the process of general progress. The relics of barbarous times disappear one by one as these principles draw nearer and nearer to the ideal of justice, growing more and more at each step into conformity with the laws of reason, and more and more favourable to the happiness of all. Such is, and has ever been, the destiny of property, as I have shown in my book, "Primitive Property." The laws with regard to it have always been, and still are, very different with different nations ; frequently they have varied very much with the same people, and it is perfectly certain they will suffer many more changes. None but the enemies of property would wish to restrict it within the limits of its present prescribed boundaries. Social institutions gradually become transformed, but they generally develop in a certain given direction, and according to fixed rules ; at all events during many consecutive centuries. It is therefore probable that property will become modified in the way I have indicated, and the changes which have already taken place allow of our foreseeing, in a measure, those which are likely to ensue. Property is becoming more accessible ; it is therefore probable that a time will come when all will share in it, as it is essential to a real state of freedom, and the true development of individuality that all should accomplish. It is also becoming more and more a reward of labour ; we may therefore reasonably believe that by-and-by that maxim, which is at once both the absolute negation of Communism and the most sacred justice, will receive due legislative recognition : To each the produce and nothing but the produce of his labour.

EMILE DE LAVELEYE.