

of depending upon having a sufficient quantity of workers in a particular branch of industry at a given time. If, for instance, the central authority estimates the coal production necessary for, say, a year at a given amount, it will be necessary to have a given proportion of miners to get it out. But if, as is not unnatural, that number of men may not be willing to engage in the laborious and painful task of extracting coal, their estimates would be unrealised and the whole course of manufactures interfered with. For if occupation is to be a matter of choice, which occupations do you think will be most sought after? Will men prefer to work in evil-smelling chemical works, in digging out sewers, in cleaning chimneys, in coal mines or in blast furnaces, to working, say, as gardeners, or clerks, or attendants in shops—I say nothing of desiring the places of power and influence that must exist even in a Socialist Commonwealth. Well, working men are very human, and they must answer that question for themselves. If, on the other hand, the central authority or the local authority is to decide what occupations each one must follow, what an intolerable slavery it will result in! At present we have some freedom—at the outset of life there is a choice of *some kind*—and the man of energy and ambition can generally escape from work he dislikes; he can change his employer, or even find another occupation. In the Socialist State, if work is assigned, he will have to obey; for only thus can the given quantity of labor in each industry be maintained. Some Socialists endeavor to get out of this difficulty by saying that the more objectionable occupations will be better remunerated, and that the workers in them will only have to work very short hours. But, if the hours of labor are shortened, more men will be needed to do the same work; so that the lowest and most debasing forms of work would need great numbers of workers, who would thus be withdrawn from higher industries, which in turn would be crippled. And no matter how the difficulty was determined, it is quite clear that the great principle of equality of rights and equality in the conditions of life would *not* be maintained. Furthermore, to reduce the amount of work or raise the pay for these lower occupations would be a direct denial of the Marxian principle of value (upon which the whole doctrine of Social Democracy rests), which is that all socially necessary labor is worth the same; and that, no matter how men are employed, equal amounts of such labor are equal in exchange value. Besides, even with the solutions offered, we are confronted with this difficulty: that the army of miners, sewer-diggers, stable-cleaners, and street-sweepers would be called upon to work for a shorter time for the same or better pay than is given to the artist or physician.

Bebel has found another solution. He says that the citizen of the Socialist State will be so educated that he will be capable of undertaking, not one, but any of the duties in a Socialist State; so that in the department of health, say, the man who one day empties the refuse into the Communal refuse-cart may on another day feel your pulse and prescribe for your sickness. Or, in the department of defence, he may take his place as commander in the army that but lately knew him as a very humble private. He says: 'It is not at all improbable that as organisation progresses, and the thorough education of all members of the social body advances, the different functions of labor will simply become alternate—that, at stated intervals, according to a fixed rotation, all members of a certain department, without distinction of sex, shall undertake *all functions*.' And Marx asserts that his education in the new State will confer upon the workman an 'absolute availability'; that is to say, will make him available for *any and every* emergency. Ramsay Macdonald, in 'Socialism and Society,' takes the term 'handy man' as used for the sailor, and employs it to suggest how, in a changed society, a man would have mightily increased powers. Well, is this sense, or is it nonsense? Take, for instance, the profession of medicine, in which the best years of a man's life may well be spent in getting a proficiency in one special branch; then consider how many different forms of specialism are now practised; and one must realise how utterly impracticable it is for a man to become proficient, not only in one branch of it, as surgery, or medicine, but even in one or two of its subdivisions. And yet Socialist thinkers are not afraid to venture the proposition that it is possible so to educate a man that he may in turn undertake the labors that fall upon the practitioners in every branch of the science and art of healing! Or, to use another illustration, they assume that a man will be able to undertake the duties of fireman, tackler, cardroom-hand, weaver, spinner, accountant, or manager in a cotton mill!

1 'Die Frau.'

Are we far wrong in saying that mankind is not very likely to change much, and that not only is it unlikely that we shall ever be so omniscient and all-powerful, but that we shall all be as keen in those days to get hold of a soft job as we are now?

Before I leave this subject, let me ask who is going to decide on the fitness or unfitness of an individual to follow a given vocation or to occupy a given post? The unfortunate authority whose task this is will need the wisdom of Solomon and the patience of Job, and yet be unsuccessful in pleasing the community. For if I, thirsting to achieve great things in the realm of science or of art, find myself adjudged to be a letter-carrier or a bricklayer, do you suppose I shall be satisfied? Or is it not more likely that I shall seek out the other unfortunates who, like myself, have been given hard labor, and make common cause with them in fault-finding and in agitating against the injustice we feel done to us? I am saying nothing now about the appointments at the very top of the tree. I don't know how *they* will be made, nor does it matter, for I think I may leave that branch of the subject for each one to puzzle out for himself the problems it suggests.

THE PAY-SHEETS OF A SOCIALIST STATE.

I have barely touched on the question of remuneration, but it will constitute one of the great difficulties in the Socialist State. How is labor to be rewarded under Socialism? This question is answered variously by different authorities. Some admit that it would be ridiculous to measure all services by the same standard—to determine that the poorest type of laborer, slouching through his ordained portion of work, should be paid exactly the same as the energetic, brainy man, giving expert and valuable aid in the higher functions of the social organism. And yet both are citizen owners of the property, both give equal labor time. How, then, shall any just distinction be made? Logically there cannot, and many Socialists hold that remuneration should be the same for all. But they argue that this will inflict no injustice, as each citizen will be so amply rewarded that there will be no room for discontent. Cathrein ('Socialism,' p. 267) quotes from Stern ('Thesen,' pp. 12, 13), the following description of life in the Socialist State. 'Every one,' says Stern, 'who can show that he has performed a certain amount of labor has the most unlimited right to any species of consumable goods in any quantity he may choose to fix. He draws his clothing from the public stores, he dines at the public hotel on what he pleases; or, if he prefers, he may dine at home in a highly comfortable residence, which is in communication with the public hotels (by telephone, pneumatic-tube, and by whatever other inventions may be made in the meantime), whence he may in the most convenient way order his meals, just as he pleases; or, if he prefers, he may have them prepared at home, or he may prepare them himself.'

Now, this is an alluring picture, but, as Cathrein pertinently observes, Stern omits to say who is going to serve his picture-man. Who is going to wait on him, cook for him, provide his drinks for him, and generally act as his servant? Yet this is a very important question to settle before the delights of such an existence can be regarded as practicable.

Another important consideration arises here—namely, what motives will operate to produce that quality of cheerful and energetic labor with which Socialists are so fond of endowing their citizens? or, rather, may we not ask, Will there not be many motives for taking things easy?

In the first place, there will not be the stimulus of increased reward; the worker will have no direct *personal* interest in doing particularly well; in the second place, the man who sets too hard a pace at work is not likely to be very popular. There would rather be a tendency to take things easy, when every necessity of life was assured, and neither landlord nor shopkeeper would come for their weekly pay. Thus the standard of production would be in danger of being lowered, and the well-being of the community thereby damaged.

So that, after this most cursory and necessarily imperfect consideration of only a few of the difficulties (there are many others) in the way of realising the Socialist theory, difficulties which seem insurmountable, which show Socialism to be impossible, or at least impracticable, a political and economic will-o'-the-wisp, may we not, as a practical conclusion, challenge the confident claim of Socialists to have found the one and only solution of social ills?

It is true that many Socialists are impatient of the objections set forth. It is a favorite device of English Socialists to pour ridicule upon them as applying only to what they call Utopian schemes. But, if it is true that the schemes are Utopian, it is because of the nature of Socialism, because that is the funda-