

there is something higher, even here on earth, than the Sovereign State, that the essential interests of each nation, just as in every community, the common good transcends all but the inalienable rights of the individual. Prussia's terrible threat to civilisation, now providentially overcome, has awakened the world to the fact that it has common interests to preserve, has united the great majority of nations for their mutual preservation.

"We are provincials no longer," aptly said President Wilson in one of his great pre-war speeches (March 5, 1917). And again: "The world is no longer divided into little circles of interest. The world no longer consists of neighborhoods. The whole is linked together in a common life and interest such as humanity never saw before, and the starting of war can never again be private and individual matter for nations." In past ages up to the present century selfishness has been the besetting sin of Sovereign States. National action has invariably been reducible to self-interest. The great lustre round Belgium, for her splendid self-sacrifice in 1914, arose mainly from the fact of its extreme rarity. The State exists for the very purpose of promoting the national welfare, and previous generations, misled by a false and unchristian philosophy, became convinced that competition, and not co-operation, was the primary condition of success: national selfishness was erected into a virtue, and usurped the name and credit of patriotism. To-day men have come to have at least the chance of learning that national division—given one common aim—need not prevent comradeship and association. By blending into one common family, nations may, indeed, miss some opportunities of enlargement, and meet with some checks to freedom, but the sacrifices demanded under the League count as nothing to the sacrifices required without it.

But the needs of the day claim that the restoration of the world's order on a common basis of justice, ought to be accompanied by a similar process in each individual State. Peace should be secured at home as well as abroad. Now, to be candid, can we truly say that we are governed in accord with justice? We are a democracy, but are we not going down more and more into a plutocracy. The political side of Government is nowadays far less important than the economic. It is in economics that reconstruction is necessary, if we hope to reach social peace. Of what avail are the widest possible franchise and the fullest participation in Government, so long as common control, that is, control over the means of human livelihood and welfare, is in the hard grasp of a small and irresponsible minority of capitalists? The legitimate aim of organised Labor, in this and every other country, to secure right control over industry and self-government, becomes a sham, if it leaves the control of economic power in the hands of an autocracy, or a plutocracy. Politics is a minor part of man's life; his daily work—the conditions of his existence in the shop, factory, and field—is an immense part; and there can be no genuine self-government until the Government extends to the control of these things. In other words, Capitalism in its modern development, and its patent abuses, stands in the way of a just reconstruction of society. The practical and all-important question of the day is how can we preserve the present industrial system in its essence divested of all its drawbacks?

Let us glance at the abuses of the present industrial system. As things are, the inequalities of human conditions are obviously very great. The good things of life are very unevenly distributed: not more so in reality than at other periods of the world's history, but more keenly felt to be so, because of the better education of the masses and their sad loss of the support of the Christian faith—man's supreme consoler in affliction.

Why—demand the lower classes—why is it that the few should have opportunities of education, recreation, travel, culture? Why should they so easily acquire positions of power and social consideration? Why are they so free from the necessity of hard work? Why should they, accordingly, claim to belong to a higher

caste, and should subordinate so many of their fellow-creatures to their needs and their luxuries? It is no adequate answer to appeal to Providence which has so arranged this social hierarchy. Because it is undeniable that so much is manifestly unjust in individual conditions. It is unthinkable that God could approve of it. In the past and for centuries the multitude was unorganised and untrained to think. It was blindly led by immemorial tradition, it was powerless to make persistent and effective complaint. It had little or no voice or weight in the Government. But now men are not content with social subjection, a lifetime of toil, the stigma of hired service, an inferior education, a lower culture and quality of life. They justly refuse to willingly support a parasite body, a class which produces no wealth itself, but only consumes it, lives upon the past and present labor of others, and causes others to labor the more, because it chooses to be idle. Are not these aspirations justifiable? And if so, are we not compelled to admit that there is much in our present economic conditions that is grievously unjust, since they necessitate the subjection and impoverishment of such multitudes?

"If a spirit of rapacious covetousness" (said that shrewd observer, Disraeli) "desecrating all the humanities of life, has been the besetting sin of England for the last century and a half, since the passing of the Reform Act (1832), the altar of Mammon has blazed with triple worship. To acquire, to accumulate, to plunder each other by virtue of philosophic phrases, to propose a Utopia to consist of only Wealth and Toil—this has been the breathless business of enfranchised England for the last twelve years, until we are startled from our voracious strife by the wail of intolerable serfage." (*Sybil*.)

The working of the old Economic Liberalism, here so scathingly denounced by Disraeli, was an odious industrial Prussianism. It replaced morality by fitly styled "iron laws," that is, sundry embodiments of cupidity converted into immutable axioms. It appealed for support to atheistic philosophy involving the denial of freewill, and the assertion that all human betterment resulted from ruthless competition; "the free play of natural forces"—the elimination of the weak and the unfit. For over a century this devil's doctrine of avarice prevailed in England's economic life, grinding the faces of the poor, lifting Britain to the foremost place in industrial nations, hoarding vast heaps of wealth in the hands of a few, and pitilessly bringing down degraded herds of landless workers to the status of slaves. The misery, appalling beyond description, wrought by such perversion that condoned and excited man's innate selfishness, so prone to excess, is chronicled in the dark pages of Blue Books by the score. While it is a familiar theme to the economic student, it is ever present in the long memories of the poor. And alas! this industrial Prussianism is still rampant in Britain and elsewhere, as the world war sadly shows. Listen to the noble words uttered but yesterday by Cardinal Bourne:—

"There are millions of people, for whom the necessary conditions of life are never realised. All their lives they are forced to be content with dwellings that are badly built and equipped, unfit for a growing family and wanting in ordinary conveniences. They are tied by the exigencies of their daily toil to a particular locality, and must perforce put up with the accommodation that they can find. Their weekly income will never rise beyond a miserable pittance; before their eyes is ever the spectre of the possibility of unemployment. But there is nothing in the nature of things to render such a condition in any way necessary. It cannot be urged that the goods of this world are insufficient for the maintenance of all those who dwell therein. On every side there are evidences of wealth and plenty. Money is acquired and heaped up in the ownership of individuals to such an extent that it must be quite impossible for the possessor adequately to control either its acquisition or its outlay. Such conditions are clearly unnatural and abnormal. The poor man is forced to struggle for his living wage, obtained