

THE AGE OF FOLLY

CHARLES J. ROLLESTON

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THE AGE OF FOLLY

A STUDY OF IMPERIAL ARMS
DUTIES AND WARNINGS

CHARLES J. GILBERT

THE AGE OF FOLLY

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THE AGE OF FOLLY

A STUDY OF IMPERIAL NEEDS
DUTIES AND WARNINGS

BY

CHARLES J. ROLLESTON



JOHN MILNE

29 HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN

LONDON

1911



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A STUDY OF IMPERIAL IDEAS
DUTIES AND WARNING

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CHARLES J. HOLLISTON

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1911

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THE AGE OF FOLLY

CHAPTER I

THE WRITING ON THE WALL

A bypath in India—The City of Victory—The Empire of Vjianagar—Its wealth and culture—Causes of its decay—The Moham-
medan conquest—Sack of the city—Now lost in the jungle—A
political object-lesson.

DURING a period of official service in which I was once engaged in Southern India I received orders to proceed to a native hill state, the Rajah of Sundoor's country, where I was to take up an appointment. Not long after my arrival a party of English officers passed through this territory on their way to the dominions of another native prince, the Rajah of Anagoondi, to whom they had a letter of introduction. As none of the expedition were acquainted with Hindustani they applied for an interpreter, and I received orders to accompany them in that capacity. The visit being over, my friends continued their journey to Hyderabad, where their regiment was quartered, and I returned to Sundoor to resume my official duties. The visit

had been a most interesting one to me, as our route lay close to a vast, but deserted, Hindu city which I had opportunities of exploring during this and subsequent occasions when I visited the place.

This city, known as Vijianagar,¹ was once the capital of a great Pagan Empire of the same name, which comprised at one time about a third of what is now British India. Various circumstances had contributed to make it a place alike of great opulence and importance. It had not only been the metropolis of an immense Empire, but also, as a sacred city rivalling Benares in holiness, it attracted pilgrims in multitudes belonging to all classes. Its excellent climate and surroundings, amid a rich and variegated landscape, through which flowed the broad silver flood of the river Toongaboodra, also attracted the nobles and the wealthy, thus making it the pleasure city of the great South Indian dominion; and as it became a vast commercial emporium, the capital extended until it covered twenty-four square miles of ground. Around the city there stretched a system of suburbs consisting of parks, gardens, and orchards in which were built the stately palaces of the nobles, the wealthy, and the high government officials. Within the precincts there were broad streets lined by temples in carved stone, public buildings, and bazaars, in which, according to records which have been handed down, were stored the choice

¹ *Anglice* = the City of Victory.

and costly products of the East. In those palmy days of picturesque Hindu civilisation, Vijianagar seems to have been a scene of brightness, of gorgeous pageants, and also of animated commercial traffic, for the trade-loving Hindu brought merchandise from afar to supply the market for luxury in his own land of flowers and sunshine. In particular, a great mart was formed for the sale of precious stones and pearls, which were brought from Burma, from different parts of India, and from Persia, besides silks and brocades from China and Egypt. Here, in abundance, were textiles, metal and ceramic art-ware, and as imports there are also mentioned oil, wine, drugs, spices, coral, ivory, and sandalwood. The thirst for knowledge so characteristic of the high caste Hindus, and especially those of the Brahmin race, was represented by a good system of education which diffused learning; schools and colleges were established, and that a considerable advance was made may be judged by the fact that women were not only exempt from the strict seclusion practised throughout a large portion of Asia, but they studied in the colleges and sometimes even occupied the position of professors.

What causes led to the shattering of the Empire and the complete desertion of this magnificent capital? They were briefly as follows. By the middle of the sixteenth century the dominion had arrived at its acme of wealth, magnitude, and

culture ; various races speaking distinct languages were united under the sway of one government, which, judged by the Asiatic standard, seems to have been a good one ; and the great fertile plains of Southern India were well cultivated by an industrious people, who thus became very prosperous. This very prosperity, however, this acquisition and diffusion of great wealth, appears to have contained the germ of some principle which favours the decadence of nations. The upper and ruling classes indulged in the voluptuous æsthetic life so easily pursued in their beautiful pleasure city ; their manners became soft ; for generations they lived in easy affluence on the gifts which Nature had showered down in profusion on this portion of the Indian land. The sterling qualities which are called forth by a struggle for existence became atrophied by disuse : the classes lived in the pursuit of pleasure, and for pleasure only ; the masses lived in contented subjection ; that decline of energy which so often comes in the wake of a life of ease continued for generations, and which might be called a species of moral dry rot, was widely diffused, and became in itself an invitation to conquest.

Since the commencement of the eleventh century the warlike Mohammedan power, reinforced by successive invasions from the North-West, had been gaining strength in India. Ominous rumours reached Vijanagar of Hindu

kingdoms being reduced to subjection; cities were sacked, palaces were plundered, and the wave of Western conquest rolled on until the South Indian state was practically the last stronghold of the Pagans. No doubt among these there were many able and far-seeing men who knew they were living in an age of folly, and who warned their countrymen of coming disasters; but such admonitions were as unheeded as they now are nearer home. Nothing could arouse the people from the national apathy which kept them as it were spellbound, and, Asiatic-like, they left future events to the direction of their gods.

In 1564 several Mohammedan rulers of adjacent states lying to the north formed a compact with each other to make a partition of the Hindu Empire, and having collected a large force they marched towards the capital. The government of Vijianagar, taken by surprise, hastily assembled all available troops, which were sent to meet the invaders; but after a long and desperate conflict the Hindus were defeated, their army scattered, and the victors marched rapidly on the city. The Empire was populous and wealthy, the rulers were intelligent and educated, but, lulled by a sense of false security, they had neglected the most obvious precautions; they had no other force under arms, no time to improvise a fresh army out of their vast territories, and to all their frantic efforts Fate only replied with its inexorable sentence—too late.

On the approach of the fierce and predatory Mohammedans, merciless as conquerors, ruthless as plunderers, there was great consternation in Vijianagar, and the inhabitants began to send away their wealth. That the amount of it was enormous may be judged from the account of the Portuguese historian Faria-y-Sousa, who mentions that a large amount of property, including gold, silver, and precious stones, amongst which was a magnificent royal throne set with jewels, was packed on 1550 elephants, and this caravan made its escape before the entry of the victorious army.

The capture of the city was followed by one of the most terrible scenes that have ever been narrated even in the annals of Eastern warfare. For five months the place was given over to pillage.¹ The Moslems, elated by conquest, eager for plunder, and intensely fanatical, did not recog-

¹ It is lamentable but too true that the deeds perpetrated at Vijianagar have their parallel in other and more recent annals, besides those of Mohammedan conquests. According to Mr. George Lynch, in his work on the march of the allied armies to Peking in 1900, *THE WAR OF CIVILISATIONS*, and contemporary reports on the same subject by well-informed journals, soldiers of Christian nations committed the grossest acts of rapine, cruelty, and outrage. Nor was the pillaging, shameful as it was, confined to the military rank and file. If the statements, *uncontradicted*, of English correspondents on the spot can be relied on, certain officials, officers, missionaries, and ladies looted disgracefully or were receivers of stolen goods. The victims, be it remembered, were not the Boxers with whom we were contending, but inoffensive Chinese traders, householders, shop-owners, and curio-dealers, etc., who had absolutely nothing to do with the Boxer movement.

nise that the Pagans had any rights. Such were the men who were now masters of the vast, wealthy, defenceless city. Impelled by a sleuth-hound intensity of greed the soldiery were ruthless in their search, and they appear to have been rewarded by an immense booty. From time immemorial the Hindus have practised the device of accumulating hoards of precious metals or jewellery and burying them in the ground. From the royal palaces down to the humblest dwellings all were looted, treasures were being continually brought to light, and it is recorded that Adil Shah, one of the leaders, secured, amongst quantities of jewels of prodigious value, two diamonds, one as large as an ordinary hen's egg and another somewhat smaller. Murder, rapine, and outrage of every description which avarice and lust can suggest when all the worst passions of men are stimulated, were inflicted on the unhappy population, and cow's blood was spilt in the temples with the deliberate purpose of desecrating them.

This animal being held peculiarly sacred by the Hindus, the wretched inhabitants believed that the wrath of the gods was excited. In horror and despair they fled away from what had been formerly their enchanting, wealthy, pleasure city and dispersed through the surrounding country. The defeat of an army, or even the temporary occupation of the capital, need not necessarily have shattered the Empire. It did so in this case,

because adequate preparations had not been made to meet an impending crisis of which there had been many and ample warnings; there was want of cohesion amongst the leaders of the Pagans, they had no time to organise fresh defences, and the great dominion broke up into fragments, some falling under the power of various Mohammedan nawabs and others under Hindu rulers.

During my visit of exploration I rode through broad streets of palaces and temples, once the seat of wealth, of luxury, and of learning; but the colleges which had been thronged by Indians of the higher castes were demolished, and the libraries, stored with treasures of ancient genius collected during the course of centuries by the patient industry of thoughtful Brahmins, had been destroyed.

All around Nature had painted a landscape in her brightest colouring. For miles the river-banks were fringed with trees showing a wealth of deep green foliage mingled with groves of feathery palms, and scattered thickly amongst them were still more idol-temples of pale granite with their rows of sculptured columns. The utter loneliness of the place, and the emptiness of the magnificent edifices long since untenanted by man, conveyed a peculiarly weird impression, which was heightened by the numerous stone-hewn Indian deities, sometimes monstrous, always fantastic and strange, looking apparently with an expression

of silent mockery carved on their faces. Through such a scene I passed on in silence broken only by the footfalls of my horse on the pavement, and the only sign of life was the presence of large grey monkeys, which have their habitations everywhere through the buildings, and which clustered in crowds amongst the images of the gods, climbing in and out of the palaces which in other days were inhabited by Hindu princes and nobles.

Vast territories, enormous wealth, a high state of civilisation, a good internal government, a collection of various races forming a great population, these were the powerful factors calculated to provide national strength, and they existed previous to the fall of Vijianagar. On the other hand, the warlike invaders were not as rich, as highly cultivated, or as numerous as those they conquered; yet one battle lasting only a few hours broke up the great Empire of the Hindus. Owing to long-continued prosperity they had grown careless of the future, while their manners became soft and their lives luxurious; they shut their eyes to the most palpable danger-signals; neglecting to prepare for coming emergencies they stifled the warnings of experience in the allurements of pleasure; they lived in their Age of Folly.

The circumstances connected with the decline and fall of the Vijianagar dominion have a significant parallel in the narratives of the wreck of other Empires. In the pages of history we find that

nations, if at last successful, after being hardened in a long-continued struggle against adverse forces, develop qualities which make them rich and powerful ; but prosperity is not always an unmixed blessing, for a widespread luxury, the outcome of an artificial life, frequently ushers in an age of decadence. Forgetting, that in proportion as wealth and territory augment, means should also be increased to defend acquired possessions, men refuse to make adequate sacrifices, personal or otherwise ; and when a political crisis arises, the nation is involved in serious disaster or irretrievable ruin. So it was with the great South Indian state which has passed into our hands ; but history sometimes repeats itself, and in guarding not only our magnificent inheritance in Asia, but also our world-wide Empire, it might not be amiss to study the object-lesson so plainly and emphatically set forth in the history and fate of the Empire of Vijianagar.

CHAPTER II

THE LESSON OF ROME

The beginnings of decay—The policy of doles—Inequality of wealth—Official corruption—Decline of agriculture—The craze for amusement—Public insecurity—Development of trades unionism—Rome's warlike neighbours—Warnings disregarded—Art and beauty a prey to barbarism.

HISTORY repeats itself. The maxim is a hackneyed one, but is the lesson which it involves sufficiently studied and learnt? Have the leaders and guides of the British people sufficiently marked the salutary warning conveyed by the downfall of the greatest Empires of the past? Have they realised by the light of history what must happen if the opportunities still open to them are neglected, as Rome in her decadence neglected hers?

When the vast and wealthy Roman Empire entered on what we now recognise as its period of decrepitude there were not wanting manifold signs that the great superstructure was becoming unstable at its foundation. Moreover, it is significant that the evidences of decay were precisely the same as those usually foretelling the fall of nationalities which have enjoyed a lengthy period

of wealth and power. The creation of a large opulent class brought into existence, as it usually does, another large order of work-shy parasites, and the changed conditions of Italian life produced in time a marked change in the Roman character. The members of a great plutocracy, whose position entitled them to be the leaders of the people, abandoned themselves to voluptuous indolence, the former simple life of the Roman altered to one of luxurious ease, and in time those robust moral qualities which are the outcome of a nation's successful struggles against adverse forces declined.

In order to gain the support of the masses successive governments gave to idle multitudes doles of corn, supplemented afterwards by increased largesses of pork, oil, and wine. This most pernicious system of supporting able-bodied men without exacting an equivalent in work had the disastrous effects which might be supposed; the masses were demoralised, self-respecting workmen were transformed into whining paupers contemptibly clamouring for the fruits of the labour of others. Gangs of men, useless but dangerous, thronged the streets of Rome, and a premium was placed on shameless mendicity. Although, as the boundaries of the Empire were enlarged by foreign conquests, the imperial city became a great emporium of wealth, that wealth was not generally diffused, thus producing the fatal contrast between an indolent, pleasure-loving society having a redund-

ancy of opulence, and another much larger section of the community existing in sordid poverty.¹

Venality amongst those entrusted with the administration of public money was widespread and especially noticeable among the *curiales* or governing body of the municipalities. These officials, having the power to make assessments of local taxes, gained a notoriety for corruption and cruel fraud. As the Roman generals prosecuted their foreign conquests, it became the custom to plant military colonies in the subjugated territories, thus

¹ PROPERTY AND ITS DISTRIBUTION.

"An interesting commentary on the finance debate in the Chamber of Deputies was supplied by M. Jacques Bertillon, the well-known statistician and economist, in a paper which he read before the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences at its meeting yesterday. Dealing with the distribution of property in this country and the question of the average amount of inheritances, M. Bertillon stated that upon reaching the age of fifty three-quarters of the population of both sexes were possessed of property in one form or another. At forty years of age the proportion was smaller, but nevertheless still considerable. In regard to the amount of the property, every French man and woman of over forty years of age was possessed of an average sum of £464, as compared with an average sum of £670 per head of the population of that age in the Netherlands, and £840 in England. In Austria, Spain, Italy, and Rumania the average was lower. Returns for Germany and other countries were not available. The situation of the population of France, which had progressively improved, had become less prosperous since 1895. With regard to the distribution of property, M. Bertillon estimated that on the basis of the number of inheritances of over £100 per 1000 deaths of persons of over forty years of age, the average for France was 364—and in the case of Alsace, 399; for the Netherlands, 218; and for England, which was the richest of the countries named, only 186. France, therefore, was the country in which property was most extensively subdivided" (*The Times*, 28th February 1910).

draining Italy of the best portion of her male population. The emigrants' places were taken by hordes of alien slaves, who in time mingled with the population and thereby formed a powerful element of denationalisation.

With the idea of making bread cheap, fiscal laws were so arranged that Italy should be largely supplied with wheat from North Africa, but cultivatable land was heavily taxed at home, the consequence of which was that the tax-bearing acreage contracted, waste lands became common, and it was a saying that agriculture was only an expensive luxury. In the beginning of the fifth century, in the province of Campania alone, though it was once known as the garden of Italy, more than 500,000 *jugera* (about 312,000 acres) were shown to have gone out of cultivation.

By degrees the Italian population evinced a strong tendency to flock to the large towns which arose as wealth and conquests increased. The smaller rural gentry became poorer and by degrees much less numerous, as their agricultural profits declined, while taxation became more burdensome.

As the cities and towns augmented in number and size, the populace wasted their time and money in taverns, and devoted what ought to have been their working hours to public exhibitions, such as gladiatorial fights, the circus, the theatre, and the racecourse. As may be supposed, the resulting

tendency of this craze for spectacular amusements was most demoralising, for the idle habit was engendered, and so was that of gambling with all its attendant evils. The energies and attention of the masses were directed from subjects connected with the national welfare to the merits of rival charioteers or racehorses, and the townspeople thronged the courses, which resounded with the loud cries of those who backed their favourites in the race.¹

The citizens became too weak in public spirit to administer the law so as to deal properly with crime, and the rural districts were unsafe owing to the multitude of idle bad characters infesting them. Symmachus, a wealthy proprietor, writing in the latter part of the third and early portion of the fourth centuries, who owned fifteen villas in different parts of Italy, complained that he was debarred from the enjoyment of any one of his country seats by the unsafety of the roads.² More especially stands apparent the increased shameless malversation of state funds, and in particular those in the hands of the municipalities, whose venality became a byword. Low-class obscure men worked themselves into positions which gave them, for

¹ ROMAN SOCIETY IN THE LAST CENTURY OF THE WESTERN EMPIRE, by Sir Samuel Dill.

² Yet a little earlier, in the reign of Domitian, the philosopher Epictetus had been struck with the excellent order and security maintained throughout the Empire: "Ye see, now, how that Cæsar seemeth to have given us a great peace; how there are no longer wars nor battles nor bands of robbers nor of pirates, but a man may travel at every season and sail from east to west."

the first time in their lives, command of public money. Such a temptation to such men was irresistible ; ratepayers were fleeced without mercy, and the public services were neglected.

Under such sinister conditions of society it is natural to suppose that the prevailing decay in national tone affected the home life, especially amongst the upper classes. Large numbers of male and female slaves, drawn from conquered territories, crowded the palaces and sumptuous villas of the Roman magnates. The institution of slavery was calculated to induce a sentiment of cruelty, indolence, and selfishness ; in addition, it lowered the independent spirit by substituting forced service for free labour. The habit of being waited on in luxurious homes by crowds of docile slaves, tended in time to destroy the old Roman force of character amongst the patricians, so apathy in administration of national business and indifference to public interests were the natural outcome of undue softness of life. The process of moral and mental decay seems to have been general. Even the original grasp and power which characterised former Roman literature declined, and something like a paralysis of intellect was observable amongst the *literati*.

Trades unionism existed in ancient Rome, but in a more developed form than with us ; its constraints were much more irksome, they tended to weaken independence of action, and impeded

progress. The unions, which were in fact coteries of master employers, were by the third century established by law, the actual workmen being generally slaves or selected from the poorest of the commonalty. In order to bribe the populace into contentment with the existing order of things, concessions were being continually made in answer to the persistent popular cry from the masses requiring favours at the expense of the well-to-do or wealthy.

By about 230 A.D. all trades in skilled workmanship had been divided into separate corporations, which seems in fact to have been unions not only recognised but controlled by Government. This kind of interference with the natural law of supply and demand had its obvious evil results; work was badly done, Government restrictions were evaded, so arbitrary laws were enforced to meet those evasions and oblige the unions to work at unremunerative rates for the proletariat.

The irritating restraints of trade unionism, and its ever-recurring obstruction to ordinary liberty, at last constituted such a hateful bondage that men were afraid to enter the guilds. Industry and skill declined under crushing imposts, but the wastrel was encouraged, the masses were pauperised and demoralised, becoming an immense burden on working society in general, while enterprise, initiative, and independence of character were seriously hampered. As these injurious conditions were prevalent over the entire of Italy they must

of necessity have contributed largely to the deterioration of the Roman people as well as to that of their once valuable national industries.¹

While the Empire continued to move gradually but surely on the downward grade of national decadence, great hostile forces were also gathering strength on her frontiers. The Goths, Teutons, Vandals, and other races, fierce, barbarous, and warlike, together with the Huns, predatory and warlike from Asia, began to realise their own power and Rome's growing weakness. The spectacle is afforded of a weak, effeminate, nerveless, indolent, patrician class, a decaying middle class, a bureaucracy steeped in corruption, the lower sections of the populace idle and impoverished, all society manifestly degenerate. Nations, and indeed communities generally, which are wealthy but which have become weak, do not permanently retain their wealth in the presence of communities which are vigorous but poor. One after the other the rich and vast outlying provinces of the Empire fell before the onslaught of the barbarians. The decay of national spirit and intellect decreed that the sceptre of power must fall from hands grown too weak to sustain it, and at last the former mistress of the known civilised world saw herself reduced to the possession of Italy alone.

¹ For a more detailed study of these conditions the reader is referred to Professor Flinders Petrie's invaluable work, *JANUS IN MODERN LIFE* (Constable & Co.).

From time to time, even from the early days of the Empire, there were not wanting Pagan writers who had seen the growing deterioration, for Juvenal, Horace, Suetonius, Tacitus, and others failed not to utter the warning voice and essayed to school the public morals. In later periods, Christian moralists such as St. Jerome and Salvianus attacked the growing corruption of the age and lashed the sins of society. Edict after edict was promulgated, punishments by means of fine, imprisonment, banishment, death, and even the avenging flames, were decreed without material result. Roman society was not to be purified by odes, satires, or epigrams of Pagan authors, nor yet by the reproaches of austere Christian priests or laymen. The rampant corruption of the time was not to be checked by the severest laws and eventually it undermined the entire fabric of the State.

"It is through our sins that the barbarians are strong," wrote St. Jerome in the fatal fifth century, and it was true, for the decadence of his country had reached such a pitch that the coming catastrophe could not be much longer averted, and Rome was already tottering for her fall. In particular, the modern Roman woman, on account of her extravagance and other failings, came in for a large share of the saint's wrath, not quite unjustly either, for she was distinctly a decadent. The accusations may perhaps have been too

general, but it is true that Roman ladies placed the East under contribution for costly silks, stuffs, brocades, and jewellery ; that they flocked in crowds to the amphitheatre, demoralising themselves by the spectacle of gladiators killing each other for the amusement of the populace ; that they gave long and elaborate banquets of more than regal splendour, in which the size and weight of fish and game were recorded, while the lower classes were in pitiable indigence. Surrounded by slave-women and eunuchs, Italian dames became indolent, selfish, frivolous, vicious, and useless, not calculated to become good wives or mothers ; little qualified to bring up a generation of sagacious statesmen or resolute generals.

The ancient warrior-nation, in its early strenuous life, undoubtedly formed magnificent moral qualities, but these had become atrophied by disuse, and the commencement of the fifth century saw the Italians careless, pleasure-loving, and weak. True patriotism and devotion to the nation's welfare no longer existed amongst the masses, valour had departed from a people too characterless to make adequate preparation against coming disasters, too fond of present ease to realise the dangers which threatened. The spectacle of able-bodied men supported by the State, or as parasitic crowds by wealthy patrons, tempted men to desert the ranks of industry. Vast sums were sent yearly to foreign countries in payment for

imports, and Italy was thus drained of money while lands were running to waste and men were idle or half-employed. Public spirit decayed, so did the old patriotic sentiment. The ancient military fortitude languished, and in the latter days of the Empire, when danger was most imminent, the better class of the native-born Romans objected to serve in defence of their country, so that the ranks of their armies were at last replenished by the lowest dregs of the populace, by slaves, and by Teuton mercenaries.

At the same time the Romans had not become in every way degenerate. Whatever may have been their faults, the patrician class maintained a keen appreciation of art and literature, they enjoyed the most exquisite social culture, and a degree of educated refinement not at that time equalled in any portion of the world. They had acquired libraries stored with the highest products of Latin and Greek thought. They vied with each other in collecting the choicest pieces of art work in gold, silver, textile fabrics, carved ivory, and sculptured marble, produced under the influence of the most elegant classic taste for the adornment of their beautiful villas. Through every detail, in the coloured mosaics of the rooms and the delicate varied frescoes on their walls, everything was redolent of luxury and beauty.

From the records which have come down to us it appears that when the Roman noble built his

rural habitation, with a natural instinct for the picturesque he generally selected a site of great original beauty. Sometimes it was on a rising slope before which stretched an enchanting landscape of meadow, parkland, and cultivated plain; at others it was on the wooded banks of a winding river, or on the shores of a lake reflecting the deep blue sky on its calm surface. Surrounding the country pleasure-houses were picturesque gardens, each one in itself a scene painted with the brightest tints from Nature's palette in an atmosphere full of the scent of the orange and lemon. Each of these charming resorts was directed and arranged with the finest classic taste, where marble fountains gurgled amidst green sward, semi-tropical flora, and a delicious wealth of colour. All contributed to make the perfection of soft beauty. Life was an earthly paradise for the wealthy, in the balmy air and under the sunlit azure sky.

Wrapped in a sense of false security, degenerate Italy was at the same time a tempting prize and an easy prey to the uncivilised hosts which clustered on her northern frontier. Tribesmen whose habitat had been amongst forests and swamps, dreary plains and desolate wind-blown tablelands of Europe and Asia, now poured into the country. These men, warlike, virile, fierce, and predatory, with whom the chase was an occupation, and war but a pastime, swept hot-foot over the conquered territories, splitting into separate hordes to enjoy

an orgy of pillage and outrage. Impelled by lust of conquest they found all which might attract such combatants, food, wealth, wine, beauty, and boundless loot. Rude Gothic warriors, to whose uncultivated intelligence, taste, art, or literature made no appeal, strode through the marble courts and colonnades of the aristocratic mansions, with raucous voice exacting plunder. The fruitful orchards and tasteful flower gardens were devastated, the well-stored libraries were scattered to the winds, and priceless works of ancient writers were lost for ever to the human race. The choicest treasures of art in statuary were smashed in brutal recklessness, and the proud daughters of Roman senators presented with trembling hands gem-studded golden goblets of Falernian wine to rough conquerors who were the countrymen of those ladies' former slaves. With fire and sword the genius of destruction stalked through the land. The noble public buildings and the elegant private mansions were reduced to ruins, cities and towns were laid in ashes, and with the smoke of burning dwellings ascended the wail of the plundered inhabitants. At last the curtain falls dramatically as the invaders stormed the capital and sacked majestic Rome.

The old order of things, containing much that was imposing and picturesque, but with its attendant follies and vices, was shattered at last. It had been evolved during the lapse of twelve centuries; it

had played the leading part in the drama of humanity; and it now lay prostrate and helpless under the heel of barbarism. It fell through the decline of its former solid qualities; the time had come for a new order of things to be established and a new civilisation to be gradually built up on the ruins and memories of the past in the land of art and beauty.

CHAPTER III

THE LESSON OF SPAIN

Natural endowments of the Iberian peninsula—Wealth of the Jews and their expulsion—The Moors in Spain—Economic results of their banishment—Poverty and depopulation of Spain in the seventeenth century—False conception of wealth—Dissolution of the Spanish Empire.

PERHAPS no country more than the Iberian peninsula possesses in proportion to its area those natural advantages which, if only utilised with energy, tend to make its inhabitants prosperous and powerful. It has splendid ports capable of commanding the rich Mediterranean trade, an exceptionally fertile soil, varied and valuable products, an agreeable and healthy climate, changing according to locality, a peculiarly safe geographical position, being bounded by the sea, and by a short frontier protected by the Pyrenees. The discovery of America had given Spain and Portugal practically undisputed sway over the greatest portion of the southern division of the new continent, as well as the wealthy Mexican territories in the north; and from these

came a well-sustained shower of gold over the Peninsula.¹

After the Church, the Jewish community was undoubtedly the wealthiest body in Spain. The Israelites were very numerous; and besides being intelligent and energetic as business men, they excelled in various useful industries. Their wealth excited Spanish cupidity, while as non-believers in Christianity they encountered ecclesiastical intolerance. Both laity and Churchmen combined at last in a raid on Jewish wealth. It was seized, and in 1492 its possessors were driven from the country under circumstances of hideous cruelty.

The Moorish population, chiefly inhabiting southern Spain, were industrious, thrifty, and prosperous. As in the case of the Jews, they were very skilful in many of the handicrafts for which Spain was once famous. Unfortunately two great forces of evil, greed and religious bigotry, were directed also against them. They suffered most shameful persecutions, and eventually, early in the seventeenth century, by a regal edict, their wealth was confiscated and they were driven forth from the land of their birth under the same circumstances of atrocious cruelty to which the Spanish Israelites

¹ According to a competent Spanish writer on political economy, America sent to Spain in the course of 232 years considerably more than one thousand millions sterling (Ustaritz, THEORY AND PRACTICE OF COMMERCE). Yet at the close of the period of the 232 years mentioned by Ustaritz, *i.e.* 1724; what was the condition of Spain? She was sunk in the most abject poverty.

were subjected little more than one hundred years before.

In expelling the two Semitic races from the country the Spaniards also expelled the many arts and industries in which those races excelled. From the earliest times they had engaged in the manufacture of various kinds of fabrics wrought with exquisite skill from linen, silk, cotton, and wool; they worked the most delicate embroideries and brocades, carpets, rugs, etc.; and they were adepts in the production of gold, silver, and ceramic work. In the preparation of leather, by a peculiar Moorish process, they formed a large and valuable industry, the chief seat of which was at Cordova; their steel work, made by a secret process known to certain families of Moors, was renowned through Europe; the manufacture of paper, the art having been originally discovered by the Spanish Moslems, was almost entirely in their hands. The Moors were particularly skilful cultivators, they reduced their system of irrigation to a science, and wherever they settled, even on the most arid tracts, they were able to convert them into highly cultivated vegas and blooming gardens.

Hardly had the Moorish expulsion been achieved when, as might have been anticipated, the cessation of valuable home industries was followed by serious national calamity. The most important manufactures commenced to languish and became in a short time practically extinct, the

circulation of money lessened, and the finances of the country were dislocated. In the middle of the sixteenth century Toledo had upwards of fifty woollen manufactories ; it had only thirteen in 1665, the expelled Moors having carried the industry away with them to Tunis.¹ The former city had long been famous for its silk manufacture ; this was in the hands of the Moors, but on their expulsion the craft was absolutely lost for Toledo, thus throwing out of employment nearly forty thousand persons who depended on it for their daily bread.² In the middle of the sixteenth century the fleets of Spain were supreme alike in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic ; by the middle of the seventeenth the shipbuilding industry, once so large, had almost completely passed away.³ During the sixteenth century and up to the time of the Moorish expulsion, Spain was celebrated for superior glove manufacture ; the articles were produced in immense quantities, which were exported to England and France. Dating from the expulsion, the production commenced to diminish rapidly, and by the middle of the seventeenth century was completely extinct, according to a Spanish writer, Martinez de Mata, who wrote in the year 1665.

The entire or partial extinction of so many lucrative national industries naturally resulted in

¹ Laborde's SPAIN, vol. iv. p. 338.

² Sempere, MONARCHIE ESPAGNOLE.

³ Bacallar, COMMENTARIOS DE LA GUERRA DE ESPAÑA.

a corresponding decay of Spanish towns and impoverishment of the general population. Thus, during the sixteenth century the wealthy city of Seville alone possessed a silk industry which gave employment to one hundred and thirty thousand persons, working more than sixteen thousand looms. By the reign of Philip v., who ascended the throne in 1700, less than three hundred looms were in use in Seville, and according to a Government report made in 1662 the population of this city had fallen to one-quarter of its former inhabitants. The report moreover emphasised the fact that even the vines and olives formerly cultivated profitably in the vicinity were almost completely neglected. Only a few years previous to the exodus of the Moors, the population of Madrid was considered to be about four hundred thousand; in one hundred years it had decreased to one-half that amount. In Burgos, once a prosperous commercial city, the silent streets and empty houses in the middle of the seventeenth century testified to the decay from which it has never since recovered. Segovia was once famous for its woollen and silk products, also for its beautifully coloured dyed cloths, yet its arts and trade declined along with its population, until, by the middle of the seventeenth century, it numbered only six hundred impoverished inhabitants.

Throughout the beautiful, naturally rich, and once so prosperous districts of Andalusia, agriculture declined with the deterioration of arts and

industries ; the taxes were only collected with difficulty, although the revenues from that most fertile province could always be relied on in former years to replenish the Imperial treasury in time of a monetary crisis ; as time passed, the condition of Spain became lamentable, money was rapidly leaving the country, and during the third quarter of the seventeenth century the inhabitants, even in the vicinity of the capital, lived on the verge of starvation. Later on, appalling destitution prevailed throughout Spain, tax-collectors remorselessly exacted their demands by seizing the furniture of the unhappy people, by selling even the beds from under them, and unroofed their houses in order to dispose of the materials for any scanty sum they might fetch. The people now commenced to fall into the fatal apathy of despair, numbers of the rural population fled from their homes, by degrees sterile tracts took the place of cultivated farms, entire villages became deserted, and at the close of the seventeenth century in many of the towns upwards of two-thirds of the houses were destroyed.¹

In proportion as Spain ceased to be a producing country those classes which depend on labour of some kind for their daily bread became terribly impoverished. Multitudes died of famine and exposure, and positively a species of widespread

¹ See DISCURSOS, by Alvarez Osorio y Redin, published in 1687 and 1688, subsequently reprinted in Madrid in 1775.

paralysis seemed to affect the national mind. Starving, unemployed men thronged the roadways, wandering aimlessly in search of food; the streets of the towns became unsafe on account of the gangs of unemployed; starving workmen, with wives and children also starving, clustered ominously in the streets calling for bread. Nor were they content with mere supplications, for workmen speedily became transformed into burglars and marauders.

Stanhope, the British diplomatic representative, writing in 1699, stated that recently more than twenty thousand additional beggars, "looking like ghosts," had flocked into Madrid, and that continually people were killed in the streets scuffling for bread.¹ Throughout the entire country all those qualities which tend to make or preserve a nation seemed to be on the down grade. The disheartened people, falling under the spell of widespread national apathy, lost their former national and warlike spirit. They seemed to lose even the instinct of self-preservation. While masses were famishing, the coast fisheries were neglected to such an extent that in 1656 it was found impossible to procure sufficient sailors to manage a small fleet for the service of the High Admiral of Spain when he was about to put to sea,² and at last foreign pilots were, as a rule, engaged for Spanish ships,

¹ Mahon's SPAIN UNDER CHARLES II.

² Dunlop's MEMOIRS, vol. i. p. 549.

owing to the gross ignorance of Spaniards as to the intricacies of their own country's coasts and waterways. Perhaps, however, little illustrates the decline of Spain during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries more forcibly than the extraordinary decline of her population. In the days of Pagan Rome, when the empire was ruled by Augustus Cæsar, the Spanish population had been estimated at about 40,000,000.¹ In the time of Charles v. (Charles I. of Spain), who abdicated in 1555, it numbered only 10,000,000, and in that of Charles II., who commenced to rule in 1675, it had fallen to 6,000,000.

When, at the mandate of religious fanaticism, the intelligence and the industries of Spain were driven to other lands, the natural consequence was, as we have seen, rapid and dire disaster. In their efforts to remedy this the governing classes displayed the most profound and childish ignorance of political economy's most ordinary laws, for Spanish administrators, having plundered infamously, blundered hopelessly. They failed to see that coin is not in itself wealth, but only a token of value, that the real wealth of a nationality lies in its various assets, and that these are represented by the productive industries of the country as well as by the capacity and conduct exercised by each unit of her inhabitants. When Spain expelled her industries, together with the most capable elements

¹ See HISTOIRE DES ARABES ET DES MORES D'ESPAGNE, by Viardot, vol. ii. p. 29, published in Paris, 1850.

of her population, events followed each other in the most logical sequence. True, money poured in from her foreign possessions, but money also poured out to pay for articles which had formerly been produced at home, and as failures in various directions produced failures in others, so one class after another fell under the hard yoke of poverty. According to Harrison¹ enormous masses of gold and silver, annually transmitted from the colonies, passed through Spain into French, English, Italian, and Dutch pockets. "Not a réal, it is said, of the thirty-five millions of ducats which Spain received from the colonies in 1595, was found in Castile the following year." At last almost everything the Spaniard required in his daily life was made abroad, or by aliens residing in Spain.

The "unemployed" question was an ever-present and serious danger. The monasteries and convents gave doles of food to swarms of able-bodied loafers, and thus the working classes became lazy, unreliable, deficient in self-respect, and demoralised. Those Spaniards who possessed enterprise, spirit, or energy emigrated in large numbers while still in early life, leaving behind an undue proportion of the good-for-nothing, spiritless, physically weak, or mentally defective. The few remaining industries were crushed by over-taxation, the country becoming so poor that the government could not obtain money sufficient to

¹ Harrison's SPAIN, p. 543.

carry on a proper administration; and it may be said that everything taxable was taxed to the point which indicated that higher imposts must mean decrease of revenue. The adverse conditions, political and moral, under which the people of Spain lived, produced their inevitable result in gradual decay of the ancient warlike spirit, and the national intellect itself became enfeebled. The moral atrophy of the Spanish people is strongly exemplified by the gradual loss of their once magnificent foreign possessions. Between 1648 and 1735 Spain was obliged to relinquish Holland, Roussillon, Artois, Portugal (which was Spanish from 1580 to 1640), Franche-Comté, Luxemburg, the Spanish Netherlands, the Duchy of Milan, Sardinia, the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily. The different Spanish administrations, each coming into power in turn, endeavoured to counteract national calamities by worse remedies. Those who swayed the destinies of Spain were with few exceptions unprincipled charlatans, ignorant political adventurers, narrow-minded doctrinaires, hack-politicians, and greedy office-seekers who, caring nothing for the real prosperity of their country, concealed their own selfish designs under the mask of patriotism. Spain, with her many natural advantages, might have become, under good administration, permanently rich, powerful, and a Queen amongst nations. Instead of this, a lengthy adherence to false principles induced widespread corruption, ending

in national poverty; her institutions decayed with the spirit of her people, and her once magnificent empire fell to pieces because the sceptre of power dropped from hands too weak to sustain it.

CHAPTER IV

THE LESSON OF THE NETHERLANDS

Natural characteristics of the country—Condition of its first inhabitants—Their struggle for existence—Their wealth and culture—The War of Independence—Amsterdam the warehouse of Europe—Germs of decay—Particularist tendencies—Policy of John de Witt—Free trade and decentralisation—False security—Neglect of national defence—Effects of free trade on Dutch industries—National poverty and oligarchical wealth—War with France—Murder of de Witt—Wars with England and Prussia—Subjugation by Napoleon—Future prospects of the Netherlands.

SPAIN and Holland — there are surely no two European countries contrasting more sharply with each other, not only in their natural features and endowments, but also in the character and early history of their inhabitants. Yet we shall see that both alike had an age of folly, in which plausible fallacies, eagerly adopted for the sake of immediate gain, in the one case by the Monarchy and the Church, in the other by an exceptionally intelligent and sturdy democracy, led inexorably to the downfall of a great State, and to the laying waste of a splendid fabric of national prosperity.

Nature would seem to have her favourites and her antipathies amongst populated localities, in which case Holland must undoubtedly be placed in the latter category.

The country is destitute of timber, minerals, and mines; there is no coal, practically no stone, the land is naturally very poor, and one-half of it lies on a level with, or below the level of the sea. Of a truth the Dutchman's country in its natural condition was a Cinderella amongst the dominions of Europe. In its early history the territory was a vast unproductive morass; bitterly cold winds swept in howling gusts over the dreary marshes and barren sand-dunes, amid the scream of the sea-gull, the whistling of the curlew, and the sad cry of the bittern.

Mountains, marshes, desolate moorlands, and sandy wastes are often the refuge of the vanquished races; of the fag-ends, so to speak, or rejected elements of humanity, or sometimes of those who, strong in everything but numbers, have had to withdraw before the onset of conquering hordes. In these inhospitable tracts, more or less in the character of Ishmaels, the refugees contrive to maintain an independent existence, sometimes even to work out a distinct civilisation of their own. It would seem that the western Teutonic tribes broke off fragments and offshoots which in time sparsely peopled the region which is now Holland. That in early epochs the life of the

inhabitants was wretched, may be gathered from an account written by the elder Pliny in the first century of the Christian era. He speaks of the Batavians as subsisting on fish left by the receding tides which poured in their waters twice every day. The narrator states that neither trees nor shrubs appeared in the swampy land, that the people took refuge on sand-hills or in little huts built on the summits of poles, that rain-water for drinking purposes was collected and preserved with great care, and that the fuel was a species of peat which was gathered and formed with the hand.

Primitive and barbarous as were the Batavians, even at that period they had commenced to erect dykes along some portions of their coast. Slowly and painfully, fighting hourly against the forces of nature, the people progressed, winning constantly from the waves more land, which was drained by a system of canals. These were brought up to the dykes, along which were lines of windmills constructed so as to pump the water over the sand barriers into the sea. Thus the Dutch became in time some of the best hydraulic engineers in the world, and their general intelligence was highly developed in various directions. The naturally poor sandy soil, won from the sea-bed, required unremitting labour, besides constant manuring, to make it capable of producing crops, and hard necessity induced habits of thrift. Everything which could nourish the soil, even to the very

egg-shells, was returned to it, and incessant vigilance to withstand the inroads of the tide engendered habits of co-operation and foresight. The length and intensity of the struggle laid firmly the foundation of future prosperity, and the Dutch, in their early history, were nurtured on the rough, uncompromising, hard-kneed lap of poverty.

Heavily weighted in the struggle for existence, the emergence from primitive conditions into a more advanced civilisation was strongly marked by the exercise of those qualities which tend to make a people successful in their national career. The Dutch made the most of their ports and navigable rivers, their hereditary occupation of fishermen contributed to make them bold and enterprising sailors, their ships carried merchandise over the farthest seas. Great commercial cities sprang up, population increased, as did wealth in the hands of the frugal inhabitants; when printing presses became common and national education was diffused, the national intellect marched rapidly to success. As traders, financiers, and administrators, the Dutch excelled; they studied the mechanical crafts, agriculture, literature, philosophy, and art with intensity and a rare intelligence which gave birth to numbers of manufacturing industries. The race which originated from some scattered congeries of poor fishermen in a region of bleak morasses and sand-dunes developed a brain-power and brilliant national genius second to none in

Europe, while by labour and skill they converted the ancient sea-bed into a blooming garden.

At the outbreak of the Dutch War of Independence against Spain in 1567, all the odds were in favour of the latter country. The Duke of Alva overran the Netherlands with a large army, and inaugurated an era of terrible cruelty and carnage. The very extent and barbarous nature of the atrocities committed at last spurred the terror-stricken, oppressed people to combine for mutual defence, though the struggle seemed at first hopeless. A long war ensued, during which the Dutch developed magnificent qualities in tenacity of purpose, courage, and skilful seamanship. The Spanish fleets were encountered and worsted, Spanish merchantmen taken as prizes, and Spain's commerce received serious and lasting injury. The war languished on, the Dutch received material aid from France and England, both nations being willing to cripple Spain, of whom they were jealous and afraid, and at last, after a hard-fought struggle of eighty years, the United Provinces were free. They were not only free, but having during the war, in conjunction with the English, practically destroyed the foreign trade of Spain, it fell chiefly into the hands of the seafaring Dutch. Owing to this fact, there was more than compensation for the drain of resources caused by the war, and the Netherlands made rapid strides towards wealth and prosperity.

The progress of the Netherlands in the accumulation of wealth was extraordinary. The Dutch ships carried trade to the most distant seas, and in proportion to their numbers the people were perhaps the richest in Europe. In time the Dutch monopolised the bulk of the carrying trade of the world, their country became practically the world's workshop, her people were the bankers, traders, and financiers of the world, they were successful colonists and planters, their productive industries flourished because of the intensity with which they were followed. Amsterdam, in particular, which had become the Venice of the North, was a city of enormous wealth; when Adam Smith wrote, this city was the great warehouse of Europe, as money there was so plentiful and cheap that it could be obtained at only two or three per cent. interest. According to Sir William Temple, there was stored up in the Amsterdam bank more wealth than was known to exist in any other repository in the world. The treasure consisted of bars of gold and silver, plate, and an indefinite number of bags which were supposed to contain gold and silver. He stated besides that the city itself was the most beautiful, the most expensively built and highly adorned on earth. Even at the close of the eighteenth century, although the Dutch had then entered on the period of their decadence, it was estimated that the bank of Amsterdam contained three thousand tons of gold.¹

¹ Equal to £381,588,000.

How abundant was money may be illustrated from the fact that the two and a half per cent. State loan stood at a hundred and ten, thus giving lower interest than that ever yielded by English consols.

But even when the Netherlands were at the zenith of prosperity, there were apparent the germs of what subsequently proved to be national decay. The early emergence of the country from barbaric into civilised conditions, was marked by the tendency of the inhabitants to collect into small, semi-independent groups, in which not only had each district its own government, but in time every large city had its own senate. This form of rule became more highly organised by an assembly of deputies from the various provinces held in 1651, when it was decreed that each province, of which there were seven, should exercise sovereignty within its own borders, all being governed, and loosely governed, in theory by a States General, composed of delegates from the various districts. Thus the general sentiment of the Dutch people was not only democratic, but particularist, even each small district or town worked for its own exclusive interests, as did the provinces, and their interests were often at variance with each other. The country was governed by political groups; the mouth-pieces of the people were too often merely self-asserting and self-seeking noisy demagogues. These constantly lost sight of the general good in the interests of their native town or locality, and

while masquerading under the name of patriotism, stifled the promptings of the real sentiment in a selfish working for narrow local or personal aggrandisement.

In closely studying the pages of history, the fact is apparent that democracies are unfortunately rather prone to maintain their immediate and selfish interests with the greatest tenacity against other interests of future but most obvious national importance. For centuries two political Dutch parties strove against each other, endeavouring to sway the destinies of their country. One, the aristocratic group, aimed at a closer connexion of the seven provinces under an hereditary ruler, the Stadtholder, so that the Netherlands should constitute a distinct and unified State, national departments being each under a distinct responsible Minister. The Army and Navy were to be kept in a condition adequate to the defence of the country, its foreign interests, and its wealth. By this means an uninterrupted home and foreign policy could be carried out ; it would also be prompt and effective ; yet the government would be represented by a popular national Assembly. The democratic party, however, desired that each one of the seven provinces constituting the so-called States of the Netherlands should be as far as possible independent of the others, subject to a very loose federation, bound to each other in little more than the obligation to unite for mutual

defence in time of war. During the Dutch national life power swayed from one party to the other, the democratic sections being generally successful, just so far as to prevent a thorough unification of their country. This party required a strong leader, and unfortunately one was forthcoming who voiced the short-sighted and fatal sentiments of Dutch democracy.

John de Witt, a young lawyer, first entered public life when about twenty-four years of age. He was fluent, ambitious, plausible, and, according to posterity's verdict, a faddist. How far his expressed opinions may have been genuine and sincere must be a matter of doubt; his enemies naturally affected to believe that he was actuated far more by a desire for notoriety and political power than by true patriotic impulse. Be this as it may, he used his power as an orator to become a leader to the middle class, and was the admiration of the trading element who, guided by their pecuniary interests, listened to the voice of the fluent leader. The party represented by De Witt grew powerful under his leadership. Each separate province became a separate tiny democracy, subdivided into a system of lordships, corporations, free cities, and towns, each of which strove for its own narrow interests. Under the name of liberty, the former policy of decentralisation was pursued to extreme lengths, and national disintegration followed as a natural consequence. However

faulty may have been De Witt's policy, he carried the country with him; he succeeded in having the Stadtholderat abolished, and was in 1653, when only twenty-eight years of age, himself made Grand Pensioner of the Province of Holland, the office he held being equivalent to that of perpetual President; and he became practically ruler of the other States constituting the United Netherlands. In fact De Witt and his party were warmly accepted by the people at large. Their objects were mainly represented by two principles: one was that of free imports from other countries, all of which were tariff-protected; the other was that of the strict decentralisation policy before explained.

We shall see how this victory was utilised.

Government by groups does not bring forward the best statesman or administrator; it does certainly bring to the front the self-advertiser, the faddist, the grievance-monger, the intriguer, the dreary platitudinarian, the place-hunter, the greedy office-seeker, and the silly sentimentalist. The late Lord Goschen, a shrewd, far-seeing statesman, once, when addressing his countrymen, emphatically but ineffectually warned them against the danger of government by groups. It can readily be seen that a popular government, having an efficient working majority with what is called a healthy opposition, can work well for national welfare, supposing its councils are guided by judgment and patriotism. It will also be seen, however, that

such types as I have mentioned must represent a national danger when holding the reins of power, and the government of the Netherlands drifted into an accentuated form of government by numerous and distinct opposing groups. The objections to these political conditions are almost too obvious to require demonstration. None can fail to see that a number of separate factions, divided among themselves, actuated by mean ambitions, each band striving for selfish ends and narrow schemes, must be a bar to prompt and effective national action. Yet decisive measures promptly carried out are often of the most vital consequences when a crisis arrives in national life. Time is frequently lost in frothy lengthened discussions when wise conception and rapid operation are urgently called for. Opposing petty interests have to be reconciled by compromises involving faulty half-measures; opportunities are thus lost, and government by oratory is too frequently found to be government by deception.

It is usually observed that large trading classes carrying on business with money over the counter are very apt to view political matters solely from their individual standpoint, and to look mainly to present gain. Thus peace, economy, the maintenance of independent authority in each petty province, and free imports from tariff-protected countries for the benefit of coteries of importers, formed the Dutchman's policy, and the populace

were bemused by the misleading party cry of cheap foreign products. The usual species of clap-trap arguments were used by De Witt's party to support their leaders' views, and were much the same as those maintained by the Cobden School in Great Britain long afterwards. De Witt taught his countrymen that his policy must be the only sound one, and was bound to be eventually successful; that Protection was illogical and illusory, therefore it could be successfully fought by Free Trade, especially in Holland, which had been designed by nature to be the centre-point of the world's industries and commerce; that, to be consistent, a land which called itself free should also have its trade free. By way of enforcing their views, the so-called Free Trade party flooded their country with pamphlets containing promises and arguments supporting that policy, so with delusive force and plausible oratory they played to the gallery—for a time. Peace, prosperity, progress, wealth, lowered taxation, and increased well-being for all were freely offered, the glowing assurances were accepted by an emotional and ill-informed populace, De Witt was called "the wisdom of Holland," and Free Trade became an established institution.

Wealthy commercial democracies are generally prone to be very suspicious of the military element, and curiously forgetful of its absolute necessity for protecting the wealth they possess. De Witt's

party now deprecated the necessity for keeping up costly armaments merely for defensive purposes. It was urged that other nations would not allow Dutch independence to be destroyed, as this would injuriously affect the balance of power in Europe; thus that the Netherlands might safely rely for national defence on the mutual jealousies of European States. The Dutch only desired peace; who, therefore, would attack them? Even were they attacked, an invasion would be difficult owing to the nature of the country, and the fact that the Dutch fleet would always form an adequate line of defence. Why, then, keep up an expensive army and navy to encounter imaginary enemies and guard against imaginary dangers? Such deceptive reasoning found a ready echo in the minds of the people; the inferences were treated as if they were established facts too obviously true to admit of discussion, and in time militarism was despised and disliked as costly and useless. The suicidal policy of limiting the country's defences was only too successful, and by the middle of the seventeenth century the popular party then in power succeeded in reducing the national army. The navy, which was so essential to the very existence of the enormous Dutch commerce, was also neglected; the war-ships were even reduced from 150, which they formerly numbered, to 40. To put it shortly, the Dutch, with a fatuity which seems to us astounding under the circumstances, left the de-

fence of their country to foreign States and trusted to the chapter of accidents. Naturally the most sagacious and far-seeing amongst the Dutch leading men raised a warning voice against the danger of leaving great mercantile wealth, besides power and colonial territory, without adequate protection. It was urged that other nations had by no means disarmed, therefore the Netherlands were liable to invasion or to an adverse combination of States which were warlike, poor, and covetous of Dutch unprotected riches. The populace, however, refused to listen to the predictions and disinterested advice of the wisest and most experienced of their countrymen. Peace at any price, retrenchment, economy, were the lures by which De Witt attracted his followers, and the most obvious precautions were neglected for the sake of present ephemeral advantage.

The Netherlands had formerly been justly styled the workshop of the world, and certainly the inhabitants appeared to excel in whatever they undertook. The brewing industry was once very flourishing and, connected with it, that of barrel making; woollen and cloth manufacture, with hat making, represented important industries. Paper manufacture was so extensive that it became almost a Dutch monopoly, and the product was considered the best in the world. An enormous amount of printing was carried on in Holland, and a large proportion of the inhabitants of Leyden lived by

the book trade, as those of Delft did by producing a peculiarly fine species of pottery. Although the Netherlands could boast of no forests, great quantities of foreign timber were imported for shipbuilding and other industries springing from it, and these were so extensively carried on as to give employment to a large proportion of the population.

As might have been expected, the undoubtedly excellent Dutch characteristics and qualities, their ingenuity and their diligence, could not prevail against a home policy of Free Trade and a strong Protection policy on the part of the Dutchman's manufacturing and trading competitors abroad. If the Dutch did not understand their own interests, other nations did theirs, and in order to foster home industries sedulously kept up a strong tariff barrier against the Netherlands' productions, with a result which might have been easily foreseen. In proportion as the consumer was favoured at the expense of the producer, and as the neighbouring nations poured their merchandise into the Free Trade United Provinces, the Dutch were bereft of their own flourishing, productive industries which had been created by centuries of intelligent assiduity. One by one the various handicrafts languished; many became extinct, skilled workmen began to emigrate in large numbers, those who remained sank into apathetic poverty, and men who were formerly self-respecting, intelligent

operatives, became beggars and loafers. The services of the sailors who had been employed to man the war-ships had been dispensed with, the inadequate number of vessels remaining in commission were not kept in proper repair or fighting condition, and skilful dockyard artisans were dismissed from motives of false economy.

While former flourishing industries were flying to tariff-protected lands, unemployment became ominously common, and hordes of workless, starving men commenced to throng the roads and cities. As a palliative, these unemployed were supported by the State, and the pernicious system of maintaining able-bodied men in idleness without exacting a genuine equivalent in productive work had its unfailing result. Whereas formerly amongst the thrifty Dutch, beggary was practically unknown, now owing to faulty legislation, industrious, intelligent workmen were converted into masses of idle loafers and mendicants. Although immense quantities of foreign food poured into the country, although the policy of purchasing food in the cheapest market was the policy still followed, yet starvation stalked through the land and discontent was prevalent. Naturally enough, for the working population had lost the industries which in other days had provided them with abundance in comfortable homes.

At the same time the Dutch still retained the reputation of being wealthy, and to a certain degree

this reputation was justified. There was a large oligarchy, so to speak, of rich business men, whose system of trade and finance, if not productive of general good to the country, still made the individual rich. In proportion as home industries dwindled, investors commenced to send their capital to other countries for investment, and in this way drew their incomes from abroad. The invested capital therefore stimulated foreign instead of home enterprise, to the impoverishment of the Netherlands. Considerable numbers of traders also were importers of foreign goods, thus strangling home manufactures; but if the nation lost, the individual importer benefited. As may be seen, the Dutch policy so persistently carried out formed a condition of great concentrated wealth in juxtaposition with great poverty amongst the masses. More than this, the wealthy became indolent, pleasure-loving, non-progressive; the poor had a precarious living from the decreasing remnants of former industries, from casual work, or from begging, or State support.

These demoralising influences were bound to have their result, and it was a very bad one. Emigration of the best elements of the people set in to a serious extent, while the worst elements, the lazy and the good-for-nothing, remained at home. That the existence of a large class drawing their incomes from foreign investments does not conduce to national welfare so much as if the

capital employed was stimulating home manufactures, is proved, if proof were needed, by certain significant statistics. Towards the close of the eighteenth century there were more people in Holland who lived in idleness on their incomes than in any other country in the world. While the poor were crying for bread or employment, millions of Dutch gold went abroad annually to pay for foreign products which could have been easily supplied by home industry, While taxation increased, poverty amongst the masses became more acute, the death-rate increased, the birth-rate decreased. Leyden, previous to De Witt's time, was one of the most prosperous cities of Holland, but its population fell from 100,000 to less than 30,000, and, by the year 1808, in Amsterdam, formerly known as one of the richest cities of the world, one-half of the inhabitants lived entirely or partly on alms.¹

With the fall of prosperity resulting from this decay of national industries there followed that strange lowering of self-respecting spirit which usually seems to precede the break-up of nations. Widespread apathy shed its evil influence over the land, the sacred name of liberty was not to be outraged by obliging the youth of the country to enrol themselves for its defence ; they shirked their patriotic duty when danger threatened, leaving the army deplorably inadequate to protect commerce or

¹ RICHESSE DE LA HOLLANDE, 1778.

territory. Even the early genius and intelligence of the Dutch showed visible signs of decay, for their commerce and other occupations were gradually usurped by more active and intelligent foreigners.

The evil day was to come at last. The French under Louis XIV. were poor, predatory, covetous, and warlike, the Dutch had allowed themselves to become weak, but they had magnificent ports and waterways, and they had a trade which entered strongly into competition with that of France. A war on the part of France promised her foreign possessions, wealth, and military glory, therefore Louis commenced preparations for an invasion when, as may be supposed, the Dutch were very much unprepared. It is true that within a few years previously their fleet had been improved under the care of De Ruyter, one of their best admirals, but their army was to a great extent on paper. Devotion to their country and her true interests had ceased to exist as a practical force amongst the Dutch youth, the military force was a sham, and what there was of it was recruited from the dregs of the slums and by foreigners.

Pretexts for war can always be manufactured. Louis accused the Dutch of ingratitude, after the material aid which they had received from France against Spain in their war of independence. Their policy was, he said, treacherous; and he complained of what he called the insupportable vanity of his former allies. A secret offensive alliance was then

adroitly concluded by court intrigue with Charles II., King of England, and all being ready, a French army, including, one is ashamed to say, an English contingent, marched on the Dutch frontiers and invaded the territory in May 1672. There was great consternation in the Netherlands when it was realised that the invasion was an accomplished fact, for the country, as we have seen, was lamentably unready for war; even the most ordinary means to ensure efficient national defence had been neglected. The fortresses had not been kept in proper repair, the magazines had but very insufficient supplies of ammunition, the provision stores were partially depleted, and what remained had deteriorated by age. From motives of economy the army had been neglected, its human material was very poor, its weakness constituted a national danger. In precipitation and confusion the government tried to augment the military forces from the rabble of the towns, as the manhood of the country apparently did not rise to the occasion, but a rabble, as other people have also found out, cannot be converted into trained soldiers in a few days. The Dutch people awoke from their long-continued lethargy to find that they were defenceless.

Not only were they defenceless, but they considered they had been tricked and deceived. Their leaders had promised them prosperity, liberty, immunity from foreign attacks, comfort and well-being for the masses. These very masses who

were to benefit so largely according to the promises made to them were now impoverished, workless, badly fed or starving, because their means of livelihood represented by their national industries had been crippled, or completely extinguished, and driven to other shores. The army was useless; and in a sudden crisis, with the enemy at the gates, the demagogue leaders who had spoken so confidently seemed to lose their heads and wasted time in futile discussions.

In the meantime Cornelius de Witt, the brother of John de Witt the statesman, had been imprisoned at The Hague on a probably baseless charge of trying to contrive the death of William Prince of Orange, who had been called upon to assume supreme control of the national defences. John de Witt had gone to visit his brother at an unfortunate moment when popular excitement was at fever height, and angry groups clustered in the streets. There are times when deception practised on men rouses them more than even pecuniary loss; the Dutch considered rightly or wrongly that they were victims of deception, they were undoubtedly menaced by great danger; they had incurred national ruin, and were exasperated. With ignoble and vindictive popular fury the mob made an onslaught on the prison, smashed the doors open, dragged Cornelius de Witt and his brother (once the idol of the trading classes) into the streets, and there slaughtered them.

In a few weeks the greater portion of the Netherlands was overrun with little resistance by French troops. Trade came almost to a standstill, industry was paralysed, and so was the ordinary intelligence of the people, who were stunned by the suddenness of a catastrophe for which they were so absolutely unprepared, and who found themselves completely at the mercy of the invaders. French troops now patrolled the Dutch towns, the sharp words of command from French officers resounded through the streets, and Dutch homes, primitive, Puritan and Lutheran, had to open their doors to victorious French officers and soldiers who were billeted on them, and who made themselves more than quite at home. Terrible indeed was the ordeal through which the Dutch passed as a penalty for their past apathy and neglect. Ultimately a frantic appeal for aid was made to the neighbouring German princes. The assistance asked for was granted, but the war languished on until 1678, when the French withdrew and the Netherlands were free. Yet the country lay prostrate and ruined, it had been devastated by foreign armies, its trade and industries were crushed, and it was loaded with debt owing to the cost of the war.

How lamentable and lasting were the effects of the blow suffered by the Dutch is clearly shown by their subsequent history. Being permanently weakened they were unable to defend themselves

against foreign aggression. In a disastrous war against England, 1780-83, they lost the greater portion of their foreign possessions. In 1787 a Prussian army of 20,000 men successfully invaded the Netherlands. Immediately after the revolution in France the Dutch had to endure once more the horrors of a French military occupation, and were dragooned into abject submission, besides being obliged to pay a war indemnity of a hundred million florins. Napoleon formed the country into a Kingdom, strictly under French dictation and military occupation. The very people who, in the name of liberty, had refused to submit to military obligations when the country was in peril, were now obliged to submit to them at the command of their victors, and to enrol a large army to fight for them. On the demand of France the Dutch were compelled to admit her products duty free into the Netherlands, Dutch industries being thus under-sold in the Dutchman's country, but Dutch products were rigorously excluded from France. That is to say, in accordance with a thoroughly selfish policy of an arbitrary dominant power, the Netherlands were obliged to carry out a one-sided fiscal system, which the people of our United Kingdom have adopted and still adhere to, of their own free will. In both cases the results were the same, lasting injury to once flourishing national industries and the impoverishment of the working classes. A stupid adherence to palpably false

principles has ruined many nationalities, amongst them the Dutch, who thus present a warning to nations not yet ruined, it is true, but travelling towards national catastrophe.

This tragic story is well told in *THE RISE AND DECLINE OF THE NETHERLANDS*, published by Mr. Ellis Barker in 1906. The work is well worth the attention of all Englishmen who are interested in the shaping of their country's policy at a period when there is something like a national crisis. Mr. Ellis Barker traces the rise of the Dutch to wealth and power as due to certain solid qualities, chiefly springing from an ancestral life of struggle and hardship, which called forth the continual exercise of those qualities. We see that a deterioration of the Dutch character set in, and that national collapse was marked by the decay of the country's industries. The author shows clearly how the history of the Netherlands is a narrative of missed opportunities which, if only utilised, would have made and kept the country one of the foremost in the world. Her downfall must be attributed to the errors of politicians, and to the adoption of a policy considered as sound, but which was actually represented by follies and fallacies, believed in and adhered to until too late. The present position of the Netherlands has perhaps been accurately described by Mr. Barker in a paragraph which I quote from one of the chapters of his work :—

“The Netherlands, which once occupied a position in the world greater than that held at present by Great Britain, have declined to insignificance, and Holland may disappear as an independent State. She may, and possibly will, become absorbed by Germany,¹ and it is conceivable that in a century or two the Dutch language will be a dead language known only to a few philologists. Since steam and electricity have abolished space, the time of great nations has arrived. The Netherlands have a past, but no future.”

At the same time it may be said that the Dutch of to-day have learned and profited by the experience of the past. The old qualities which made the nation of bygone days so rich and powerful are rapidly re-asserting themselves. The Dutch are now industrious and thrifty, agriculture is again encouraged, trade is reviving, the masses are well educated, wealth is increasing, and is besides well diffused. Should Mr. Ellis Barker's surmise prove correct, and should Holland in future times only continue to exist under a foreign flag, this will not in itself prevent the country remaining still rich and prosperous. The greatest avenues to success would still be open to the Dutchman, and his excellent moral and mental qualities will always continue to have the scope his great natural genius deserves.

¹ See “The Absorption of Holland by Germany,” in NINETEENTH CENTURY AND AFTER, July 1906. By Ellis Barker.

CHAPTER V

THE VOICE OF CASSANDRA

Causes of national decay—Symptoms in Great Britain—Conditions of national security—Industry and employment—Foreign policy—Military obligations—Democracy and its responsibilities—Colonial preference and Imperial union—Danger of delay.

IN the preceding pages I have treated of the collapse and downfall of four once great States or nationalities, Vijianagar, Rome, Spain, and the Netherlands. Each of these, once powerful and wealthy, declined from much the same causes, accompanied by the same general symptoms. In fact history demonstrates that the stories of the wreck of empires and of nations run on significantly parallel lines, the provoking causes being much the same in each case. It might be well, therefore, to examine the sources from which invariably spring such baneful influences.

It would seem that great and long-continued prosperity tends at last to produce social conditions which invite a species of gradual deterioration or dry-rot, so to speak, in national character. This must naturally be the case when daily observation

shows that want is the driving force of human effort, for self-discipline, self-control, self-reliance, resolution, and courage are acquired qualities which gradually develop in those who are obliged by force of circumstances to act for themselves. The laws regulating the lives and natures of such men bring forward the energies which are best calculated to make them successful in the great battle of life. That the converse of these conditions has the opposite effect was aptly pointed out by Herodotus when he wrote: "It is the settled appointment of Nature that soft soils should breed soft men, and that the same land should never be famous for the excellence of its fruits and the vigour of its inhabitants."

If a soft, luxurious climate and a richly productive soil are calculated to induce listlessness, apathy, deficiency of energy, and foresight, they are not the only conditions tending to evolve the like retrograde qualities. Similar characteristics may develop in a more rigorous climate and on a far less fruitful soil wherever the masses have grown unaccustomed to the goad of want as a stimulus to exertion. Perhaps it may be said that in Great Britain the upper and upper middle classes have resisted the insidious effects of long-continued wealth and luxury more than would those of other races had they been subject to like influences. The love of field sports, outdoor amusements, and country life so common to the leisured of the

British race, the partiality for travel, adventure, and exploration, all springing from an abundant natural vitality, have had a wholesome and steadying effect on the character. In addition to this, the absence of an unduly strict caste principle, thus favouring marriage between members of the upper and the active, successful, energetic middle classes, has greatly assisted in counteracting any tendency to degeneration amongst the higher sections of society.

That there should appear occasional instances of failure in a large class must be expected, seeing that no social order is free from certain worthless types; at the same time it may be considered that, chiefly owing to the causes I have mentioned, those forming the leisured, cultured, wealthy and aristocratic divisions of British society do not as a body evince signs of physical degeneracy. Admitting this postulate regarding what are known as the classes, can the same be said referring to the masses, constituting, be it remembered, the bulk of our population? The following questions besides are worth considering: Can it be said that the present day sees no change and deterioration in the once powerful force of average British character, taking all classes together? Are we inclining towards national decadence or towards national strength? Are we not gradually loosening the ties which still bind together a magnificent empire, and is the system we now pursue the best calculated

to form a strong, governing, Imperial race? Do not our aristocracy and professional classes miss something of the discipline, the moral stamina, produced in Continental nations by the institution of universal military service?

There are certain points taught by the experience of history which are so important that they cannot be regarded too carefully. Amongst the chief of these are the following. It is essential to the stability of a nation that it should keep up an army and navy commensurate with the nation's wealth and the extent of its possessions. International understandings, *ententes cordiales*, or even the most solemn treaties, are only binding up to the point where any Power, being a party to such, acquires an interest in infringing them and the strength to do so. Unfortunately, politics take little account of either honour or truth, and nothing of sentiment; consequently nations which are wealthy but feeble never permanently retain their wealth in the presence of neighbours which are warlike, powerful, and poor. Communities of men will always allege justification for taking what they want, and doing what suits their purpose. The principles alone of honour, honesty, good faith, justice, etc., may sometimes restrain individuals, communities rarely, governments never.

The youth of every school or college, supported or partially supported by government, should be carefully taught that the first duty of a citizen is to

learn how to defend his country in case of danger to his country, *i.e.* danger to his own life, liberty, or property. Therefore military training in government schools ought to be as much a matter of course as learning how to read and write.

It should be carefully remembered that coin is not real wealth, it is only a token of value; the true wealth of a country lies in its productive industries, far more than in even a vast income derived from foreign investments. The former create home wealth and its well diffused circulation, the latter circulating abroad stimulates the industries of foreign competitors and trade rivals. It follows, therefore, that native industries and manufactures ought to be more carefully fostered and encouraged, they should be closely watched, and every care is requisite that they should not leave the country once having become established.

True national prosperity is combined with full employment for the working classes. Therefore the State should ensure that the best technical education should be at the disposal of board school children showing special aptitude, thus essentially fitting the future workers for the careers best adapted to them in their country's industries. By this means would children receive an education equipping them for future successful careers, instead of unfitting them for their positions in life as is so much the case at present.

There are certain distinct signs which, hovering

on the political horizon like birds of ill-omen, usually presage the decay or downfall of nations. When in outlying portions of an empire seditious feeling grows apace, at last becoming permanent, when respect for and confidence in the ruling race are gradually lost, when officials in distant possessions are timid in doing their duty because effective support is not accorded by a faction-ridden home government at a time when strong measures are called for, then the ties which bind together different races professing diverse creeds are slackened to the extreme danger-point. In fact such symptoms are fore-warnings that the sceptre of power is about to pass from hands too weak to sustain it, and the ominous signs require careful attention. When foreign policy is timid and vacillating, when international difficulties are arranged by what are called graceful concessions and losing compromises, by temporising and procrastination, these are fatal signs; such policy too surely invites aggression, and only postpones the evil day.

When a nation owning great wealth, having widespread interests and vast territories, permits its national defences to become inadequate to the protection of those interests, their security must be seriously endangered. When a nation sheltering itself under the much-abused phrase, liberty of the subject, refuses to institute general military service while in the presence of other nations doing it with

intensity and preparing for instant aggression, the backward nation, to speak plainly, must have sunk into a state of apathy and degeneration, pointing to a lamentable decay of national spirit. It is preparing a sad future for itself; for in time, probably a short time, it must expect conquest, dismemberment, perhaps even serfdom itself.

When once flourishing industries fly from the country, when the best portions of the working population emigrate, carrying their energies with them, when, while land is going out of cultivation, able-bodied men cluster in hungry multitudes demanding food and employment, it is but natural to suppose that there must be a multitude of mischievous false principles at work. They call loudly for amendment, while there is yet time, if national catastrophe is to be averted.

For better or for worse, as the case may be, the governing power of the United Kingdom has drifted into the hands of a democracy. This power is now represented by an electorate of more than 7,500,000 voters, about three-fourths of whom are working men, who are no doubt up to a certain point patriotic, and as a body they retain certain very sterling qualities. At the same time they have neither the leisure nor even perhaps the inclination to make a thorough study of politics; usually their political education appears to consist of little more than reading short, plain-typed leaflets, which represent every shade of sentiment on public

questions. Such men are apt to accept simple allegations as proved facts ; they are impulsive, apt to be led away by gusts of popular feeling ; very prone besides to regard matters strictly from their own stand-point of self-interest, or it may be a very erroneously supposed self-interest. Naturally such men display a strong tendency to be led by the better-educated, noisy, but plausible demagogue who, in his turn, is frequently guided more by his own narrow personal or party interests than by far-seeing patriotic sentiment.

On the other hand, we have amongst our fellow-citizens shrewd, far-seeing, and politically well-educated men, who, by no means blind to the real circumstances of our present position, declare we are veering to a point which may involve a crisis as dangerous, or more so, as any in our past history. The real peril which menaces us lies in the fact that we are face to face with questions of such importance as to jeopardise the welfare or even the safety of the Empire. For their consideration cool judgment and wise decision are required ; but the majority of the electorate is composed of men, a large portion, if not the bulk, of whom do not understand, and do not even pretend to understand, the very questions on which they are called to exercise their judgment and to record their votes.¹

¹ Speaking of the rise of the democracy to power, Professor Henry Jones has the following admirable passage in his article, "The

A review of our political and social position might be useful in determining whether or not we are pursuing the most correct course for maintaining the stability of our Empire in general, and the prosperity of the United Kingdom in particular.

On 6th October 1903, Mr. Chamberlain delivered a speech at St. Andrew's Hall, Glasgow, on the subject of a preferential tariff for the Colonies. He spoke long and he spoke well, but there was one particular point in his remarks, when speaking of his experience with colonial public men, which merits special attention, and I quote his precise words :—

“I have been in communication with many of the men—statesmen, orators, writers—distinguished in our Colonies. I have tried to understand them, and I think I do understand them, and I say that none of them desire separation. There are none
Ethical Demand of the Present Political Situation,” in the *Hibbert Journal* for April 1910 :—

“We desire that its will should be an enlightened will ; for on that, we say, our destiny depends. We would elicit its best mind. But we endeavour to do so by means which are pitifully inadequate, and calculated to bring out not the best but the worst. During a few weeks before the election, the people are deluged with hasty orations, delivered by tired men with husky voices to crowded and passionate gatherings, or in the open air at the breakfast and dinner intervals ; and the appeal is to passion and prejudice. Is there no alternative to this heartless manipulation of popular impulse ?”

Certainly the electoral machinery demands to be overhauled and readjusted. A system like that of Proportional Representation, which offers a prospect of introducing into the House of Commons an effective body of members who are not slaves to the party system, could hardly be other than a great gain to English political life.

of them who are not loyal to this idea of Empire which they say they wish us to accept more fully in the future; but I have found none who do not believe that our present colonial relations cannot be permanent. We must either draw closer or we shall drift apart."

For a considerable time subsequent to these remarks Mr. Chamberlain continued to warn his countrymen that the sands were running out, and that if a deaf ear were turned to proposals for preferential treatment, the Colonies would undoubtedly conclude with foreign Powers commercial treaties which we so unwisely refused to consider.

In April 1907 the Colonial Conference assembled in London, and made what may be justly considered the greatest opportunity which had ever been presented to any nation by another people. The Colonials offered a large preferential tariff in their imports from us on condition that we should reciprocate and give them preference in their exports of food to the British Isles. The argument in favour of our accepting the proposal was enormous. It meant consolidation of the Empire, and an effectual bar to the component portions drifting apart. It meant fastening and ensuring the loyalty of our fellow-subjects in the Colonies, and in consequence of the proposed preference to be given to our manufactures, our languishing industries would receive a very

effective stimulus. Nor was this all. The population of the Colonies represented at the conference amounts to about 13,000,000, but is rapidly increasing, and most probably, long before this generation will have passed away, must stand at 50,000,000.

These present advantages, great as they would have been, must have sunk into insignificance before the enormous wealth and the vast accession of Imperial power which would in the future have accrued to us had we accepted the proposals of our cousins across the seas. A crisis had arrived in our national history obliging us to take one of two paths, either to go forward or to go back. We chose retrogression, and selected that which tended to disintegration of the Empire. In adherence to the antiquated principles of so-called Free Trade, which is so manifestly unsuited to our present political and social condition, we rejected the magnificent gift with all its rich collateral benefits, and we banged the door in the face of the colonists.

The result which had been so distinctly foreseen came to pass. Only a few days before the conclusion of the Imperial Conference Sir Richard Cartwright, then acting as Prime Minister of Canada in the absence of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, stated plainly that should Colonial Preference be refused by the British Government, communications would be at once opened with other nations. As

a fact, when the Conference concluded, negotiations were at once commenced with the French Government by two Canadian ministers, Mr. Fielding and Mr. Brodeur, an arrangement as to Preference quite satisfactory to the Governments of Canada and of France was arrived at after some discussion, and the French Senate has ratified the treaty.

Behind our refusal to accord Colonial Preference was simply the party cry of "dear food," yet the fear of raising the price of the loaf seems to have been highly chimerical. When in 1902 a duty of one shilling per quarter was imposed on wheat, the price of bread fell slightly instead of rising, but it rose the following year when the duty was taken off. Let us suppose, however, that a duty of two shillings per quarter was placed on foreign wheat, and let us suppose that against our former experience, bread rose in price exactly in proportion to the amount of duty imposed, the difference in that case would come to less than one farthing in the price of the quartern loaf. On the other hand, the preference given to our manufactures by the Colonies would stimulate our home industries to such an extent as to create a wide and rapidly increasing market, followed by steady, well-paid employment. Springing from this, the well-diffused prosperity amongst the working classes would stand in striking relief against the supposed increased price of the quartern loaf by a fraction of a farthing. There is little doubt that in time, it

may be hoped in a short time, the British working-class electorate will view the subject of Colonial Preference in its true and in its beneficial aspect to themselves; but here a great danger lurks in delay. The remainder of the Colonies may follow the example of Canada, and at any time negotiations may be opened up with other nations. Once trade reciprocity treaties have been ratified, enormous financial interests must naturally spring up, and their existence may prove an effectual barrier to anything like a revision in our favour. Such a condition of things, which may come into effect in the near future, and when too late to find a remedy, may yet be numbered amongst the most lamentable of the lost opportunities in the history of the British race.

CHAPTER VI

THE LEAKAGE OF BRITISH WEALTH

Character of the Anglo-Celtic people—Is it retaining its vitality?—Dependence for food on foreign countries—Decay of agriculture—Pauperism and unemployment—Difficulty of restoring vanished industries—Dumping and its results—Flight of British industries—Advantages and disadvantages of dumped imports—Manifest unsoundness of our present economics.

WHAT is that great underlying principle which has conduced so powerfully to the formation of the Anglo-Celtic¹ character, and to the extraordinary success of the race throughout the most distant lands? It is a question which has often presented itself to thinking men of other countries in Europe. The British flag waves over more than one-fifth of the habitable globe, one-fourth of the human race acknowledge the sway of the British Monarch, more than one hundred princes render him allegiance. The English language is spoken by more people than that of any other race, it bids

¹The common term, "Anglo-Saxon," which implies that the British people are a compound of two Teutonic tribes, answers to no historical reality. I prefer the term "Anglo-Celtic," which does express the most fundamental and significant truth about the racial composition of the people of these islands.

fair to become at some time the speech of the globe, and about one-half of the world's ocean shipping trade is yet in British hands.

The rise of the British Empire, as such, may be said to date from 1757, when Clive, though opposed by overwhelming numbers, in a single battle with only one British regiment and a handful of natives, gained a vantage ground which resulted in India passing under the rule of England. From that time forth there has been a steady increase of fresh territory, and Englishmen are able to proclaim with truth that the sun never sets on their world-wide possessions. The building up of such an Empire, mainly within about one hundred and fifty years, could not have been effected without the operation of some extraordinary force of character. Great tenacity of purpose, courage, fortitude, self-sacrifice, foresight, capacity for endurance, the exercise of shrewd common sense, love of enterprise, the spirit of adventure, and that peculiarly British attribute, unreadiness to admit defeat, these are doubtless the qualities which have chiefly contributed to national success. They have enabled Englishmen to conquer, and then to govern, a *colluvies gentium* more varied and more numerous than has ever before been united under the sway of any single Power.

These are no doubt great facts, but do not other facts indicate that our power and prosperity may not prove permanent? Are the English

people now displaying the same brilliant qualities by which their forefathers acquired such an imposing Empire, and is that Empire acquiring stability? Is the British force of character retaining its vitality? Many of the most intelligent and far-seeing of our own countrymen, especially from the Colonies, strongly and publicly assert the contrary. The well-educated foreigner residing in England, while studying her present conditions, says the same, and the opinion of both is corroborated by facts which I imagine cannot be gainsaid.

The United Kingdom is at present paying close on £200,000,000 a year¹ for imported food-stuffs alone, of a kind which could be produced at home, yet land is going out of cultivation steadily, tens of thousands of able-bodied men complain of want of work, and the country roads are infested by human weeds in the shape of lazy tramps. With all this, cultivators complain of not being able to get labour except at wages which render farming with profit almost impossible. The decline of British agriculture and the resulting evils, as tending to the degeneracy of the rural population, are illustrated in a very cogent manner by one significant fact alone. The total population of agricultural labourers in England and Wales during 1851 was, according to the fiscal Blue-Book, 1,904,687, but by 1901 it had diminished to 988,340, showing a

¹Dutiable foods and drinks are excluded. See STATISTICAL ABSTRACT FOR THE UNITED KINGDOM, August 1909 (Cd. 4805).

total decrease of 916,347. In 1851 the total population of England and Wales was 17,927,609, but the percentage of agricultural labourers to the total population was 11·2. In 1901 the total population of England and Wales was, 32,527,823, but the percentage of agricultural labour had dropped to 3·5. It stands to reason there must be something very faulty in the conditions of English agriculture when such an extraordinary falling off in employment of labour is apparent.¹

When Arthur Young made his tour through France, just previous to the outbreak of the Revolution, he placed his experiences on record. He saw a bankrupt farming class, a discontented, poverty-stricken peasantry, the industries of the country decadent, the fields were scenes of pitiable mismanagement. All the elements of speedy national collapse were present; nothing could avert it except a very drastic and radical change in conditions.

Let us suppose that a well-educated German from one of his country's universities, in which he had previously acquired a thorough knowledge of English, were to visit this country for the first time, his impressions, if placed on record, might likewise contain some salutary warnings.

Unpalatable though his strictures might be, if

¹ It is worth noticing in this connexion that the proportion of the population engaged in agriculture and forestry is in Germany about 35 per cent., in Great Britain only 8 per cent. See STATISCHES JAHRBUCH FÜR DAS DEUTSCHE REICH, 1909.

translated and published in England, they would perhaps attract the attention of the most enlightened of our countrymen, and undoubtedly the following questions would arise: "Do not these criticisms represent actual facts? Do not these facts indicate national decadence or possible speedy disaster?" Widespread lethargy, the outcome of long-continued prosperity, has before this taken possession of races once strong, vigorous, intelligent, and has ruined them. Would it not be well for us to shake off the national lethargy which is now creeping over us, and to grapple with evils, some of which affect us now, and others which are casting their shadows before?

The decay of agricultural industry is well illustrated in the following tabular statement published by the Tariff Reform League.¹

AGRICULTURE.

	Average.		Decline.
	1871-75.	1907.	
	Acres.	Acres.	Per cent.
Acreage under wheat	3,737,000	1,665,000	55
All corn crops	11,544,000	8,317,000	28
Green crops	5,073,000	3,901,000	23
Flax	136,000	60,000	56
Hops	64,000	45,000	30

¹ SPEAKERS' HANDBOOK (published by Tariff Reform League), p. 151, 5th edition.

Not many years ago agriculture was a thriving industry. The owner of the soil, the farmer, and the labourer, could all live comfortably off the land. Now, except in a few favoured places, the industry is ruined, it is rapidly going from bad to worse, and immense tracts of excellent corn-growing land are lying uncultivated.

Take also the following:—

Since agricultural land employs from twice to four times the labour necessary for pasture land, the diminution in our crops means that there is no work and no wage for hundreds of thousands who would otherwise be employed on corn-growing land in ploughing, harrowing, rolling, drilling, hoeing, reaping, loading, stacking, and thatching.

It is estimated that from eight hundred to one thousand millions of agricultural capital has been lost in the last twenty-five years,¹ while in innumerable cases farmers have gone bankrupt, and have had to leave farms which have been held by their families for generations past.

On one point it would be well the nation should understand its ever-present peril, but unfortunately the point is not clearly recognised by the nation at large. The Anglo-Celtic people are now dependent for four-fifths of their food supply from abroad, yet for this they are not mainly dependent upon their colonies, but upon foreign and conceivably hostile countries. In case of a future

¹ SPEAKERS' HANDBOOK, 1908.

European combination against Great Britain (and that Power was by no means free from the danger of such during the last ten years), from what source, and how, do the inhabitants expect to receive their food supply?

In 1897 the Royal Commission on agriculture issued a report in which calculations were given which showed that the capital value of the land in the United Kingdom, which in 1875 was estimated at £2,007,000,000, had fallen in 1894 to £1,001,000,000, a drop of over £1,000,000,000 in twenty years, and this fall still continues.

Mr. Chamberlain stated in his speech at Welbeck, in August 1904, that the live stock of the country had on the whole diminished by something like two million head. He also mentioned that the number of people cultivating the land had decreased by six hundred thousand during the previous thirty years; but going back for fifty years, it had decreased by something like a million.

It is sometimes argued that the diminution of agricultural employment merely implies a change in the character of work, that the classes which formerly laboured on the soil now crowd into the towns and cities, and relinquishing one sphere of activity, engage in productive industries of another kind. To a certain extent this is true, as for several years there has been a marked rural exodus, and in one generation masses of what were formerly healthy country people are now repre-

sented by a very low type slum population. So far, then, as the physique of the working classes is concerned, the change is responsible for palpable and widespread deterioration, no light matter when it affects such a large proportion of the British race; but close scrutiny of the subject must raise serious doubts as to whether there is a commensurate gain in the industries connected with the factory and the workshop. The reports published in the best informed English journals are certainly not very encouraging.

It is unquestionable that the wealth of Great Britain is still immense, but it is owned by proportionately a few, and owing to want of proper diffusion, large masses do not experience its beneficial effects.¹ It is not surprising therefore that about 12,000,000 of persons in Great Britain are underfed and on the verge of hunger, that the country supports nearly 2,000,000 of paupers, the cost of these amounting to over £25,000,000 per annum,² and that about 500,000 British workers, unionists and non-unionists, represent the total of chronically unemployed industrial workers in Great Britain.³

¹ See p. 13, *note*.

² The latest figures are: in and out-door paupers in the United Kingdom, 1,161,402, costing in relief (1908) £17,102,607. To these must be added 647,494 old age pensioners costing, it is estimated, at least £9,000,000. No account is taken of the vast sums spent in private charity for the relief of destitution.

³ *SPEAKERS' HANDBOOK*, 2nd edition, p. 205. The Board of

Mr. Cobden promised his countrymen that, should they adopt his views, prosperity, wealth, full employment, unrivalled industrial success, great agricultural prosperity, and all that tends to make a nation contented and happy, would follow. Mr. Cobden's predictions might have possibly proved correct were it not that they were founded on a false assumption, namely that in five years from the time of the adoption of his principles, the other nations of Europe would also adopt them. This, however, is precisely what they have not done, for, on the contrary, they have built up high tariff walls, by which, assisted by bounties and other measures, they are often able to place their surplus goods in the United Kingdom below cost price. With this the British trader cannot possibly compete.

For now about sixty years the Cobdenite theories have been accepted, and as a result agriculture is becoming a bankrupt industry, others are vanishing or departing for foreign lands, the middle and lower classes complain of shrinking incomes, bad trade, want of employment, tens of thousands of intelligent artisans and workers are emigrating to protectionist countries, while tens of thousands of aliens, often of a very low type, are crowding into England, taking the place of emigrants of English stock.

Suicide is increasing in proportion to the

Trade Blue-Book, Cd. 4954, for 1909, gives 8.65 per cent. as the figure for unemployment in 1908, the highest since 1886.

population; insanity is also increasing rapidly. The birth-rate is decreasing. The virile peasantry of other days, leading a healthy country life, are rapidly diminishing in numbers, and masses of the modern English, huddled together in town purlieus, are producing a race of physical degenerates and mental defectives.¹

Already some very ominous symptoms are making themselves conspicuous; crowds of half-starved, half-idle, desultory workers cluster in the streets and tramp the roads, rightly discontented with the existing order of things, and ever ready to listen to the voice of the sedition-monger and the anarchist.

Was Free Trade policy intended to produce these results, and how do they fulfil Mr. Cobden's promises? The tariff reformers can hardly adduce a better object-lesson in defence of their views than by comparing the glowing forecasts of that statesman with the conditions of English life after his theories have been accepted for sixty years.

Mr. W. R. Lawson published in 1904 a work entitled *BRITISH ECONOMICS*. It is replete with sound argument and information, and might well appeal to Englishmen of every shade of politics, for it throws much light on the fiscal problem. In

¹ In Dr. Albert Wilson's able work, *EDUCATION, PERSONALITY, AND CRIME*, the singular and ominous fact is noted, that records show the typical English pulse to have become in the last fifty years asthenic in character (p. 2).

this publication Mr. Lawson presents one fact which merits special attention. As the United Kingdom does not produce sufficient food for its own people, it follows that every addition to the population must be fed from abroad, but it is estimated that next census will find at least four million more inhabitants in the British Islands than there were in 1901. If the cost of their food coming from abroad be fixed at the low estimate of eight pounds per head per annum, it must amount to thirty-two millions sterling. The food will probably cost much more, but even on the former estimate the addition of thirty-two millions sterling every ten years, and the increasing disproportion between our native means of subsistence and the population to be fed, must greatly accentuate the difficulties in which we should find ourselves in case our foreign food supplies were interfered with by war or otherwise.

The Tariff Reform League are doing excellent and patriotic work, for they are educating the British voter to understand how vitally his interests are affected by the fiscal question. It admits of little doubt that the views of the League will be eventually adopted, but every year of delay involves great present loss and future danger.¹

¹ May I here call attention to the best summary I know, in a short space, of the case for a revision of our fiscal policy? It is contained in Mr. F. Francis's NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE, OR A COMMONSENSE POLICY! (Constable & Co., 1909).

It is clear that in localities where land has gone out of cultivation both time and expense are required to bring it back to its former state. Labourers' cottages must be built, farm-offices constructed or repaired, fresh utensils and machinery purchased, men and women formerly unused to agriculture have to be instructed ; as a consequence, the longer the rural exodus continues, the more difficult will it become to re-establish rural occupations. The same difficulty must confront the British people in attempting to revive their vanished or decaying crafts. Each of these represents some special description of work, often of a complicated character, in which efficiency can only be attained after considerable practice. During the last thirty-five years large numbers of skilled English workmen have been thrown out of employment. Many have emigrated, some have died off, some have taken up other pursuits. Of course, the imposition of a reasonable tariff on foreign manufactures would at once bring quantities of workmen to British factories, and workshops would again be busy, but these industrial recruits would require certain periods of instruction before full efficiency were attained. In few cases can the revival of a decadent craft be accomplished at once, and it should be remembered that in the last twenty years no new industry of importance has been started in Free Trade England.

One of the chief concomitant disadvantages of

Free Trade as regards England is as follows. The manufacturers of the United States and different countries of Europe sometimes find that they have a large quantity of their wares on hand which cannot be sold at the normal price, this taking place at the ever-recurring periods of over-production. The proprietors generally find also that in the long run it pays better to dump their goods in Free Trade England than to keep them in stock, although the sale price may be actually lower than the cost of manufacture. This process, popularly called "dumping," injures the British producer by driving his goods out of the market; he is even sometimes obliged to close his factory or workshop, and then the industry passes *pro tanto* into the hands of the foreigner, who can recoup himself in the near future. The following facts, taken from a letter by Mr. G. E. Holland, which appeared in the *Standard* of November 6, 1905, afford some striking illustrations of the manner in which British industries suffer by foreign competition:—

"*January 23.*—Paper works shut, men discharged through dumping and free imports.

"*April 13.*—Galashiels Chamber of Commerce reports: Germahy's increased duty on hosiery 30 per cent.; asks Government to try and get reduction.

"*June 17.*—Tanning driven out of Bermondsey on account of foreign competition and bad method of tanning.

"*July 16.*—Meeting of East Kent hop growers. Acreage of hops decreased by 24,000 acres since 1878, involving loss of wages alone of £500,000 per annum. Foreign hops admitted duty free. Our hops taxed in Germany, France, and United States 7s. 1d. to 34s. per cwt.

"*September 16.*—Lynn oil cake mills ceased operation because of competition from Russia, from whence large quantities of cheap and inferior cakes are imported into Lynn. At Norwich the Palace Paper Mills closing, the Germans dumped down straw boards, and undersold the company 10s. per ton.

"*September 17.*—On the Thames from Oxford to Reading, a distance of forty miles, all the flour mills are shut up with one exception.

"Thus, this year, our paper trade, our tanning trade, our hosiery trade, and oil-cake trade are damaged and threatened with absolute ruin, men turned out of employment, and factories idle, and the foreigner reaps the benefit.

"Our big shops in London are crowded with foreign-made stuff—furniture, carpets, pianos, curtains, etc., from France, Austria, the States, Italy, Belgium, Norway, and Switzerland, all admitted duty free. At the same moment wood-work (manufactured here) has a duty of 42½ per cent. in New York. In the cheap building line also there are hardly any goods used of British make—doors, windows, skirtings, floors, locks, bolts, and everything used in building a house come into this country duty free.

"In speaking of the cry of the small loaf, the

writer went on to observe: 'I make bold to say almost every workman at present has three weeks' slack time (or is out of work) in the course of the year. Put his wages at the modest sum of 30s. a week, he loses £4, 10s. If he had to pay a half more for his loaf, and he consumes eight in the course of the week, he pays 17s. 4d., and if foreign manufacturers were taxed he would get constant work. Which man has the best position—a man who sticks to our so-called Free Trade and has nothing and is unemployed, or the man who has paid his 17s. 6d. and has work and has £3, 12s. 8d. in his pocket?'"

In the early part of 1905 a volume of the Tariff Commission report dealing with the silk industry was published. Some of the statements, such as the following, are instructive:—

"My own firm," says a Macclesfield manufacturer, "had four throwing mills at work twenty years ago employing 1200 hands. To-day we have closed our mills and broken up the machinery, and we do not employ one hand."

The report goes on to say: "Within twenty miles of Nottingham there were twenty years ago twenty-two throwing mills, one firm alone employing 1700. To-day there are only three mills, and not one-third of the machinery of these going. In Derby and the locality 2400 people used to be employed; there are now only 200. In 1852 from 20,000 to 25,000 people were employed in silk manufacture within a radius of fifteen miles of Manchester; there is only one firm left now in that district, and it employs from 200 to 300 workers. One

Manchester firm used to employ 2000 weavers; the firm and the weavers have totally disappeared.

“The change in the London branches of the industry is equally disastrous. There were more than 30,000 looms weaving silk in Spitalfields in 1860; to-day there are not 200.”

The same story is told of woven silks. The free importation of fabric gloves has brought about not only serious loss to the workpeople, but almost ruin, as most of the machinery is standing idle at the present time. One manufacturer stated: “We calculated the loss of wages to the workpeople in 1903 in our firm alone would be about £16,000 to £18,000.”

“In the year (1860) that saw the signature of the French Treaty removing the silk duty, the silk ribbon industry in Coventry alone employed 28,000, out of a total population of 42,000, and 2,300,000 yards of ribbon were produced per week. To-day the industry is nearing extinction, and for the last ten years one Coventry man has made a comfortable living by following the occupation of a loom wrecker.”¹

London in 1824 contained 24,000 looms, and 60,000 operatives were employed in weaving silk. It is said that only about 1000 looms are at work to-day.²

¹ THE SPEAKERS' HANDBOOK (1st edition), published at 7 Victoria Street, S.W.

² *Ibid.*

One need not go very far back to recall the time when 20,000 looms were employed in the Manchester district, but the silk industry in Manchester is to-day practically extinguished.¹

In 1874, in the county of Cheshire, there were nearly 12,000 artisans employed in silk manufacturing. To-day there are not more than 4000, and at least a third of the number, it is said, are engaged in making up foreign silks.

One of Coventry's remaining silk manufacturers declares that a regular tax of 15 per cent. *ad valorem* on imported foreign silk yarns would probably lead to the re-establishment of the industry.²

The Tariff Reform League have published some further very telling facts as to the gradual extinction of England's once flourishing silk industry. The following, which I have selected, speak for themselves :—

“In 1857 we imported from Europe only £1,723,000 worth of manufactured silk.

“In 1904 we imported nearly £13,000,000 worth, a rise of about eleven millions sterling.

“The workers and silk manufacturers lost, in 1904, the wages and profit upon a large proportion of this £13,000,000.

“The silk brokers, Messrs. Henry W. Eaton and Co., in their circular of January 1903, remark

¹ REPORT OF THE TARIFF COMMISSION, 3250, etc.

² *Ibid.*, 3352.

that 'those familiar with our trade will be able to recall at least one hundred throwing mills scattered all over the country, from Colchester in the East to Sherbourne in the West, and northwards to Lincoln and Manchester, each of which directly employed on an average about 300 hands, and many more people incidentally. These have now nearly all ceased to exist, having been killed by foreign competition. This is the result of high tariff walls in foreign countries.'

Mr. C. Woollam, of the Abbey Mills, St. Albans, says :—

"Some years ago there were large mills, filled with costly machinery, engaged in silk throwing at Watford, Rickmansworth, Chesham, Tring, and Aylesbury—all these have disappeared, killed by foreign competition."

One concluding fact clearly indicates how the once flourishing industry has dwindled. In 1851 the silk industry of England employed 130,723 persons. In 1901 the numbers of employed fell to 39,035.

No fewer than fifteen glass works have been closed down in the last few years within a small radius of Newcastle and Sunderland. The British glass trade has passed, or is passing, into the hands of the foreigner.

In the valuable work called *THE SPEAKERS' HANDBOOK* there occurs the following significant passage quoted from the *Western Gazette* :—

“The great firm of Dent, Allcroft & Co., established (glove) factories at Grenoble, Prague, Heidelberg, and Brussels. Other manufacturers followed suit, and now the strange spectacle is presented of large factories all over Europe, employing many thousands of foreign workmen, being run by English manufacturers for the purpose of supplying the English market. At a low estimate this means a loss to the United Kingdom of employment for 100,000 men, and £75,000 a week in wages.

In the same work from which I have taken these statements appears a list of no less than twenty-seven British industries injured by unfair competition, *i.e.* hostile tariffs of trade-protected countries, combined with the British suicidal policy of free imports.

This so-called Free Trade is responsible for something more than injuring British industries within British territories. It is actually driving them out of the country altogether, and the process commenced as far back as 1882.

The results of the fatuous British policy regarding Free Trade were forcibly demonstrated by Mr. Porter, of the United States Tariff Commission, in a report to his government. He remarked :—

“I found shoddy manufacturers from Batley and Dewsbury established in Aachen, Prussia; Lancashire and Scottish spinners in Rouen; Yorkshire wool-combing establishments in Rheims;

Dundee jute mills in Dunkerque ; woollen manufacturers in Roubaix ; English iron and steel mills in Belgium ; and English woollen mills in Holland. Removing English capital to the Continent has secured a profitable home market, while England was near with widely open ports to serve as a 'dumping ground' to unload surplus goods made by foreign labour, superintended by English skill. In this way the English markets are swamped and her labour undersold."

Possibly the average British voter does not quite understand the manner or extent of what is called "dumping" foreign goods on British markets, or the wasting injury it inflicts on British industries. The process has been clearly explained by the Tariff Reform League in *THE SPEAKERS' HANDBOOK*, from which I quote the following :—

"The conditions for successful dumping are (1) that the makers' home market is protected by a tariff (for it is necessary to secure high prices at home) ; (2) that the market in which the goods are dumped is *not* protected by tariffs. A strong trade combination is also a necessary condition. The second condition is fulfilled only in Great Britain, hence the saying is that England is the dumping-ground of the world.

"Dumping confers on this country the present advantage of cheap prices. The disadvantages to us are (1) waste of capital and loss of employment in the industries attacked ; (2) the necessity of paying for what we buy with the savings of the

past years, not with the produce of present industry ; (3) high prices in the future when the British maker has been finally ruined and the British industry destroyed."

A sufficient tariff is an absolute protection against dumping. No other method of protection has been suggested.

How can Englishmen suppose for an instant their national industries can do aught but languish, and for the most part finally become extinct, if they permit foreign manufacturers to pour their goods into the country, sometimes in masses at less than cost price, while at the same time a strong tariff wall is built up against British industries in the land of the foreigner? The facts connected with this subject and their sinister future results are so obvious that they seem hardly to admit of argument. Yet there is an unmistakable object-lesson in these sinister results ; for we see hordes of unemployed Englishmen thronging the streets and roads of once industrious England, crying for work, while the crafts which gave it have fled away to enrich the Englishman's rivals.

The fallacy so often (but of late less and less confidently) put forward in Free Trade circles, that dumping must be rather a benefit than otherwise because of the cheapness it produces, is very easily exposed. The only sound basis of wealth is productive industry. If that is absent or decaying, then cheap goods for the nation are about as much

use as the waters of Tantalus. It is true that very cheap half-manufactured goods may sometimes, when obtainable by dumping, prove useful as the material for British industry, but the supply is altogether too casual and fluctuating to justify us for one moment in setting this slight advantage against the great and manifold evils arising to the standard industries of the country from the flooding of the market with foreign wares. Moreover, it must be remembered that no rational system of protection would act with a mechanical indifference to the actual needs of British industry. The aim is not to tax the materials for that industry, but the foreign labour which supplants our own. Protection is not, like Free Trade—or what is called by that name—a doctrinaire theory of economics. It is a flexible, adaptable, entirely practical system, directed to actual needs and working by such methods as may seem applicable to each particular case. Its object is the promotion of national wealth, and this, as I have said, can be truly based on one thing alone—on flourishing productive industries. But even where these industries exist, we should still deny the title of “wealthy” to a country in which the rewards of these industries were concentrated in a few hands, while the masses of the people lived on the brink of destitution. From this unhappy condition Free Trade has not saved us. England, the one Free Trade nation of any consequence in the world,

is also that in which prosperity is most unevenly divided.¹ France, with her high tariffs, and especially with her resolute determination to preserve her splendid agriculture from the danger of competition with the virgin resources of the New World, shows the best record of any civilised people for this true glory and happiness of a commonwealth—the wide diffusion of material well-being. The institutions which produce this condition cannot possibly be founded on a delusion. The institutions which have brought England to the condition in which her industries and social life stand to-day cannot possibly be economically sound. Let these facts only receive the attention of leading minds in this country among workmen and employers, farmers and artisans, and the nation will soon find its feet on the upward track, the bonds of union with its over-sea dominions will be immeasurably strengthened, new blood will flow in its veins, and a new security and vigour will be felt in every British home.

¹ See p. 13, *note*.

CHAPTER VII

THE MANUFACTURE OF PAUPERS

Public and private charities—Unsatisfactory results—Profits of mendicancy—Pampering the pauper—The farm colony at Laindon—Poplar Workhouse—Past history of Poplar—Its present condition—The unemployed—South Ockendon farm colony—A workhouse *ménu*—Insubordination of inmates—Attempts to relieve unemployment—Mr. Mackenzie at Canning Town—The tyranny of taxation—A scheme of reform.

THE English people are justly credited with being both philanthropic and sympathetic. In the administration, however, of their charitable institutions they do not appear to be endowed with the shrewdness, or even with much of that common sense to which they lay claim. Whether in the case of vast sums levied by rates, or in that of voluntary millions subscribed at the cry of distress for numerous benevolent institutions, money flows readily; but it cannot be disguised that, owing to loose and careless administration, pauperism and idleness are thereby actually created; that self-respect, self-reliance, the exercise of thrift, industry, foresight, are all discouraged; and that owing to lack of proper scrutiny, a continual and strong

temptation to fraud is placed in the way of those connected with charitable administration.

In fact the English system of relieving the wants of able-bodied applicants without requiring an adequate return in work, or without proper investigation as to what produced the want, is responsible for the creation of a large army of wastrels. These are the men and women, chiefly men, who represent the worst form of social parasites; they exist as human weeds, not ashamed to live on the industry of others, and hating toil; they yield to the charms of that desultory nomadic life which appears to have such a strong attraction for those who once enter on it. They take turns of the poorhouse, the prison, and the casual ward; they do odd jobs of work occasionally, but do it badly; they are ever ready to join the ranks of the unemployed, yet refuse honest and steady employment. A large portion of these are tramps and beggars by profession, others are professional criminals; as citizens they are bad, useless, dangerous, yet society tolerates them; in certain directions, as I am prepared to show, they are even fostered and encouraged. Life for them is by far easier than that of the poorer hard-working classes, many of whom endure the utmost severity of daily toil for a pittance barely sufficient to sustain their pleasureless, narrow, sordid lives.

The beggar, lazy, dirty, ignorant, and useless,

enjoys, without working for it, an income much more comfortable than is generally supposed. In 1906 the Departmental Committee published a report on the subject of "Vagrancy," a report which contains some passages well worth the attention of those who wish to study the question. Sir Eric Buchanan, the secretary of the London Mendicity Society, in giving his evidence, expressed his opinion that not less than £100,000 a year is given away to street beggars. He stated that his society had dealt with about twenty-five thousand cases in the last seventeen years, but of these only one was discovered to be really deserving. It is not very strange that street beggars are reluctant to avail themselves of the aid, coupled with the searching methods, of the Mendicity Society, when it is remembered how easily the whining mendicant can collect alms in the London streets. A well-known case, brought to light the year before, was cited of a beggar, who, by shamming paralysis, had been gaining £6 a week, and the secretary stated that a successful beggar could collect about 5s. a day. Mr. Booth, in his great work, LIFE AND LABOUR OF THE PEOPLE IN LONDON, estimates that about one million and a quarter in London alone are members of families the total income of which amounts to no more than 21s. a week; thus the hard-worked artisan of the lower class, too self-respecting to beg, has 14s. a week less than the worthless, workless, demoralised street mendi-

cant who, while gaining as much as a skilled workman, lives comfortably on the offerings of credulity.

One of the severest problems which is to tax the English intellect of this period, is that of the growing incubus of pauperism and its outgrowths, manifesting themselves in various evils which overshadow such a large division of the British race. The existing methods of relief are abundantly proved to be very inadequate to cope with the problem, precisely as false remedies for poverty or any other evil must invariably fail to attain their object. Moreover, the present system has one specially bad tendency, for it mulcts the industrious, wealth-producing class, in order to develop and encourage another class of worthless, dangerous parasites: it does not suppress pauperism, it distinctly fosters and even creates it. Here let me quote a passage from a recent work of Miss Edith Sellars, whose investigations of foreign poor law systems have thrown such a flood of light on the solution of the problems of pauperism.

“No country but England” writes Miss Sellars, “could afford to spend £14,000,000 a year on poor relief, it must be remembered; no city but London could, even if it would, spend 14s. a week each on its workhouse inmates, and nearly £40 on every poor little waif or stray it has to maintain—in Bermondsey, State children cost £52 a year each, and in Poplar, £50. In foreign poor law

departments, our expenditure on poor relief is regarded as quite appalling; the officials there speak of it with bated breath, and wonder what we can possibly do with our £14,000,000—how we can manage to spend them, in fact—and yet have so little to show for our money. For although we spend on poor relief incomparably more per head of the population than any other country, there are countries undoubtedly where the poor, or at any rate the more deserving section of the poor, fare better than here, and where all sections are dealt with more intelligently, as well as more justly.”

Out of ten foreign systems investigated by Miss Sellars she found “only three under which the deserving poor, especially the aged deserving poor, suffer so keenly as under ours; and not one at all under which the undeserving, the thoroughly worthless, are made quite so comfortable.”¹

A glance at the working of the British poor law system will, I think, strongly corroborate this grave indictment.

In March 1906 Mr. Mackenzie, correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, wrote an article headed “Palaces for the Unfit.” He describes the new workhouse in Wormwood Scrubbs as the most costly in England. It is the home of the wastrel, the loafer, the cadger, yet it has luxuries unknown to the honest, industrious worker, or even the majority of the overburdened ratepayers. He states—

¹ FOREIGN SOLUTIONS OF POOR LAW PROBLEMS, 1908, p. 10.

“Its silvered hot-water heaters would not disgrace the halls of the Carlton or of the Savoy. Its kitchens are the finest I have ever seen, rivalling those of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York. Its tessellated walls would adorn West End mansions. The premises are so elaborate, so ornate, and so fitted with all manner of improvements, that the wonder is that the cost was not more. The place is a village of great red-bricked buildings, with clock-tower central administration offices, the whole covering over fourteen acres. It is unnecessary to say that a very small number of ratepayers have quarters that so amply provide for every requirement of health. The corridors are very wide, and all the rooms are lofty. The central corridors are mostly laid with concrete floors; those to the sides are covered with very fine tessellated work, while the floors, even of the wards, are nearly all of parquet. The walls are tiled for some feet up, but it is tiling made beautiful, of a rich golden hue in many parts, with fine lines of blue enamel along it, and with an upper ridge of abutting ornamental tiles. Some of the woodwork is of Oregon pine, which, treated as it is here, by polishing and varnishing, is a credit to the artistic taste of the selector. The least observant stranger will be struck by the beautiful silvering of the hot-water pipes and radiators that heat the premises. From these it is a natural step to the porcelain baths, and the lines of porcelain wash-basins, all with constant supplies of hot and cold water.

“The maternity home is a separate building,

and illustrates one of the serious problems of work-house administration. A very small proportion of the women who come to that place are married. One woman has returned to the maternity wards of Hammersmith no fewer than five times. Her five children were reared and taught in the work-house schools, being raised at the charge of the ratepayers, and the whole of them costing the district an annual amount running into three figures. Nothing can be done with such a woman. Parliament will not suffer any restraint to be put upon her. There are many like her all over London. All the parish can ensure, is that the birth of her children shall be surrounded by conditions of health more perfect and with accessories more costly than one honest wife in five hundred in Hammersmith can command."

According to Mr. Mackenzie, the majority of those occupying this abode of bliss for the idle and worthless will be unskilled labourers, the splendid maternity home will be mainly used by unmarried women.

By a curious distortion of sentiment the British people would positively seem to aim at nurturing and augmenting the numbers of the worst and most contemptible types of society. How this class is lodged by indulgent officials spending other people's money has been seen, but I also propose to show how the idle loafer is fed and otherwise pampered.

During the year 1906 several English journals drew public attention to the demoralising system

pursued in some of the workhouses, the searchlight of a public inquiry was directed to the alleged abuses, and some startling facts were elicited. It was asserted that the Poplar Workhouse was supplied with the finest butter, best English beef, which it was required should be fresh killed, with thick flanks and thick buttocks, best pork, mutton, and best beef suet, best English new-laid eggs, best English cheddar cheese, the best bread, milk having ten per cent. of cream, fish, including salmon, and the finest Irish bacon. In addition to these, a workhouse tender appeared for the following articles—Cadbury's best cocoa, raisins, best onions, best turnips, Lazenby's pickles, best Denmark sugar, castor sugar, Lee and Perrins' sauce. It was also discovered that coffee and Mazawattee tea had been supplied, the latter at 2s. 4d. the lb., which, it seems, is higher in price than that supplied to the House of Commons.

It is true that during the inquiry it was stated on behalf of the Guardians that some of the luxuries enumerated were for the workhouse officials and *some* for the paupers, though the assertion still left a gross abuse in evidence. In any case it is clear the paupers were maintained in a manner utterly beyond their position, as may be seen by one of Mr. Mackenzie's series of articles on the poor of London, written as correspondent of the *Daily Mail*. He states that he visited the Poplar Workhouse and observed the diet of the inmates, on

which he presents the following opinion. To quote his own words:—

“They—the Guardians—work on the policy avowed by some of them that ‘the poor man ought to have the best sometimes.’ They are going to give him the best when he is in the workhouse, and they do! The butter costs, bought by the ton, 1s. 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. a lb. I am informed that the contractors are required to supply only Denny’s best Irish bacon. The meat is of the very finest quality to be bought, and the bread is of a grade and perfection rarely to be had in shops and restaurants. I examined the dinners being served in the course of an ordinary visit, and I declare in sober truth that the quality was at least as high as that given in an average West End club. The mealy potatoes and the fine boiled meats certainly equal those served in the modest club where I lunch.”

During the inquiry an association known as the Borough of Poplar Municipal Alliance was represented by Mr. Elvey Robb, who called attention to the fact that orders were found for lace curtains, best white counterpanes, damask table-linen, thirty-six dozen Irish cambric pocket-handkerchiefs, eighteen dozen damask table napkins, and one hundred yards of art serge for draping. In the printing and stationery department the paper had to be antique, double thick cream wove, and there were also two thousand five hundred ivory visiting cards. What was all this for, and for whose use? Mr. Robb also complained of £112

having been spent in one year on newspapers and periodicals,—the lavish supply of these is mentioned in the report to the Local Government Board.¹ Allusion is also made in the report to the fact that tobacco and snuff were supplied to the inmates.² The cost of these was considerable, as the chairman of the Poplar Borough Municipal Alliance, when addressing a meeting of the members in March 1906, alluded to the fact that during the previous year the tobacco bill for the workhouse stood at £572, 5s., and this did not include three hundred and fifty pounds of snuff. He also alluded to the fact that were good margarine supplied instead of butter at 1s. 2d. a lb., a clear saving of £4000 could be made. The system by which beer was supplied to the workhouse called forth strictures in the report. The daily allowance of beer to the inmates seems to have reached considerably over one hundred pints; at one time it was over two hundred. It would appear, besides, according to the report, that there was a surplus of beer paid for by the ratepayers but not consumed by the inmates,³ a matter which indicates that very close scrutiny was not exercised on that point. Out of seven firms which tendered to supply workhouse beer, it was the highest and not the lowest tender which was accepted.⁴ No doubt many of the hard-worked, struggling ratepayers would be very glad

¹ REPORT ON THE POPLAR UNION, p. 16.

² *Ibid.* p. 15.

³ *Ibid.* p. 17.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 29.

to be supplied with a reason for this. The Drink Bill of England's workhouses amounts to £40,000 a year. English ratepayers in general would probably also be glad to know why they should be called upon to pay this sum in order to supply free beer to paupers. The report notices that it was not the general practice at Poplar to accept the lowest tenders; if such had been the case, however, an average saving of over £1600 a year would have been effected for the ratepayers in the years 1903-4, 1905-6, 1906-7.¹ Altogether contracts seem to have been accepted with but little regard to the ratepayers' interests. It is not clear whether it was for the use of workhouse officials or pauper inmates that Scotch potatoes were supplied at 80s. per ton, and under the heading soap, soft, primrose, yellow, mottled, and carbolic all figure, the qualification being best in every case, while forty dozen of Pears' unscented, fifty-three dozen of Izal, and thirty cwt. household were asked for.

The inquiry elicited some very strange facts regarding the supply of broughams for inmates of the workhouse. It appears that on able-bodied paupers leaving, for the supposed purpose of seeking work, they were driven to London Bridge station in broughams, and it was admitted that the cost of conveyances for 1901 was £540, but that in 1905 it rose to £1545. It would be interesting to know what occasioned this extraordinary rise

¹ REPORT ON THE POPLAR UNION, p. 26.

in cost, and if the entire sum of £2085 of the rate-payers' money was spent on broughams for able-bodied paupers, and why?

That a premium should be placed on pauperism appears to be customary in other places besides Poplar, as may be inferred from the following passage in the *Globe* of 15th December 1905 :—

“At a meeting of the Romford Guardians a member complained that the workhouse was now a social club. Concerts were given every other day to the inmates, who also had a military band to play to them while they were at dinner. The house was now crowded by those who had come in to share the Christmas joys. One man had candidly admitted to the Guardians that he liked the house, and intended to stop for good.”

In 1904 the Poplar Guardians tried the experiment of planting a farming pauper colony at Laindon, in Essex, for the reception of able-bodied paupers. A portion of land, consisting of about one hundred acres, was rented, and one hundred men were sent down there, the number being afterwards increased to one hundred and fifty. The employment of such a number of men on farm work which, according to the season of the year, could easily have been performed by from four to ten able-bodied labourers, as may be supposed, doomed the project from the first to absolute failure as a financial experiment.

Judging from the expensive luxuries which were

supplied to the "colonists," as the working paupers were called, it would appear there was little effort to make the institution even self-supporting. Thus these paupers had three meat meals a day, each inmate, besides, being supplied with tobacco, and in fact their condition was far better than that of an ordinary independent farm labourer. It came out in evidence that these charity-supported labouring men had altogether a very *recherché* dietary; amongst the items provided were sausages, eggs, best ground coffee, tea, Lazenby's pickles, tapioca, best Valencia raisins, best English cheddar, best American cheese, bread, butter, pudding, and cake, two thousand lbs. of the latter item being supplied. In other directions the personal comforts of the able-bodied paupers were well catered for: they played cricket and football, cards, draughts, and dominoes, while for their intellectual recreation books were supplied from the Poplar library. In fact the colonists had a far happier time than the poverty-stricken, hard-worked inhabitants of the Poplar slums, who directly in rates, or indirectly in increase of rent, paid for the pampering of able-bodied loafers unwilling to do a fair day's work, but not ashamed to live in luxury on the hard-earned means of others, many of whom were unable to afford for themselves or their families the ordinary comforts of working life. It is impossible to read the report on the Poplar Workhouse without being struck by the reckless extravagance and want of

discretion displayed in its management. During the inquiry it was admitted that Guardians' gilt-edged diaries were bought at the rate of £8, 5s. for eighty—the lowest tender, which was for £2, was rejected. £800 was spent on a motor wagon; but according to the report, chiefly owing to the state of the roads, the conveyance was found to be unsuitable, and the £800 paid for it was wasted. Again, it was elicited during the inquiry that on one occasion over £30 was paid by the Guardians for work connected with the Poplar Workhouse when, according to Mr. Robb, there were hundreds of able-bodied men in the house fit to do the work.

Mr. Mackenzie, in one of his series of articles in the *Daily Mail* on "The Poor of London," called attention to the number of able-bodied in Poplar Workhouse who remained in practical idleness. He said:—

"There are over two hundred and fifty young men in the workhouse to-day, amply fed, well clothed, and maintained week by week and month by month in idleness. They are lazy, good-for-nothing scamps, many of them, as their records clearly show. Naturally they take advantage of the glorious prospect of plenty to eat and nothing to do. There is another army, only less numerous, of young women, in the prime of years and of health, equally idle.

"A few days since I went over the 'workhouse' at mid-day, and watched the great rooms

packed with legal idlers, all busy eating a dinner such as few labourers outside have. 'Do you mean seriously to tell me that these men have no proper employment?' I asked my guide, as he stood in a great room thronged with not far short of three hundred men, mostly varying in age from eighteen to forty, all sound limbed, all physically fit. 'We use them as far as we can in cleaning up,' my informant replied."

Yet men physically fit as these are badly wanted in the Royal Navy, the Merchant Service, and the Army, they are wanted as farm hands, and the most valuable industries of Great Britain are leaving the country because employers cannot compete with foreign productions.

As a rule the candidates for sumptuous living and indolence at public expense are not deserving of much sympathy. Superintendent Marden, of the Essex Constabulary, who gave evidence at the inquiry, said that he went to the Laindon farm colony and found a number of men there with a criminal record, and he considered the majority of the inmates were undesirable. He said the men went about in groups from one public-house to another, they begged, and there were several prosecutions for refractory conduct and drunkenness. He had gone out at night on purpose, and had seen men lying drunk on the road at one o'clock in the morning. Nineteen of the inmates had been in the hands of the police, one of them had been com-

mitted six times between June 1903 and August 1904. The superintendent also said that it was not safe for a girl to be out after dark. The residents of the neighbourhood complained of the conduct of the men of the farm colony, and in consequence of a petition an extra officer was put on duty. In the Report to the President of the Local Government Board before mentioned, attention is called to the fact that in the winter of 1904-5 the Guardians allowed some thirty or forty of the inmates to attend an unemployed procession in London, their fares being paid from some outside source not specified. Later the Guardians actually paid the fares of seven inmates to attend a second demonstration.¹

It is not easy to see the consistency of sending men employed on the farm colony to swell the procession of the unemployed, nor the justice of supplying money for the purpose from rates levied on working men far too poor to afford the luxuries also paid for by them, and placed at the disposal of the pampered "colonists."

According to Mr. Mackenzie, whom I have before quoted, a generation ago, Poplar was a great industrial and nautical centre. Engineering firms favoured the place because it was the centre of the London shipping trade. The average Poplar youth was apprenticed to some skilled trade, and the Poplar workman was justly famed.

¹ REFORM OF THE POPLAR UNION, p. 33.

When, owing to trades union mandates, labour at the docks became so expensive that the English merchants found they could unload with less expense at Hamburg or Antwerp, business at Poplar naturally suffered. When experiments on pauperism, carried out with extravagance but with absence of common sense, ensued, Poplar decayed as a business place. Thus when Mr. Mackenzie wrote, one out of every sixteen of the inhabitants was a pauper, the rates were 12s. in the pound, and in one large section of its boundaries no less than 99 per cent. of its inhabitants were casual labourers. When the rates went up with a bound older private residents and old business houses began to leave the place steadily for cheaper localities, and residences, not long before the homes of people in comfortable circumstances, were gradually becoming common lodging-houses, shelters, or were being closed up altogether. Poplar has now become a wretched, poverty-stricken district, the worthless poor from other localities have flocked to it in search of state-supported idleness, and in 1905 no less than 6000 persons in Poplar were receiving out-door relief.

When the subject of the unemployed is closely examined it will be found that a very large portion of this class is composed of thriftless, lazy vagabonds, shameless beggars, and tramps, often criminals or potential criminals, not deserving of much sympathy. No doubt in times of depression

there are many genuine unemployed who are quite willing to accept work, but the tramp, the street beggar, the able-bodied workhouse inmate, are noxious human weeds, who are nourished only too readily on the soil of spurious philanthropy.

Symptoms of that peculiar species of demoralisation which springs from ill-judged and indiscriminate charity are continually becoming more apparent. A few facts, which I have selected from many others, will I think show how palpably the moral infection is spreading amongst the English working classes.

During the winter of 1905, when the unemployed were organising demonstrations, parading the streets, begging and receiving contributions, work at the docks was also sometimes going begging. An agent for two steamers which arrived in dock wrote to the *Evening Standard* to say that up to noon of the day he wrote neither steamer had put out an ounce of cargo, solely owing to the inability of the dock company and stevedores to get men to work, nor could men be found willing to transfer a few tons of coal from barges alongside to the steamers. These steamers were costing their owners about £60 a day, and naturally these owners were indignant at the unnecessary loss they were incurring. The writer went on to state that on the same day there were in one London dock alone fourteen steamers waiting to be discharged,

yet that only one had commenced to unload that morning.¹ Certainly the owners had a right to be indignant that able-bodied men should be maintained on high living in London workhouses at public expense, while urgent work was at hand, but not accepted by those who found idleness too sweet.

During the winter of 1906 there was a fall of snow for some days. To clear it away, and by way of giving employment, the borough councils offered employment at 5s. a day to every man who offered his services; yet with such wages, for light unskilled work, the supply of labour was altogether insufficient.² The question is, where were the unemployed, where were the able-bodied loafers in London workhouses supported by the hard-won earnings of rate-crushed householders? It is clear the wastrel did not care to relinquish the slothful existence he loves, and the luxuries to which he was not previously accustomed, for the prospect of a self-respecting life at the wages of a skilled workman.

At the time when the unemployed mustered strong in 1904, the authorities in Shoreditch attempted to deal systematically with local distress, and the result of their efforts throws a strong light on the generally worthless character of the applicants for relief. Out of 1894 who applied

¹ *Evening Standard*, 29th December 1907.

² *Daily Mail*, 29th December 1906.

for employment, only 446 were skilled workers, and 1032 were mere casuals. Out of these, 400 men were selected and offered public work of various kinds. Notice was given to 126 of them that they could have work on the sewers, but 21 did not turn up, 22 had to quit as being unsuitable or lazy, and 26 went off without giving any reason. That is, they refused three days' work in the week of seven hours a day.

Men claiming to be unemployed and starving were offered street-sweeping work for three days in the week at 4s. a day of eight hours' work, yet out of 125 men, 10 did not put in an appearance, 53 were discharged as unsatisfactory, and 21 either found other employment or did not return.

It is certainly difficult to understand how a hard-working, self-respecting community of rate-payers can consent to feed luxuriously, house, clothe, and maintain in idleness a multitude of lazy, shameless wastrels.

In order to deal with the unemployed problem, the West Ham Distress Committee have established a Farm Colony at South Ockendon, where, until recently, sixty-seven men were located. According to an account of a representative of the *Daily Mail*, published in that paper on 6th April 1907, the pauper colonists seem to have had a very good time at the ratepayers' expense; in fact, as the superintendent explained, everything was done to make the life of the men comfortable. Indoors

they could play cards, dominoes, or draughts ; they had tobacco, and were even supplied with a piano, which they could use at their desire, and one of them, a bricklayer, was generally considered a very good pianist. In the heat of summer they worked an hour earlier in the morning and had two hours for dinner, then worked till 5.30 in the evening. In winter they left off when it was dark, and could always go for walks after their work if they chose. On the occasion of the *Daily Mail* representative visiting the place he observed the following notice in the dining-room :—

THE SOUTH OCKENDON FARM COLONY.

EMPIRE.

A Grand Concert will take place every Thursday Evening at
7 o'clock sharp.

Mr. Barker, the superintendent of the colony, said that the life of the colonist was by no means dull, monotonous, or of prison-like severity in its control. But discipline had to be maintained, and that was the sole cause of some insubordination which had broken out on the previous Wednesday. Mr. Barker added that "the dietary was on a scale such as very few skilled artisans, earning full wages, enjoyed."

It may be safely assumed that life in the colony was by no means dull, dreary, or prison-like, and the diet, consisting of four meals a day, was certainly

far beyond the means of an ordinary skilled artisan or the generality of the ratepayers. The following week's menu must speak for itself :—

	BREAKFAST.	DINNER.	TEA.
Sunday . .	Bacon.	Cold roast mutton, pickles, vegetables, pudding.	Bread and butter, cake, and tea.
Monday . .	Cold meat.	Irish stew, vegetables, suet pudding.	Bread and butter, jam, tea.
Tuesday . .	Red herrings.	Roast beef, vegetables.	Bread and butter, marmalade, tea.
Wednesday .	Bacon.	Meat puddings, vegetables.	Bread and butter, jam, tea.
Thursday . .	Porridge.	Salt beef, vegetables.	Bread and butter, marmalade, tea.
Friday . .	Bacon or cold meat.	Fish, vegetables, bread pudding.	Bread and butter, jam, tea.
Saturday . .	Red herrings.	Roast mutton, vegetables.	Bread and butter, jam or marmalade, tea.

It might have been supposed that light work, excellent food, and amusement would have satisfied pauper inmates who, according to their own account, had been previously starving and out of work ; but men of that class are notorious grumblers, and these formed no exception. One pauper, on being served with a bloater for breakfast, refused to eat it, and sent it away because he could not be served with vinegar also. The dumplings were objected to, but at last insubordination came to a head on the subject of coffee. It had been customary in the colony, except during the summer, to supply the men with

a pint of hot coffee at ten o'clock in the morning. When first served out they pretended it was too hot; when given to them cooled they said it was too cold, and they must go into the kitchen to warm it; this wasted more time until it got cool again, and as this was done palpably to waste time, when the weather was besides becoming milder, the superintendent resolved on giving oatmeal and water, which was the usual summer drink. As the days lengthened the working hour was extended to 5.30, beyond which time no more work was ever done, but this gave great offence. There were many shirkers amongst the men. Four of them on one occasion during the cold weather were sent to dig a trench, but they came back to the office on the plea that they could not work fast enough to keep themselves warm. They frankly said that if a warm job could not be found for them they would go home—and home they went. Out of the sixty-seven who remained, forty-eight took their departure afterwards, their causes of complaint being as follows:—

Dislike of discipline.

Objection to diet (see menu above).

Withdrawal of hot coffee on weather becoming warmer.

Extra half-hour's work as the days lengthened.

The men complained besides that they were not given any sweet puddings or milk puddings, except when the committee came down. In addition, it should also be noted that these malcontents

who revolted at the excellent treatment they received were all married men with children, and their wives, according to the size of their families, were paid from 10s. to 13s. 6d. weekly.

A correspondent of the *Standard*, of 23rd November 1905, related the following incident, from which I quote his own words:—

“SIR,—Last evening I offered two able-bodied men who were lounging about half-a-crown to scatter a few loose stones, that were lying handy, on a soft place in front of my house, the roadway being not yet made up. The job would have taken them less than half an hour. The men refused, saying that it was too cold for them to work.”

Recently, at a time when the cry of the unemployed resounded through England, two corporate efforts made in the town of Leicester to provide work for those supposed to want it completely failed. Twelve selected men were given employment in pipe-laying. One was dismissed for insolence, and ten others declined to work twelve miles from Leicester. Twenty men on another permanent job did likewise, and it was declared the men had become demoralised by charitable doles.

N.B.—These incidents in Leicester took place a few days before the march of the unemployed in London from the Embankment to Hyde Park.

During the summer of 1905 the master of the

Workshop Workhouse reported that the male inmates had developed a decided dislike to the fare provided for them. The menu consisted of pea soup, stewed beef, hash, boiled mutton, or boiled bacon. Many of the paupers, however, refused to come to the table, and the rest either left most of the food on their plates or refused to touch it.

A representative of the *Daily Express* states he was informed by Commissioner Nicol, of the Salvation Army, that he handed a generous-hearted lady in Park Lane a bundle of tickets to give to tramps who called at her house. He said he would "provide employment for every one who called with a ticket. Not a single one called on him."

Great numbers of middle-class families are chronically in want of domestic servants, and are quite willing to give fair wages; how is it, then, that these middle-class families pay high rates to support crowds of able-bodied young men and women in the demoralising idleness of poor relief? Demonstrations of the unemployed are now becoming very common, but amongst the families of those who represent themselves to be starving, there must be many young girls well qualified for domestic service. It certainly cannot be denied that there is a market for their labour; why, therefore, do they not accept employment? The reason is obvious: throughout England there are too many free meals, generally free sustentation, and artificially arranged remunerations for an inadequate

amount of work. The working of natural law is continually opposed by the wholesale encouragement of the unfitest.

Mr. Mackenzie, whom I have before mentioned as the *Daily Mail* correspondent, has very skilfully directed the search-light of close personal investigation on the condition of the London poor. This gentleman's series of articles, commencing at a time when the ever-present unemployed question was entering on a very acute stage, provide highly valuable reading. They are especially so to those who may wish to gain a clear insight as to the prevalent causes of impoverishment over large areas, and the manner in which most ill-judged attempts at relief have not only failed completely in their object, but are actually augmenting and perpetuating poverty and other evils besides.

Mr. Mackenzie thus describes his visit to a district in Canning Town which was the most poverty-stricken and also the most largely relieved. He saw a group of women—dirty, ragged, and slatternly, but not apparently ill-fed—standing around the door of a chapel. They were the wives of the unemployed soliciting relief, and were waiting to receive their customary doles. The children of these women, who were on the roadway close by, were also ill-clad, filthy, and in many cases bare-footed; they did, however, show signs of under-feeding, differing from their mothers in

that particular. It was noticed that some of the women went straight from the relief station to the public-houses, and the correspondent pursued his investigations to some of these. What he saw I give in his own words :—

“ In a side bar of the first place we enter we find eleven women, exactly of the same type as those soliciting charity without. One of them carries a recently born baby in her arms, and another has a little girl two years old clinging to her apron. Each woman has a glass in front of her. Some of them have been here since half-past nine in the morning, and will stay for hours yet. In the next drinking shop is a party of nine, in the next but two, while in the last of all we find seven. Now one rises to go out, for her hour has come to beg for aid from school, or parson, or unemployed fund. An hour later we can see the husbands of these women amusing themselves at the street corner higher up. Five bookmakers' touts are busy among them at one cross-roads alone.”

At a time when the unemployed were loudly proclaiming their alleged grievances, and sometimes very truculently demanding relief, local bodies throughout the country appear to have shown every disposition to grant assistance. This was by no means invariably appreciated, as may be seen by the following instance, one out of many of a similar character. At a meeting of the Darlington Rural Council it was reported that a number of

the unemployed, who were given work in connection with the widening of roads in the district, had to be paid off because of insolence to the foreman.

An arrangement had been made that the men were to cease work each day at half-past four, but on one occasion they prepared to leave at twenty minutes past. When the foreman protested, the men who had received public assistance in their distress coolly told him his watch must be wrong, and refused to continue another ten minutes.

We have seen palatial residences, high living, luxuries and broughams supplied to paupers. It might be well perhaps to observe the cases of some who complain bitterly that they are compelled to pay for those indulgences lavished on the idle and worthless social misfits, in whom appears the most contemptible and poorest side of human nature.

In the month of March 1906 an inquest was held in the East Ham Coroner's Court as to the reason for the suicide of a certain man. According to his wife's evidence, she found her husband hanging behind a door in his bedroom. She further said there was no reason for the poor fellow's suicide except worry about the rent and the rates.

In November 1906 the wife of a working tailor applied to the Lambeth County Court to have a committal order on a judgment summons against her husband rescinded. The woman said

that her husband earned only 25s. a week, and that they had ten children. The man was unable to obtain cheap rooms owing to the size of his family, and therefore was obliged to take a small house, but he was utterly crushed by the rates, and at the time was in prison on account of non-payment of those owing. It is satisfactory to know that in this case the judge ordered the committal order to be rescinded; but how many other hard-working men with families to support have had the bailiffs in their houses to carry off their scanty furniture in order that paupers might live in ease and luxury?

The following pathetic letter appeared in the *Daily Express* of 30th November 1905:—

“SIR,—I have to pay 7s. 4d. in the pound for local rates, while my wife and children are absolutely starving. Only two days ago I had a police officer calling for £2, 17s. for local rates, or twenty-one days' imprisonment in default, while my wife and family had hardly a proper meal for fourteen days at least before.

“Yet I must at once draw on the little credit I had to pay these rates, and now I have another demand for rates to Christmas, and threats for non-payment within seven days of a summons. Here I am with my family almost starving, and yet my rates must be paid on demand. The unemployed workman's lot can hardly be worse than that of an
“UNEMPLOYED CLERK.”

If a man is absolutely unable to pay the rates,

why should he be sent to prison on that account? Doing so takes away any chance of procuring employment. While in confinement it may, and probably would, be the means of depriving him of it if he had any, and his family may starve while he is away from them. Should not some inquiries be made before issuing warrants to send men, poor, but respectable and honest, to prison?

Surely it is enough to make a man feel at war with society on finding himself in the body of the jail and his family starving because he is unable to pay extortionate rates spent in building palaces for paupers. Our entire system of poor relief evidently stands in need of thorough reorganisation and of more control by the Government. Present methods give the control of large sums of money to needy, struggling tradesmen, consequently an ever-present temptation is presented, and the door is opened to fraud. The workman must become demoralised in time when he discovers that he can live better as a state-supported mendicant than as a self-respecting and self-supporting worker. We are taxing the industrious and thrifty to support the worthless and idle; we are manufacturing the pauper.

The attempt to elaborate a scheme of Poor Law reorganisation, taking account of the majority and minority reports of the recent Commission, and, above all, bringing into consideration the experiments made in this direction by Germany, Denmark,

Holland, and Switzerland, would take a volume rather than a chapter. That attempt cannot be undertaken in this work, the object of which is rather to exhibit a few danger signals upon paths to which our progress is trending than to lay down, at least in any detail, a scheme of political and social reconstruction. But I cannot forbear suggesting a few main principles of action which seem to be indicated as the true remedies for our present lamentable condition. The problem of destitution and unemployment seems to concern four distinct classes of individuals :—

- (a) Those who are past work owing to age.
- (b) Those who through other defects in mind or body are incapable of shifting for themselves.
- (c) Able-bodied loafers and vagrants.
- (d) Workmen in temporary unemployment owing to trade depression.

Class (a) is now provided for by old age pensions, and except that the scheme ought unquestionably to be contributory, and *thus* to admit of a slightly increased allowance, I need here say no more about it.

Class (b) should be the proper object of the Poor Law, and should be left to local authorities and to private institutions, the former being strengthened as I shall explain later.

Class (c). When any man or woman of this class comes to the State for aid, the State has a

perfect right to say, "Very good; we shall take you on and try to make you a decent, self-respecting citizen. But you must give us a proper chance of doing it. You must, if physically fit, be prepared to be sent into the army or navy, or to a labour colony, or be hired to an employer, or dealt with in whatever way shall seem to us best for your particular case. You will get humane treatment, good food, clean lodging, and the chances of promotion from grade to grade, but in the beginning stages of your service you will get no wages, and you will be under strict discipline for a term of years, during which you must remain with us unless formally discharged. You will not be discharged while there seems a likelihood of your proving, if left to yourself, a burden or a danger to the community. If you don't like these terms, the world is wide—we have no further responsibility for you; and if private persons allow you to fatten on their misjudged charity, so much the worse for them and for you; the State has done its part."

Class (a). The most fatal course in dealing with this class is to treat it in such a way as to weaken the moral qualities which keep its members from the all too easy descent into class (c). Yet that, I fear, is exactly what is being done at present. The practice of borrowing great sums to enable local bodies to "make work" for their unemployed is one of the most deadly methods of pauperising the workman, and is a serious danger to local

finances. The work which is "made" is generally useless and sometimes destructive.¹ It is always in greater or less measure destructive to the persons employed. Stern measures here are far the most merciful in the long-run. All that the State or the local authorities can legitimately do in dealing with this class is to promote a system of compulsory insurance against unemployment, to which employers as well as workmen might be obliged to contribute, and to make as efficient as possible the system of labour exchanges which has lately been set on foot.² To pass beyond these limits of public action is to enter upon the slippery descent which leads to moral and material ruin.

Finally, let me urge that the system of putting the administration of the Poor Law, with no effective restraint or guidance, into the hands of local bodies, has proved wasteful, inefficient, and a fruitful source of jobbery and corruption, eating like a disease into the body politic. Unless when some huge scandal comes to light, practically no public attention is paid to the doings of local administrators of the Poor Law, and people of independence, honesty, and capacity either rarely get elected to them in the face of the rings organised by those whose motives for serving are less disinterested, or if they do, are

¹ As in March and April 1910, when a London suburban council set its unemployed to mutilate the fine trees which were one of the ornaments of the district.

² See p. 138, *note*.

almost helpless for good. What is needed is the presence on each county or borough council of a State officer, or assessor, who should be trained in finance and have some knowledge of practical work in surveying and building, and who should have considerable powers of intervention in the case of any misapplication of public funds. Then, while the public would still have its part in the work for which it pays, that work would be done cheaply and efficiently, under expert control, and not as now by amateurs, who are too often destitute of every qualification for the positions which a good-natured or indifferent electorate has allowed them to occupy. It may be added that an extensive consolidation of Poor Law districts, and unification of control under the county council or borough, would be a corollary of the scheme above suggested. The Poor Law, *i.e.* the management of class (*b*), and of those (if any) of class (*a*) who did not desire to avail themselves of its special privileges, should be committed to special sub-committees of these councils, who might be chosen from members of the councils or outsiders. Classes (*a*), (*c*), and (*d*) would be no concern of any local body, but solely of a State department.

CHAPTER VIII

MISCHIEVOUS CHARITY

Profits of begging—Causes of vagrancy—Dutch labour colonies—Scheme of Mr. Wilson Carlile—Attitude of the State towards vagrancy—Old age pensions—Example of the Jews—Discussion of the Act—Charitable organisation in general—Evils of indiscriminate charity—Of charitable bequests—Cases of the Lichfield, Canterbury, and Bedford charities.

PERHAPS few people understand to what an extent begging is carried on as a profession, and how lucrative the practice is.

Curiously enough, it appears to be those on the verge of poverty themselves who encourage this form of mendicity. They do not understand that the filthy, demoralised beggar who whines to excite pity, but who also bullies, blackmails, or assaults women on lonely roads as suits his purposes, is making, without working for it, a comfortable income on the proceeds of credulity.

In illustration of my contention as to how remunerative the begging practice may be made, I can cite a passage from a recent daily paper describing a man decently dressed who frequented a crowded thoroughfare and offered matches for

sale, which he carried in his coat-tail pocket. As his proffer of matches was usually accompanied by a tale of woe, in the majority of cases the penny was given and the matches refused. He was noticed to have received over a penny a minute for ten consecutive minutes, and this would work out at over £5 a week after allowing for his purchase of daily stock. A case is also reported of a beggar who is known to own a gig; and still another of one known to charitable societies, who passed as blind for years, and is now in receipt of over £200 a year from the investment of the money he has accumulated. The opinion held by the tramp as to the propriety of supporting himself by his own exertions may be judged by the following incident which came to my knowledge about four years ago. A certain university professor, wishing to study the tramp question during a summer tour he made through England, interviewed something like 2000 wandering beggars, whom he questioned as to why they did not support themselves by work, classifying the *general* effect of their answers as follows: 653 said they were willing to work, but could not obtain employment; 445 gave vague, unsatisfactory answers; 301 expressed the opinion that no one ought to be obliged to work, but if some fools did so, they (the vagrants) considered they were justified in living on them; 407, according to their own statement, were proceeding to procure work at certain far-off localities; and the

remaining 194, having expectations, were living in hope until their relations should die and leave them money. The cases I have quoted above are some which chance has brought to light, but how many others are there which have escaped detection?

The causes which contribute to the formation of the vagrant and practically worthless classes would seem to be various. In our wealthy community there is a great deal of idle and thoughtless generosity which does not recognise that mere giving is a very lazy and often most pernicious species of benevolence. The highest form of charity is that which helps a man to help himself; for experience plainly shows that promiscuous and ill-judged almsgiving has a pauperising effect. As it is, in our present system of charity administration, we, to a great extent, encourage this instinct of idleness, and in acting contrary to the scheme of nature, we bring about in large numbers the survival of the unfit. We have an object-lesson for the above in a case which appeared in the papers not long ago. A skilled artisan, so expert with his tools that he could always make sure of well-paid employment if he chose to work, had taken to intemperate habits. He was shown to have been dismissed the workhouse more than thirty times; whenever he had entered it he was found to be suffering from alcoholism, and there were several convictions for petty thefts on record

against him. We have here the case of a man who could work and get well paid for it; in fact he did occasional spells of work sufficient to provide money for drinking bouts, and when, owing to his misconduct and indolence, he was in ill-health and penniless, he found medical attendance, board and lodging in the workhouse, all at the expense of the ratepayers, often themselves hard-working, frugal men, living on narrow incomes.

For many years past, public opinion in industrious Holland has decided that within the limits of the country there was no place for the social drone or the common beggar. In pursuance of this, industrial pauper colonies were established in different localities, and men and women found soliciting alms in public were at once sent to one of these for three months on first conviction, six months on second, and nine months on third or further convictions. The inmates during the time of their detention are employed on farm work or other useful industries, thus learning to support themselves. Their remuneration is somewhat below the ordinary market rate. Out of this a certain sum is deducted for their maintenance, and they receive the residue on leaving the establishment. From one standpoint these pauper colonies are a great success: they sweep the shameless beggar and the dangerous loafer from the streets and roads; they make mendicity a crime; they

induce amongst the poorer classes a healthy sense of thrift and self-reliance, and they connect pauperism with a wholesome sentiment of shame. In fact, the general results of the institutions are beneficial and widespread; they exercise such a well-directed and powerful moral influence that the State is a palpable gainer, and their existence is more than justified. It is thus found less expensive to keep the wastrels under lock and key, and work them, than to allow them to roam the country and prey on the community as alternate criminals and mendicants. In Holland, the law, backed up by emphatic public sentiment, distinctly carries out the principle that there is no room for useless and noxious weeds in the Dutchman's garden.

The beggar and the tramp belong to a class of persons who, fulfilling no duty, and exercising no function of civilised life, are simply worthless, degraded parasites, always ready to become criminals if opportunity is afforded. They render the roads unsafe, especially to women without protection, who are frightened into paying blackmail under the name of alms; repeatedly have ladies on their bicycles, and occasionally even men, been molested and robbed on lonely roads, which in many parts of the country are positively unsafe, as are often also the suburbs of the cities and towns. Especially at certain seasons they are infested by this dangerous refuse class, too lazy and good-for-nothing to work, but ever ready to acquire the fruits of others'

industry by whining, pilfering, or bullying as they find most expedient.

These human weeds are the creatures of early environment or faulty conditions of life, and I by no means wish to imply that they are absolutely irreclaimable. Were the Dutch system of State labour colonies introduced into the United Kingdom, the idle tramp and beggar would be placed under superior conditions, they would be made to understand that a certain amount of food and payment must be earned by an equivalent in work, and they would at least be taught how to apply themselves to some industry for which they might be fitted. Regular hours, proper food, steady employment, education for the young, well-directed mental culture, and the absence of alcoholic stimulants would change for the better the former habits of thought, and in some, probably in most cases, human waste would in time be transformed into good working material. The chief object to be gained by the measure which I propose would be this important one: the present wandering vagabond would in time learn that he must either gain his living by industry in freedom or under restrictions, but that in any event the disgraceful system of wandering mendicity would be no longer tolerated.

One of the difficulties connected with the problem of the unemployed lies in the fact that there may be many in some of the large towns wanting employment, while in other localities

labour is required and good wages offered, yet the unemployed have no means of knowing where they are wanted, To meet this difficulty, the Rev. Wilson Carlile, organiser of the Church Army, has proposed a scheme for the establishment of Labour Exchanges, which has since been partially carried out. A Central Labour and General Bureau should, he urged, be established, having branches in every part of the country, and in close touch with every kind of employment. Employers would be asked to report at fixed and regular intervals as to whether they required labour or not. Men and women desiring employment could also report the fact, stating what they were best fitted for ; the officials at the Central Bureau would thus always know at once where there was a plethora, and where a deficiency of labour, and a continual supply would be forthcoming when required. As generally men out of work might be without means to travel, especially to far-off districts, Mr. Carlile thinks that migration societies might be established, which would enable the applicants to move as desired. He also suggests that recreation and reading rooms might be arranged to which men and women could repair in the evening, and thus break that monotony of country life which undoubtedly drives so many to the towns. This gentleman's plan seems to be an excellent one ; if carried out in a common-sense manner, with certain obvious safeguards, it should be eminently successful, and

would go far to solving the unemployed labour question.¹

In the *Daily Mail* of June 1903 there appeared a paragraph to the effect that farmers in home counties were offering from five to eight shillings a day for men to mow hay. This fact was made known to the inmates of the Salvation Army shelter in Blackfriars Road, but out of eight hundred men only two admitted they could use the scythe. Had Mr. Carlile's scheme been in existence, abundance of men would have been forthcoming, they would have received excellent wages, and an important home industry would have been in no danger of failing from want of labour.

There is no doubt that a Poor Law of some kind is required, but I consider it ought to be of a very different nature from the present one. When a man comes to the State for aid it is equivalent to saying that he has failed to make a success of his own life. He asks the State to take him in hand. The State has a right to reply, "Yes! we will do our best to make a man of you, but you must give us a fair chance. You must not drift in and out of our charge at your own will—you must take service with us as a soldier does, and be under discipline; you will be humanely treated, and given

¹ According to a speech of Mr. Sydney Buxton, reported in the *Daily News* of 23rd April, the Labour Exchange had already filled 45,000 of the 67,000 applications made to them. There were at this time between 90 or 100 Exchanges open, and the above record is for 11 weeks' work.

such work as you are fit for, but you must stick to it till we think fit to discharge you." The State would then have a large army of labour, which should be under control, not of Bumble and his like as portrayed in Dickens' *Oliver Twist*, but of men who understand dealing with diseased minds and wills. They should be classified, allotted various tasks, and given motives for exerting and distinguishing themselves. There are many public employments, such as the reclamation of waste lands, re-afforesting, main drainage, road making, etc., to which they could be turned without trenching on the work done for commercial objects, or spoiling the market for ordinary labour; on the contrary, according to Mr. Carlile's scheme, they could supply that market. To find suitable tasks for women might be more difficult, but, at any rate, it could not afford any ground of complaint to the ordinary workman that each in the army of labour should be made to produce sufficient for his own maintenance, for that maintenance is paid for as it is somehow—usually by a degrading system of casual almsgiving—and it is better to make the pauper pay for it (by work) than maintain him for nothing. Of course the problem of the aged poor demands separate consideration. This consideration it has lately received in the form of an Old Age Pension scheme, a hasty and imperfect measure, upon which a few observations may be here in place.

We have in the United Kingdom a community

of 220,000 Israelites, and it should be noted that the majority of these belong to the poorer classes. The Israelite, however, does not take advantage of the Old Age Pension Act, because, with but few exceptions, at the age of seventy he has made for himself an income of more than twelve shillings a week. The few who have not done so, but who live with their families, are supported by them, the very few remaining who are isolated from their kindred, or who for any reason cannot be maintained by them, are cared for by excellently conducted Jewish charities. These are well supported by the Israelite population, well-to-do members of which, I may add, subscribe most generously as well to Christian benevolent associations. It will be seen, therefore, that only very rarely does a Jew of seventy years of age find himself constrained to apply for relief even to one of his own societies. The reason is obvious; the Israelite is very industrious, temperate, thrifty, and law-abiding. He denies himself when poor, in order that he may have a competence in his old age, and that he may be able to start his children in life. He thoroughly understands the value of time, he does not waste it; and as a worker he represents the survival of the fittest.

No doubt the present old age pension scheme relieves some very deserving cases amongst the aged poor, but I think, if closely regarded, it may be questioned whether as at present constituted its

supposed benefits are not heavily over-weighted by serious disadvantages. I think it must be evident that the great majority of the candidates for the five shillings a week cannot in early life have been particularly thrifty, industrious, temperate, or that they cultivated prudence and forethought. If they did, how is it that the Israelite who emphatically does cultivate these qualities avoids the stigma of the workhouse, or of support by the charity of others in the evening of his days? I believe it is only too evident that the British old age pension scheme, to a large extent at least, favours the worthless, putting a premium on improvidence, thriftlessness, idleness, and neglect of self-respect. At the same time the weekly allowance is too small to maintain an old and helpless person in any comfort and decency. A contributory scheme, such as Germany and France have adopted, would both enable the allowance to be raised, and would redeem the scheme from the reproach which it bears at present, of putting a premium on improvidence.

With the enormous burden of taxation now pressing on the inhabitants of the United Kingdom, it might be supposed that a measure requiring the nation to accept an additional burden of some £9,000,000 annually would at all events be regarded with much caution and deliberation. If the Act be critically examined, it may be doubted if its various provisions ensure the money being

spent in the best way for those who are to pay and for those who are to receive it. And it certainly evinces some signs of having been rushed through without proper deliberation, or even without the nation thoroughly understanding it in its different and somewhat complex bearings.

It might be questioned, why was not the contributory element imported into the Act? Whatever excellent qualities the British working classes may possess, thrift is not very evident as one of them, and frequently they seem little inclined to make provision for old age. The German workman, on the contrary, is intensely thrifty; the hard circumstances of life during past generations, as well as an admirable educational training, seem to have established a special, and in a sense even an hereditary instinct of prudence and foresight. Yet when the German Government some years ago passed an Old Age Pension Act, every worker was required to contribute during his working years to a fund by which he was to benefit. This clause in the Act is a perfectly just one; the principle of contribution by the beneficiaries themselves was, however, ignored when our Act was passed. Those of our community who, by a life of struggle and self-denial, have avoided pauperism, now pay a large proportion of £9,000,000 annually to pension those who for some cause have failed to make provision for themselves, but a large proportion, perhaps the bulk of this item of taxation, would not

exist had we copied the excellent judgment of the Germans.

There is another point from which we may scrutinise a measure which, at a time of serious depression, while placing an enormous yearly additional burden on the taxpayer, has for the present jeopardised our finances. The poor relief of the United Kingdom comes to about £17,000,000 sterling every year. In addition, according to HOWE'S CLASSIFIED DIRECTORY OF METROPOLITAN CHARITIES, published in 1910, there are in London no less than 756 benevolent institutions, with a total income of about £5,500,000. Of these, 600 charities state their income, but 156, also supported by private contributions, do not afford this information. A rough estimate of the incomes of the latter class may be made by striking an average of the incomes of the first class; and assuming that the average would apply to the latter, the estimate would represent the figures I have given. This calculation, however, by no means represents the total amount expended in private contributions to alleviate poverty. England might well be called the paradise of the wastrel, *i.e.* the human weed without a trace of self-respect or proper ambition, who, hating work, has no objection to exist on the labour of others. Indeed, through the length and breadth of Great Britain the country is honey-combed with various kinds of so-called benevolent institutions, every county town, every parish,

almost every village is supplied with charitable associations of some kind, while both the well-to-do and the great middle class, comprising large numbers of those who are themselves in straitened circumstances, give in the aggregate enormous sums in private and casual alms. Referring again to Howe's CLASSIFIED DIRECTORY OF CHARITIES, we find that there are for England and Wales alone no less than 1039 organised provincial hospitals and benevolent institutions for alleviating distress. As, according to the calculation I have made, the average yearly income for metropolitan charities comes to £7166 each, I consider at the most moderate estimate the average for the provincial charities may amount to £1000 each, giving a total for them of about £1,040,000. Besides this, large sums are bequeathed every year in legacies to benevolent institutions, the total of the bequests for the past few years giving an average of more than £4,300,000. In order to relieve poverty, therefore, we provide as follows:—

Poor rate relief, about	£17,400,000
Organised London charities, about	5,500,000
Charitable bequests, last three years, average about	4,300,000
Provincial charities, about	1,040,000
	<hr/>
	<u>£28,240,000</u>

If we add to this £9,000,000 a year of old age pensions, we find that the country gives no less than £37,240,000 yearly to relieve distress, and

this is taking no account of the organised charities of Scotland and Ireland, or of the very large sums expended annually on private almsgiving to necessitous persons, street beggars, tramps, etc. The figures for these not being available, only a rough estimate can be made, but it may be safely assumed that the total sum given yearly by taxation and voluntary almsgiving to relieve distress and poverty in the United Kingdom must be considerably over £40,000,000 annually. We thus expend far more in charity than any country in Europe; yet, notwithstanding this, or perhaps in consequence of it, owing to loose management and bad administration, we have more paupers on our hands than any country in Europe, in proportion to our population. The facts and figures I have given must surely argue that there is something radically wrong in our system of charitable administration. Yet the people of the United Kingdom have just saddled themselves with a yearly tax for old age pensions which, if capitalised at twenty-five years' purchase, would represent £225,000,000.

It will not be disputed by any one with the most elementary knowledge of social conditions that the most well-meant benevolence may, if injudiciously employed, be highly mischievous in its operation. For instance, Mr. Carlile informs me that, according to his experience, there are numbers of men who distinctly refuse to work, as they prefer begging, and cites one instance of a beggar coolly

saying that he could not *afford* to work. He further mentioned that at one of the provincial labour homes in connection with the Church Army an inmate complained to the officer in charge that honest work did not pay him so well as begging. The officer expressed some doubt as to this, but the question was practically settled by the man going out and returning in two hours with five shillings, "The result of heartrending appeals on behalf of a poor unemployed working man."

A statement of Mr. Carlile's with reference to the processions of the unemployed during a recent winter is worthy of notice :—

"During the mid-day halt in Hyde Park, large numbers of processionists used to call at the Church Army headquarters close by. Many of these were given our work-food tickets, which entitle the bearer to a meal on completion of fifteen minutes' wood-chopping. Although one of our Labour Dépôts, where these tickets may be presented, is distant only three minutes' walk, very few of the men turned up, and those who did so walked away disgusted on finding that the short work-test would be enforced.

"Others of the same body of men were told to apply at our receiving office close by at 2 p.m., when arrangements would be made for finding work for as many as possible. Hardly a single man turned up, urging that this would prevent their joining the procession, and in a few days, finding that we tested the willingness to work of all applicants, the numbers from this source dwindled away."

If those forming the processions of unemployed were really desirous of work, how is it that farmers are continually complaining of the scarcity of men in the rural districts? Not long ago correspondents of the *Express* pointed out that business firms, especially those who employed porters, were absolutely unable to get their work done owing to the numbers of men who absented themselves in order to join the unemployed processions and share in the collections. At the period of the supposed distress during the winter of 1903, the Church Army had special labour yards opened in every part of London, and in these, assistance was offered to all willing to work, married men being paid at the rate of half-a-crown a day. Mr. Carlile tells me that thousands were thus assisted, though no man *earned* the wages given at wood-chopping, but he proved his *bona fides*, and the loss was borne by the Church Army. Thus, there being doubtless a certain amount of distress prevalent, assistance was benevolently given, and those really willing to work were saved from the stigma of begging and the loss of self-respect. The above-mentioned gentleman declared that if the money so carelessly poured into the money boxes of the processionists had been given by the public to the Church Army and other properly administered societies of like nature, it would have been possible to offer relief to all willing to work.

The tramping community seems to be increas-

ing rapidly, and no wonder, considering their easy life. Their easy means of getting money is illustrated by the following. During a period of twelve months I have noted recorded in the daily press six cases of prosecution for begging, in all of which these outcasts had in their possession at the time, sums of money ranging from £90 downwards, the smallest amount being £9, 2s. 4½d., while in the case of a woman who died in a poorhouse, she was found to be in possession of £270. Again, a man applying for medical relief at the parochial offices had £112 in cash and at the bank. This would probably not have been discovered were it not for the fact of his suddenly dying while awaiting the medical officer. I see it also noticed in the papers that a Leeds tramp has died in the workhouse, leaving £800 to his next-of-kin.

From an early period of our history it has been customary for well-meaning people to leave money by will to form an annual fund for the relief of special kinds of distress. According to a work by Mr. Kenny on endowed charities, the sum of £383,029 was spent *yearly* from this source in doles, small gifts of money, or kind; yet the general result has proved distinctly mischievous. In the same work (p. 50) there is the following statement:—

“At Lichfield, where the inspector found upwards of £800 a year distributed in doles, he reports: ‘The charities have turned half the

inhabitants of Lichfield into beggars; hence idleness, drunkenness, poaching, and thieving. It is impossible to exaggerate the evils they produce.'"

Further on he states :

"I have received testimony from some of the most intelligent inhabitants, who take the greatest interest in the welfare of the poor, that the charities produce a vast amount of beggary, idleness, lying and profligacy, and destroy the feelings of self-respect and independence, and these are great instruments of demoralisation in Lichfield." ¹

Like causes produced similar evil results elsewhere, as we find that in Canterbury, out of a population of 18,000, there was a total charity income of £9100, including a sum of £2000 a year given in doles. It appears that the candidates who scrambled for them amounted to about a thousand, sometimes representing households of four or five persons; thus, counting only the individual applicants, the well-meant but ill-judged bequests in a well-to-do cathedral city transformed one person in eighteen into a whining beggar. The supplicants, it is stated, were nearly all women who could have earned the money over and over again while canvassing for it. According to the inspector, a wine merchant in Canterbury stated that on the day of the distribution of the 10s. gifts he received seventy sums of 10s. over the counter. When, on a certain occasion, some investigation was instituted

¹ PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS, 1868, 9, xxi. 54.

as to the circumstances of 400 of these applicants, it was discovered that 145 of them were so comfortably off that they were not proper objects of charity, or they were of such bad character that they were undeserving.¹

In Bedford an ancient charitable endowment worth originally £40 a year had increased in 1853 to £12,000 a year, but so far from relieving want, its effects proved to be most injurious, and as far back as 1833 the following report was made to the Poor Law Inquiry Commission :—

“There are very few labouring men in my parish who save anything. The great Bedford Charity has had a bad effect on the minds of all the working classes. They are discontented because they think that there is an ample provision for the poor whenever they are thrown out of work. I have heard an engineer resident in the town say that he dare not employ a Bedford hand, they are so idle. A stranger has lately contracted to light the town with gas. He declared that of all the places where he had undertaken such work, he never met with such an idle set as the Bedford men. Thus they show by their actions that the charity is no real blessing to them. But the class above the mere working people are also affected by this charity to their injury. They imagine that they will be provided for in the almshouses if ever they come to poverty, and they are not careful and provident, but rather extravagant, in their mode of

¹ REPORT OF POPULAR EDUCATION COMMISSION, vi. 517.

living. In times of popular excitement the poorer sort will speak out and say the pauper's charity should be theirs, and if they had justice done them they need not work at all."¹

I have presented the above to the reader as an example of the manner in which the administration of charity, so frequently drifting into abuses, defeats the original object of the donor. It is satisfactory to know that some measure of reform has been applied to the Bedford endowment, yet subsequently Bedford, with a population of only 15,000, possessed a charity income of £3035, which was spent to the encouragement of improvidence in marriage portions, apprentice fees, almshouses, and doles. The assistant commissioner of the Schools Inquiry Commission reported with reference to the charity income that it

“Colours and determines the whole life of many in Bedford. It teaches the father to marry for the sake of his wife's small portion; it takes the child from infancy and educates him in a set form; settles the course of his life by an apprentice fee; pauperises him by doles, and takes away a chief object of industry by the prospect of an almshouse.”

It must be apparent that, want being to a great extent the driving force of human effort, the indiscriminate giving of alms must encourage pauperism, discourage self-reliance, attract and even create an idle, helpless, non-progressive class,

¹ See POOR LAW INQUIRY COMMISSION, FIRST REPORT, 1834.

thus producing evils greater than those which it was intended to remedy. Admitting, then, that ill-judged and misdirected charity has called into being some serious and rapidly increasing evils, it becomes a question how we can best recognise those evils, and how can the remedies be best applied. This matter cannot, of course, be exhaustively treated in the limits of this chapter, but if Mr. Carlile's admirable suggestions, with possibly some additions, were carried out, the question would be practically solved as regards the street beggar and the tramp. No one with the slightest knowledge of the subject will deny that they form a class which is utterly worthless. They are also dangerous and undesirable: as such they ought to be effectively and promptly suppressed.

CHAPTER IX

BEHIND THE MASK

Fraudulent charities—Three classes of charitable organisations—
Methods of establishing and working a fraudulent charity—
“Anon”—Working expenses and income—Mr. Chignell on
London hospitals—“Where are the securities?”—Proposed
method of public control.

“A LARGE proportion of the London charities could be prosecuted for obtaining money under false pretences.” This statement was made to me by an English clergyman who had been in a position which gave him special opportunities for investigating the administration of so-called benevolent institutions. At the same time, he would have been perhaps nearer the exact truth if he had said, “They *deserve* to be prosecuted,” for usually, though not invariably, the persons connected with this species of imposition shelter themselves under legal technicalities, and are tolerably safe from criminal prosecution. I knew the gentleman to whom I allude intimately; I found him exceedingly clear-headed and intelligent, very devoted to his professional duties, a resolute enemy of any kind of imposture, especially when practised under

the cloak of religion. My interlocutor then proceeded to details in a plain, well-defined manner; he took case after case which had come under his own observation, and after several conversations on the subject, combined with careful inquiries which I made from other independent sources, I was completely satisfied that gross deception plays a large part in the solicitation for charitable subscriptions, and that in many cases benevolent institutions are carried on very largely for the benefit of employees connected with them; also that in the administration, money is often misapplied, wasted, or even embezzled. I have also good reason for believing that in cases of charities being established for the benefit of poor or helpless members of the community, the supposed recipients of benefactions are frequently neglected, sometimes even cruelly treated, and that in addition a very large proportion of the subscribing and almsgiving public are thoroughly duped and deceived by plausibly worded circulars and prospectuses. In fact, while fraud in connection with the administration of charity is much more common, it is also more easily perpetrated than is generally believed, and multifarious are the means by which a confiding public can be, and often is, hoodwinked.

The character of the many benevolent institutions of England may be roughly divided into three classes:—

(1) Those, thoroughly dishonest in their work-

ing, formed by unprincipled persons simply with the idea of making money by trading on the credulity and kindly feelings of the moneyed class.

(2) Those presided over by committees composed of men who have themselves no wish to be dishonest, but who perform their duties in a perfunctory manner, who do not trouble themselves to scrutinise accounts or look after the conduct of subordinates, and thus open a door for mismanagement, waste, and misappropriation of funds.

(3) Those organisations which are worked with discretion and judgment, money being applied according to the intention of the donors, and care being taken to keep working expenses within reasonable limits. The latter class, I firmly believe, are much in the minority.

Having at different times taken advantage of opportunities which were thrown in my way of investigating the administration of charities, I have arrived at the conclusion that few careers present such facilities for dishonestly gaining an income with a minimum of work and with a maximum of safety from detection as that of the manager or secretary of a fraudulent "one-man" society, founded ostensibly for a benevolent object. The founder, who may be also the secretary, requires as his stock-in-trade an unblushing assurance, a certain knowledge of human nature, combined with an aptitude for deception, a small capital for advertising purposes, rent of offices, etc., for the

first year, a readiness in giving forth conventional religious phrases, and he must be thoroughly unfettered by moral scruples or any sentiment of integrity. After careful consideration this fellow selects some subject relative to which he makes his appeal. The fact that there are already 756 benevolent institutions,¹ real or spurious, in existence in London, presents no insuperable obstacle to his plans, as amongst the many sub-divisions in our teeming population, aid is often wanted, sometimes loudly clamoured for, and it is always easy to start a society with avowedly the same objects as those of others already in being, but under a slightly different name. A plausibly worded appeal is printed and circulated, the excellent objects of the society, with the fact that its purpose is to satisfy an urgent want, are duly set forth, and the organiser spends a good deal of time on house-to-house visiting in likely quarters. A man of this description finds a happy hunting-ground amongst single ladies with moderate incomes, pious, credulous, confiding, not much accustomed to the circumstances of business life, and but slightly acquainted with accounts or balance-sheets. The oily-tongued hypocrite thoroughly understands how prone weak-minded, ignorant women are to be deceived by Scripture quotations; these are largely employed, and bring in a rich harvest of contributions.

¹ Exclusive of a vast number of provincial charities.

The promoter of the charity, if he be shrewd, and he generally is so, can place himself in a very secure position, his object being mainly to avoid two dangers—first, that of exposing himself to legal penalties (and in the present state of the law this is by no means difficult); secondly, he must manage his operations so that having once gained the public confidence he must not lose it. This is not quite so easy, but with due vigilance and skilful play on the benevolent feelings of a very large but gullible class, the end may be attained and a fine income netted. In order to make everything look well the operator may appoint a committee, nominees of his own, possibly connections, or in some way dependants, who may even have an indirect pecuniary interest in the scheme. It is, of course, not considered necessary or desirable to give addresses of the committee, so at the outset every obstacle is thrown in the way of troublesome inquiries; but glowing reports are issued, circulars are distributed, and perhaps occasional meetings are arranged when carefully prepared speeches are made to an audience got together by invitations sent to subscribers and sympathisers. Complimentary remarks are made referring to the energy and devotion displayed by the individual who conceived the happy thought of bringing into being so much needed an institution; then, after the business transactions are over, a selected number of the audience, including of course the press

reporters, are invited to a good champagne luncheon, and every means are taken to make the society and its objects widely known.

It seldom, if ever, occurs that the operator applies the entire sum subscribed to his own private use; he must have something to show for what he has received, and he takes care to have evidence that to a certain extent the benevolent object is attained, but at the same time he takes still more care to make a distinctly good thing for himself. As a further bait to a confiding public, accounts are audited; but an audit, unless carried out by a firm of old and high repute, may be a very fallacious test, as accounts can be cooked by a complaisant accountant in any way to suit the taste of the person who employs him. I have myself heard of a case in which, when accounts were submitted for examination, the auditor naïvely asked whether it was desired that a debit or credit should be shown. Even when the auditor is perfectly honest, it must be remembered he has to report on accounts, statements, and figures submitted to him, but he may know absolutely nothing of transactions which are kept in the background. He sees rows of figures representing receipts and expenditure; he examines them, finds the addition and balance are correct, and certifies that they are so, but is ignorant as to how many sums have been received and not shown or accounted for, nor is he likely to ask awkward

questions of a man who has engaged him, and is moreover to pay him. The above point especially merits the attention of the almsgiving public. Again, a balance-sheet may yield practically no information. Many show the cost of management to be suspiciously great, but the separate details of the expenses are not given; various expenses, representing thousands of pounds, are also often lumped together.

Even when the items are recorded, vouchers may not be forthcoming for many of the items; but the addition is perfectly correct, and an easily deceived public is content. A balance-sheet, apparently quite correct, may fail to disclose misappropriation of money in the following directions: Entries of subscriptions may be suppressed, or several persons may send subscriptions of the same amount with the request that their names should not be published in the report. Thus let us suppose that four persons subscribe £5 each under this condition; in the report one item of £5 may appear as *Anon.* The secretary or manager can by these means place the balance in his pocket, and each subscriber supposes that his or hers must be the sum indicated. When the secretary of a society receives a large subscription in person, he sometimes reminds the subscriber that if the full name appears in the yearly report of subscriptions, he is likely to be inundated by solicitations for subscriptions to other institutions, which of course

is a bore and a nuisance, and then the thoughtful secretary ventures to take the liberty of suggesting that in order to avoid being harassed by these demands, the generous subscriber should permit the gift to appear as anonymous; no one will be the wiser, and this plan will prevent worry. It is also true that no one is the wiser if the manager or secretary helps himself, and a suggestion of the above nature should always be looked on with suspicion.

Generally when benevolent institutions receive subscriptions they are acknowledged by a printed receipt form, the counterfoil of which is kept for the information of the auditors, but sometimes the secretary merely forwards a private note of thanks, or, if he wishes, he can supply himself with a second printed receipt book, the counterfoils of which never appear. Always supposing the secretary to be a rogue, he can make money by fictitious payments for work *supposed* to be done. If the auditor insists on seeing vouchers for this, a man who has entered on a career of fraud will find little difficulty in forging a tradesman's signature or altering figures, and then the account is passed without further question. Of course in the above operation there is a certain amount of risk, but this the operator discounts beforehand, and he lays his plans so as to avoid it as far as possible. The law is unfortunately very weak in dealing with operations of this kind. In the case of a society

which is practically in the hands of one man, the latter may show no accounts, or his accounts, carefully prepared by the friendly auditor, may show nothing representing legal fraud, a thing easily accomplished by the favourite device of dividing expenditure into lump sums, the object for each having some vague designation, but no details being shown. Should suspicion be excited as to misappropriation of funds, the man is safe from prosecution for embezzlement as he is not a salaried servant: he cannot be proceeded against for obtaining money under false pretences, for in the legal sense there is no falsity, the charity does exist, a certain amount of money is spent on it, but out of the money subscribed the manager or secretary can pay himself just as much as he likes, he is not obliged to show accounts, as there is no partnership; the incomings, the outgoings, and the accounts are in his hands, and the sharper can at present defy the law. Within the last few years revelations which have appeared in the public journals as to the management of various societies clearly show how utterly valueless audits and balance-sheets may be, except indeed to the rogues they screen. The real danger to the unscrupulous manager lies in the risk of being exposed in some journal having a good circulation. Men of this class are, it is true, thus exposed from time to time, but strange to say it has been found a matter of great difficulty to protect the public

against themselves. A large section of them would positively seem not to wish to be protected, and they still keep on subscribing in spite of the most flagrant and repeated instances of misappropriation.

A distinct moral, though not legal, fraud can be, and I have reason to believe is, frequently carried on in the following manner. Some "one-man" benevolent society having been established, it is found that buildings of a kind are necessary; so, ground being purchased, they are erected in due course, the entire outlay being provided by the funds subscribed. The ground and buildings, however, are registered in the *name of the manager*, and in point of law then become his private property. Should he die his heirs-at-law can claim the property as their own, or he can dispose of it by will, or if he chooses he can sell it, the purchase-money being legally his own, and the law at present thoroughly protects him in the entire transaction. Subscribers to charities which own houses or lands therefore cannot be too careful to see that such property should be vested in reliable and substantial trustees, but *never in the name of any one man*. I myself know a case of a person who, having started a charity by public subscription, acquired for the working of the institution some property, which is now of considerable value; when he died his heirs claimed it, and produced a will by which it had been left to them as *their private property*. They

immediately entered on possession, and they were legally justified in doing so.

It would be very well if those who support benevolent objects of any kind should thoroughly understand how a dishonest secretary or manager can, with but slight risk of detection, and by various devices, without even the smallest risk of legal consequences, apply to his private use a large proportion of the yearly subscriptions, and, still strictly keeping within the law, leave substantial properties to his heirs. Let us suppose, for illustration's sake, that the operator manages to secure yearly subscriptions of £4000, he can easily manipulate matters as above described so as to appropriate to himself say £2000 a year; the rest is spent on the charity, mission, orphanage, home, or whatever it may be, and to all outward appearances the work is quite genuine. As long as dust can be thrown in the eyes of the public the knave who has generally, if not always, commenced the disreputable part of his career as a broken-down penniless adventurer, can enjoy a very comfortable income undisturbed by any qualms of conscience, though guilty of the contemptibly mean offence of applying to his private benefit money confided to him for charitable purposes.

In the case of a society being managed by a committee, those composing it may be men who would shrink from any one of the practices before mentioned, and who enjoy the reputation of honour-

able, upright gentlemen. Experience shows, however, that even an honest committee is seldom a real safeguard if the secretary be a knave, and for this reason: at the first formation of a benevolent society the different members may show a fair amount of energy and intelligence in its management, but in most cases with which I have become acquainted, matters drifted by degrees into the control of the secretary or other subordinates. The committee meet on certain days, the proceedings of the previous meeting are read out and signed by the chairman, a report of what has been done since then is read out by the secretary, who has himself prepared it. On his statement that a certain sum of money is required until next meeting, a cheque is signed, sometimes in blank, to be filled up by him at his discretion, but there is seldom any real scrutiny, and mere routine work is got through without proper investigation.

The explanation of this is pretty obvious. Each member of the committee is unpaid, he gives his work and time voluntarily, he loses nothing by dismissal, and he certainly will not be dismissed, for carelessness, by others on the committee who are as unbusinesslike as he is himself. If now and then some member of the committee asks questions or criticises something in the management, he is speedily considered a nuisance, and one who takes up the time of the members by captious fault-finding; his very questions imply

want of confidence in the excellent secretary, whom the others regard as a well-conducted, hard-working, respectable man, one who saves them a great deal of trouble by his systematic management. Unpaid work is nearly always defective and perfunctory in character, so in time the management, organisation, and control of the funds glide into the power of the secretary. Once this man finds that he has so much in his power he is subject to an hourly temptation; he may be poor and have nothing but his salary, which possibly is not high; risk of detection is very slight, and out of the number of cheques of equal amounts coming in continually to be published in the report as *Anon*, or represented by the same initial or pseudonym, a man of weak principles yields to temptation and considerably augments his income.

The ease with which transactions of this kind can be carried on may be exemplified by the following instances. There exists a charity instituted with a very excellent object, and which is well supported. On its formation many years ago the committee was composed of men of high reputation, a large proportion, if not the majority, being clergymen. A casual circumstance coming to the knowledge of a certain gentleman excited his suspicions as to the correct working of the society. The matter was laid before the committee, and on their being, after some trouble, convinced that an investigation was called for, an independent auditor was

requested to report on the financial state of the association. He proceeded to do so, but was at once confronted with the fact that the accounts for many years past were not in existence, the reason given being that it was the custom of the society to *destroy the accounts* of each past year. On the accounts for the current year, however, being examined, amongst other irregularities it was found that a large sum of money could not be satisfactorily accounted for. The committee also had been, to say the least, incredibly negligent; they had given blank cheques to be filled up for expenses of the society; they had apparently not exercised the slightest scrutiny, and they had passed, probably quite in good faith, accounts which in some quarter, whether by accident or design, had been falsified. It would be interesting to know whether, if the past accounts had been forthcoming, they would have shown similar irregularities. The society was reorganised, and I believe it is now conducted on better principles, but what had become of the money which was found to be deficient?

As the committee were in point of fact trustees for public funds collected for a charitable purpose, it does not tend to convey a favourable opinion of their business habits when we find that on investigation of the one year's accounts which were submitted, a certain portion of the deficiency just mentioned was accounted for as having been spent

in refreshments for the committee on the days of their assembly, though it was not entered as such. Remembering that the subscribers to charities are often themselves in very needy circumstances and unable to afford themselves the luxuries of life, it seems highly objectionable that any portion of the funds should be expended on luncheons to the committee, festivals, or banquets; yet one balance-sheet of another benevolent institution discloses the item of £500 for expenses of annual festival.¹

Buildings connected with charitable societies are often highly ornamental, sometimes palatial; thus large and disproportionate sums spent on building and continual repairs make serious inroads into the funds. The question must therefore arise: Are any of the officials or committee ever directly or indirectly interested in an expenditure quite beyond the actual needs of the institutions? Indirect and secret commissions have a very mischievous tendency, and in these days, when they enter so much into business transactions, it is to be feared that public charities have not escaped the contagion. I am myself aware of several cases of money having been paid as commission for good offices in connection with benevolent objects, two of the recipients being clergymen.

Another mode of levying contributions on a confiding public is for a man or woman to pose as

¹ LONDON CHARITIES, by Chignell, p. 6.

collector for some person or persons who have fallen into distress. A harrowing, possibly in most cases a more or less true, tale is told, a house-to-house visitation is instituted, frequently with excellent pecuniary results. There may be no committee, office, or secretary, no accounts need be shown, and if they are, what guarantee is there that they are correct? The collector makes his or her plausible statement, and no doubt the individual for whom the special appeal is made does receive a certain amount of assistance; but very little reflection is necessary to perceive how easily one who is dishonest can, by the above means, secure a comfortable income with comparatively little risk of detection.

Those in affluent circumstances, who sympathise with the sufferings of others, may often feel at a loss as to how to act when heartrending petitions are made to them on behalf of those who it is represented are in great and urgent need. The person from whom help is solicited may have little or no knowledge of the intermediary, who to outward appearances may be an educated and upright person, but at the same time he or she, for they are often women, may be arrant knaves, with dishonest past records, and in this case how can the charitable assure themselves as to the *bona fides* of the applicant? The difficulty can, however, be easily solved by application for information to the Secretary of the Charity Organisation Society,

284 Vauxhall Bridge Road. The main object of this association is to sift thoroughly cases which come before it ; the work is very efficiently executed, and due warning is given when anything of a fraudulent nature is detected. With such ample means of verification, therefore, at hand, it would be well if the charitably disposed would at all events regard with caution solicitations made to them by strangers—and make careful inquiries before giving.

An examination into the administration of the London charities discloses the fact that they differ widely among themselves in the proportion their working expenses bear to their incomes. Thus, in some, cost of management amounts to twenty-five per cent. ; in some it is as low as five per cent.,¹ and it would seem that in certain cases unnecessarily large sums are paid, or that a number of officials in excess of actual requirements are engaged. There is a strong tendency observed also in committees of charities to invest in securities of different kinds, and thus some of the societies have become possessed of a large capital. Occasionally, it is true, bequests are made with the proviso that they are to be invested, but this is by no means always so, and it is open to question if it is desirable that any large sums should be invested year by year, while at the same time the various committees are making urgent appeals to the public for help.

In 1892 a brochure on the administration of

¹ LONDON CHARITIES, by Chignell, p. 36.

charities was published by Mr. Robert Chignell, who lays great stress on the fact that hospitals enjoying large incomes by subscription, and being also wealthy in lands, houses, and funds invested, "should show a deficit in accounts and thereupon ask for extra subscriptions." Mr. Chignell also quotes from a pamphlet written on the accounts of charities by Mr. Michell, in which the following very significant passage occurs :—

"I will now say a word or two of hospital accounts generally. Does not their publication at present almost amount to a farce? The items of expenditure are jumbled up together in a way that would confuse any one. Investments are put down as expenditure; certain receipts are not included under income, but are placed to a separate account. Some hospitals publish no regular income and expenditure account; others publish such accounts, but omit the balance-sheet; whilst others, again, mix income and expenditure sheet and balance-sheets together, forming a species of accounts that can only be intelligible, if at all, to the innermost recesses of the author's own mind, and very few publish any capital account at all. Almost all, however, make a statement that the cost per bed occupied has been so much, though in no single instance have I been able to work out the figures. Something has been added or deducted to suit the taste of the official who prepared the statement, or of the manager he serves. The most general effect that seems to be striven for, is to manufacture a deficiency where there is not one. The object of

this is to make the accounts look as if the charity were in debt. . . .

“This is the reason we frequently find so many accounts in one report. Legacies are placed to one account, so are certain donations, so are separate collections, and in other ways the requisite deficiency is manufactured. How many persons understand an annual report? For my part I have gone through this year some two hundred reports, making careful extracts, and trying to glean some information about the charities to which they refer; and with a result which, so far as knowledge was concerned, was, in a large number of cases, almost *nil*. If I, who for a period of eleven years have been thoroughly conversant with charity accounts and with the administration and financing of hospitals, find a difficulty in gaining information, how much greater must be the difficulty of the ordinary subscriber who has not studied the subject, but who gives his money with a cheerful confidence, which is as beautiful as it is blind? As a rule he is absolutely in the dark. He has no means whatever of judging whether the charity is worthy of support, or whether it is carried on at a rate of expenditure which is both reckless and ruinous. How few charities there are in which the subscription list is ever added up! But without this, who can tell if all the subscriptions have been carried to account or if deductions have been made before the figures appear in the table of the income and expenditure? At present there is no system in publishing the accounts. The secretary or manager does what he likes.”

Mr. Chignell also remarks that after careful inspection of the accounts of all the special hospitals, *i.e.* those established for the relief of *special* complaints, he could allege nothing against them beyond the fact that the accounts were in many cases mystified, and that in some few the cost of management amounted to 20 per cent., while in the majority of similar institutions it was from 10 to 12 per cent. Since the publication of Mr. Chignell's pamphlet seventeen years have elapsed, it is therefore earnestly to be hoped that the irregularities to which he there drew attention have at least to some extent been rectified; but I think it must be conceded that some very sweeping measures are called for, involving a certain amount of direct government supervision through responsible officials in relation to the management of public charities and benevolent associations.

There is another point which I think merits special attention, because it is connected with large pecuniary interests. In Mr. Chignell's work he states (p. 33) that missionary and other religious societies have two millions invested, that hospitals and kindred institutions have an aggregate amount of three millions invested in various securities, and this does not include an immense money value in freeholds, leaseholds, and mortgages; while about seven hundred remaining benevolent societies have investments of above two millions, making a total of more than seven millions. From a strictly

business point of view the natural question arises, *Where are the securities?* Who keeps possession of the certificates of the various investments, on which, be it remembered, money could easily be raised? Do the committees personally and thoroughly verify the existence of such, or do they take the simple word of a secretary or other official that everything is "all right"? It appears that in a large number of accounts the only evidence of the existence of their investments in the balance-sheet is the entry of dividends accruing from them. One thing is quite certain: not one in a thousand of the subscribing public knows how the funds are invested, who has the keeping of the securities, or what safeguards are used to keep them intact. But the public are the generous and very confiding paymasters, therefore it seems to me that they have an undoubted right to information on the above points, and that they should be supplied with it in a perfectly clear and distinct form. Experience, and that of very recent times, has amply shown how absolutely unsafe trust money is, if it is not protected by checks and safeguards which render misappropriation practically impossible.

As a remedy for the loose and anomalous manner in which most English charities are conducted, and the failure of committees in general to exercise proper control over their officials, I would suggest a measure which indeed has already been strongly advocated, namely, the appointment

by Government of a central board of control, the members to be carefully selected, but to have ample powers :

(1) To scrutinise all accounts, and not only this, but to insist on their being prepared and published in full detail and on a uniform system.

(2) To have accounts audited in the most complete form by independent accountants.

(3) The Board should have the power of inspecting institutions when it might be deemed requisite to do so.

(4) Power should be given to the Board to deal with palpably bogus societies by suppressing them, and thus protect the public.

(5) The Board should report to the Home Office separately on each institution, stating their opinion if they considered too lavish an expenditure had been incurred, if the working expenses were too great, if they had cause to suspect that the funds were misapplied or misappropriated, or if there should be any objectionable features in the working of the institution.

If a few public men interested in the administration of charities, and whose names commanded respect, would take up the matter in Parliament, an Act might be passed on the above lines which would be a lasting benefit to the really deserving poor, a powerful check on many great but little known abuses, and would clear the way for

valuable reforms in the administration of our benevolent societies.

Pending this proposed measure, which it is to be hoped may some day become law, something might be done which would contribute a large instalment of reform. This could be effected if any of the genuine and honestly worked societies were to combine and form a general committee of one or more members from each, who would meet on certain occasions and exercise a general supervision over the preparation of accounts and reports. The former should be clear, comprehensive, and uniform in character. Under the supervision of independent, intelligent, business-like men they would be free from the obscurities and subterfuges unfortunately so common to many of them; and once the reports were ratified by such a body as the above, the public would be justified in giving their subscriptions with more confidence than they have any reason to feel at present.

CHAPTER X

WASTED NATIONAL RESOURCES

Wasted national resources—Waste lands and foreign timber—Forestry in France—In Germany—In Belgium—The coming timber famine—Resources of North America—Potential resources of Britain—Present treatment of these resources compared with foreign countries—The New Forest—Advantages of afforestation—Prospects in Ireland—Coniferous timber and oak in England and Ireland—Objections answered—Probable profits—Methods of promoting forestation—Public action necessary—Financial basis of the scheme—Instances of success.

WE have at the present time two immense sources of wealth lying waste in our country. These, if combined and utilised by intelligence and common sense, would produce a most valuable national asset long before this generation had passed away. There are now throughout the land great masses of able-bodied men who ask for employment. We are paying annually to the foreigner about £22,000,000 for wood of a kind which we could produce ourselves.¹ At the same time, according

¹ Exclusive of manufactured wood, wood-pulp, furniture, mahogany, and other woods not growing in the British Isles. See STATISTICAL ABSTRACT for 1909. In 1907 the import of wood-pulp alone came to £3,312,347. (Nisbet, OUR FOREST AND WOODLANDS, p. 12.)

to the evidence given before the Departmental Committee on British Forestry appointed by the Board of Agriculture in 1902, we have 21,000,000 acres of waste land and rough pasture, or land out of cultivation, a large proportion of which might with profit be afforested.

The French, with a keen eye to making the most of their national resources, saw about forty years ago that large tracts of waste land could be turned to account, and they seized their opportunity. At that time the bare scorching districts of the Landes, covering an area of nearly 5400 square miles, were most unproductive and unpromising. Sparsely inhabited by a few shepherds, whose flocks gained a meagre subsistence from wretchedly poor soil, the immense plain was looked upon as the desert of France. French forestry specialists, however, discerned that if crops were impossible and pasturage scanty, the land could nevertheless be made highly profitable. In some localities it was found to be admirably adapted to the growth of the Bordeaux pine and the cork-oak; these were planted in abundance, but in districts abutting on the Bordeaux vineyards the soil has been found suitable for trees of the most varied description. Now large tracts formerly producing only stunted bushes, ferns, and broom, are covered by magnificent woodlands, and the French have reaped the reward of their intelligence.

I cannot forbear quoting the remarkable

account of the redemption of "Les Landes," given in the report of the Council of the Garonne to the French Forestry Department in 1882 :—

"This is one of the most beautiful pages in the history of civilisation and progress—a region which, thirty years ago, was one of the poorest and most miserable in France, but which may now be ranked among the wealthy and prosperous. There is at the present time about one and a half million of acres of pine (*Pinus maritima*) on the Landes, and though the soil is of the poorest description, these trees have grown fairly well. Where thirty years ago a few thousand poor and unhealthy shepherds were walking about on stilts to raise themselves above the unwholesome flats, watching their flocks feeding on the scant herbage, there are now villages with sawmills, wood-working factories, charcoal kilns, turpentine distilleries; and for more than seventy miles are seen these vast forests, interspersed with fertile agricultural lands, where farmers and foresters by the thousand are finding a healthy and prosperous existence."¹

In the same way the Germans, too wise and thrifty to forego national profit when it could be earned, a nation of specialists also, employed the most approved scientific methods in utilising their waste lands. In these they planted varieties of trees according to the soil and locality to which they were best adapted, with an immense national

¹ The translation is taken from the REPORT OF THE RECESS COMMITTEE (Ireland), 1896, p. 26.

benefit. Their net receipts from State forests amounted to £4,480,002 per annum, when a Departmental Committee reported on British forestry in 1902. The net receipts from public and private forests, as stated by Dr. Schlich in 1901, amount to nearly thirteen millions sterling.¹

That the industry could be made an important and valuable one in the United Kingdom, if followed on the same practical lines as in France and Germany, is patent from the fact that the latter country has an average annual revenue of about £14,000,000 net from public and private forests and fruit orchards, while the value of the entire forest property is estimated at £700,000,000. Unfortunately, although we have already established a school of forestry, we appear to be somewhat behind the French and Germans in scientific instruction. With an immense army of unemployed men, why do we not give them at the same time State aid and State employment in afforestation, thus eventually adding considerably to our revenue, and diminishing to a large extent our present enormous national expenditure for foreign timber?

The advantage of planting waste and otherwise unproductive land has become apparent also to the Belgian people, and, since 1897, the Government has been engaged in acquiring waste lands and planting them. At the present time over 60,000 acres have been purchased and afforested by the

¹ See *Journal of Society of Arts* for 11th March 1901.

State.¹ The different communes also which own lands useless for agriculture, receive subsidies from Government as an encouragement to plant, and the industry has become most valuable. Over 380,000 acres of forest-land are owned by the communes, while about 800,000 acres are in private hands. In August 1905 the Royal English Arboricultural Society paid a visit to the Belgian forests, collecting very interesting information, a summary of which was published in *Nature* on the 21st of the following December. Amongst other places where afforesting had been carried out, the visitors inspected the wood of Soignés, which is generally considered to be one of the finest beech forests in Europe. Its entire extent is a little more than 10,000 acres, yielding to the State a net annual revenue of £18,000, and the game in addition is valued at £2000 a year.

The national benefit which might accrue from judicious tree-planting on soils unsuitable for agriculture, may also be judged from the following, which appeared in the report above quoted. On one private Belgian estate, millions of spruce and other trees have been recently planted. The experiment began some thirty years ago, when forty acres were planted with a specially suitable tree—Scots pine. These have already yielded in thinnings since 1891, £11 per acre net, and it is estimated

¹ See REPORT OF THE RECESS COMMITTEE (report on Belgium, by Michael Mulhall).

that in seven or eight years' time, when the whole will be ready for felling, it will yield, including thinnings, a total return of £75 per acre.

The question of afforestation is becoming a very serious one for the following reasons. No country in Europe, except Scandinavia, Russia, Austria, and some of the smaller States near the Black Sea, has so much timber as to be able to avoid importing it. At the same time, it is incontestable that in countries possessing the most forest land, such a reckless destruction is carried on that a dearth of wood is certain to present itself at a by no means distant period. The naturally slow process of reproduction, and some attempts at reforestation, do not compensate for the wholesale denudation now prevalent; and as we are obliged to depend on foreign supplies for one of the most vital requirements of life, we must be prepared to pay a much enhanced price for it in the near future.

Sir Herbert Maxwell has sounded the note of alarm on this subject in an able article, "British Woodlands," in *Blackwood's Magazine* for November 1905. It appears that the rapid development of manufactures in the United States, together with the large exportation of timber, have already overtaken the productions of their formerly vast forests. We continue to receive large supplies of pitch-pine from the States, but in view of the accelerated consumption, it is a question how long these will hold out, and the warning of the United States

Secretary for Agriculture conveyed to his Government about sixteen years ago, was not uncalled for. This official stated that: "Even the white pine resources, which a few years ago seemed so great that to attempt an accurate estimate of them was deemed too difficult an undertaking, have since then become reduced to such small proportions that the end of the whole supply in both Canada and the United States is now plainly in view."

Dr. Schlich, C.I.E., late Professor of Forestry at the Royal Indian Engineering College, Coopers Hill, gave a valuable lecture on our future timber supply before the Society of Arts, reported in the *Journal of the Society* for 1st March 1901. After citing some important statistics, he stated that the entire cut of timber in the United States for 1899 was as follows:—

Coniferous timber, 75,000,000 tons.

Oaks and other hard woods, 25,000,000 tons.

At this rate, he calculated that if, during the next ten years, the annual amount of wood cut increased at the same amount as that of the preceding ten years, the remaining stand of timber in the States would be consumed in about thirty-five years from the time he spoke. In the same lecture Dr. Schlich stated that matters as regards timber supply were by no means promising in Canada. The total area actually under timber amounted to 266,000,000 acres, a vast expanse it is true, but vast areas were being denuded by fire and reckless destruction

without adequate reforestation. Thus he quotes Mr. Edwardes' statement in the Canadian Parliament to the effect that ten times the amount of forest wealth has been destroyed in Canada through forest fires than has been cut by timber-men. As Dr. Schlich goes on to say that the cuttings in 1893 were estimated to amount to 40,000,000 of tons, the total annual destruction of Canadian forests might be reckoned at 400,000,000 of tons, which is considerably more than the natural production. The fact must therefore be recognised that Canada, like the United States, is by wastefulness and neglect making large inroads upon its reserve supply of timber.

Dr. Schlich, in the same lecture, quoted Mons. Melard, Inspector of Forests in Paris, and author of a pamphlet on the INSUFFICIENCY OF THE PRODUCTION OF TIMBER IN THE WORLD. In this lecture the author draws attention to the fact that while the population and industries in Russia are developing rapidly, the production of the forests has fallen off in consequence of the great destruction which has been going on during the nineteenth century. He also made the following suggestive statement: "When, in the middle of the twentieth century, Russia will have a population of 150,000,000, when her metallurgic and other industries have attained the full development on which one may count, her exports of timber will have ceased, and she will be only too happy, if she then has managed her forests

sufficiently well, to find in them the timber and firewood which she requires for her own consumption."

We now find that, owing to fast increasing consumption and wasteful destruction, both the United States and Canada are within a measurable period of having only sufficient timber for home use ; indeed of late years the States have been importing largely from the Dominion. Thus the States may, in some years to come, not only cease to export, but may become a competitor in the world's markets. Should the above data be correct, and they represent the opinion of the best authorities on the subject ; also, should Germany, France, Switzerland, and Belgium have barely enough for their own consumption, how long will Scandinavia be able to supply the markets of Europe ? It is not to be supposed that within fifty years or so we shall find ourselves absolutely without wood, but the danger is that we shall only be able to purchase from the foreigner at an enormously increased price ; that, in fact, instead of paying some £22,000,000 a year for wood supply, it may cost us within the next fifty years at the rate of £100,000,000 or £120,000,000 a year.

Sir Herbert Maxwell, writing in *Blackwood's Magazine* of November 1905, before mentioned, made the following statement : " Assuredly every cubic foot of timber, every pound of pulp which comes to us from abroad, might be grown on

British soil, to the great advantage of our rural population."¹ This is, in the language of commerce, a very large order, but coming from the writer is well worthy of attention, as may be seen from the preceding figures. During the year 1905, in which Sir Herbert Maxwell wrote, we paid more than £24,000,000 for timber and wood-pulp producible at home. Consequently, if that gentleman's opinion be correct, the country is annually but unnecessarily drained of a vast sum which we could retain amongst our own population, and which would give abundant employment. If we continue our present course, while neglecting to afforest our waste lands, our neglect represents a degree of national folly humiliating to contemplate.

The immediate problem which faces us, and which must be solved, is, how can we prepare to meet the coming scarcity of timber which is inevitable? The world in general has been living so recklessly on its capital, as far as property in wood is concerned, and the danger is so palpable, that some nations, such as Germany, France, Switzerland, Belgium, and Denmark, and in recent days the United States, have taken vigorous measures to provide for the coming scarcity which is already foreshadowed by a distinct rise in price. But what have we done? We have only

¹ Of course the writer does not take any account of mahogany and other woods not producible in the United Kingdom.

established a school of forestry so late as 1904, a short preliminary step in the right direction, but while there are 21,000,000 acres of waste land, we have only a little over 3,000,000 under woods and plantations, or about 4 per cent. of the entire acreage of the United Kingdom. Included in the above area there are 115,293 acres of national property, but of these only 57,304 are under timber.

How unfavourably our system of wood culture compares with that of other European countries may be judged from the report of the Commissioners of Woods and Forests for 1903-4. In dealing only with the Royal State forests it shows an expenditure of £58,402, but the receipts amounted only to £32,481, therefore there was a net loss to the nation of £25,921, and of the remainder of about 3,000,000 acres of woodland in private hands, though there are no statistics available, it is safe to assume that, including capital sunk, the expenses largely exceed the revenue. Compare the above with the receipts from the forest of Soignés, in Belgium, before mentioned, which, though only about 10,000 acres in extent, produces an annual net revenue to the State of £18,000. The German State forests alone occupy 17,900 square miles, giving a net annual yield computed at present at about £4,500,000.

The following figures also are suggestive, showing the percentage of public and private

lands under tree plantation in various European countries :—

Great Britain	4 per cent. ¹
German Empire	26 „
France	18 „
Belgium	17 „
Austria	32 „
Italy	14 „
Spain	17 „

The strangely short-sighted and unpractical manner in which we treat the very small amount we have of national forest may be judged from the following example :—In 1851, an Act was passed in Parliament to put the New Forest, then consisting of 64,737 acres, on a business-like footing, by a system of successive enclosing and planting. Work was commenced by selecting 5000 acres to be thus treated, and all promised well, but most unaccountably an outcry was raised against the scheme by a few noisy and presumably ignorant agitators. The result was that Parliament yielded to wordy pressure, and in 1877 another Act was passed which arrested a measure designed to effect a most palpable public benefit. Most absurdly it was decreed that while the enclosures should at no time exceed 16,000 acres out of the total 64,737 acres, no fresh ground should be taken in for plantation purposes except what had been planted since the year 1700. The real nature

¹ The figures are taken from Dr. Schlich's paper in the *Journal of the Society of Arts* for 1st March 1901.

of this extraordinary proceeding may be understood from the fact that while the ancient forest was technically kept intact, it was allowed to remain as a common grazing ground for cattle, thus absolutely preventing the growth of young timber which would otherwise have taken place. The ultimate effect of such ingeniously perverse legislation must be, that while other nations are promoting forest growth and making it a valuable source of revenue, we have arranged by law that as a mere question of time the finest and most beautiful tract of forest land in England must dwindle away and eventually vanish altogether.

Touching the question of employment in forestry, Sir Herbert Maxwell gives some important statistics. He calculates that in sheep pasture there is an average of one shepherd to every 1000 acres, but were the same ground devoted to forestry, there would be a working population of one woodman to every hundred acres, so on a State forest of 50,000 acres there would be 500 woodmen and their families instead of fifty shepherds and their families. At the same time, the afforestation of our waste lands would stimulate a number of home industries, and thus indirectly provide an immense deal of additional employment. For instance, we are now importing from the Continent wood-pulp for paper manufacture, etc., to the amount of more than £3,000,000 a year, yet there is not a single

wood-pulp factory in the United Kingdom, simply because our wood supply is so deficient. With adequate wood growth, abundance of pulping mills and cellulose factories would follow, and in addition employment would be given in subsidiary manufactures connected with wood cultivation, now more or less imported from the Continent. Amongst the principal of these, I may mention ordinary furniture, various kinds of carpentry, waggon making, cooperage, timber for building trade and osier weaving, etc. Saw-mills would gradually be established, and millions now paid in wages to foreigners would fall to the pockets of British workmen.¹

In view of the facts which I have given in the preceding pages, it would be well for us to consider our position as regards present and future timber supply, and it may be summed up as follows :—

- (a) Taking not only the United Kingdom, but over the world generally, there is a growing consumption and a diminishing supply of that article which represents one of the most urgent necessities of our daily life.
- (b) The future dearth in timber being now inevitable, we must anticipate an increased rise in its price, probably cul-

¹ The German forests support directly one million people, while three millions more live by work connected with the forest industry. (Dr Schlich, in *Journal of the Society of Arts*, 1st March 1901.)

minating in something like a wood famine within the next thirty-five or forty years.

- (c) We pay the foreigner annually an average sum of about £25,000,000 for timber and wood-pulp.
- (d) In the United Kingdom we allow 21,000,000 acres of land to remain waste, a large proportion of which, on the best authority, could be utilised for forestry.
- (e) Of all the nations of Europe, we have by far the smallest percentage of ground in woodland.
- (f) It is calculated by the Commission on Coast Erosion and Afforestation (1909) that we could grow timber to the value of about £20,000,000 a year if we had 9,000,000 additional acres under timber.
- (g) According to the report of this Commission, the scheme of planting 9,000,000 acres could be accomplished not only without any eventual loss, but on the contrary, after the lapse of eighty years, all expenses having been repaid, the State would be in possession of a very large asset, about £107,000,000 in excess of the total cost calculated at 3 per cent. compound interest.
- (h) It has been estimated, and the computation seems to be a very moderate one, that

one woodman would be required to look after 100 acres of forest land. According to this calculation, were the 9,000,000 acres available in the British Isles to be afforested, employment would be given to 90,000 men, representing a population of probably about 350,000. This estimate as to employment does not include those who would profit by the large number of varied home industries connected with wood manufactures, which must infallibly spring up if we grew a considerable portion of timber for home consumption.

- (i) A wide area of forest would add materially to our means of national defence. It would be much more difficult for an invading enemy to penetrate through a wooded country occupied by well-trained riflemen than to traverse open country. This has been proved in war on various occasions.
- (j) Cheap fuel would be supplied in large quantities from thinnings, branches, and the general débris from wood manufactures.
- (k) It would go far, not only to solve the problem of creating useful employment, but of bringing a large population back to the land.

- (l) In time it would create a vigorous, healthy population, much in contrast with the undergrown, weak, deteriorated denizens of the slums.
- (m) It would provide against the now inevitable wood famine, the coming effects of which will probably begin to be felt seriously before the next thirty years.

Ireland is capable of growing remarkably good timber, especially oak. Of the coniferous varieties, the larch is particularly good, and there are in Ireland at least 3,000,000 acres of waste land which could be planted.¹ If the Government undertook to do this, a very valuable national property would in time be created, home industries would be stimulated as before explained, and something would be done to check the tide of emigration, which has already gone beyond what is compatible with the welfare of the country. In this direction appears to lie the true solution of the problem of those rural slums of Ireland, the congested districts. It may be mentioned that in April 1908 a committee appointed by the Department of Agriculture in Ireland, after fully considering the whole question, recommended the acquisition of 200,000 acres to

¹ See REPORT OF THE RECESS COMMITTEE, p. 24. The calculation is that of the Danish expert, Forest-Conservator Howitz, who states that if in former days Irish timber had been properly protected and fostered, instead of being recklessly cut down and sold off for 6d. a tree, the Irish forests would at present be worth £100,000,000.

provide State forests in large blocks, with facilities to County Councils or private owners to acquire 500,000 more in smaller areas. Nothing has been done to give effect to these recommendations.

At times, when the question of national forestry has been raised, certain objections, all misleading in character, have been advanced. It has been urged :—

First. That British-grown coniferous timber cannot compare with that grown in Scandinavia, as ash, firs, etc., grow too fast, and that the Scandinavian tree being of slow growth, the wood is better.

Sir Herbert Maxwell answers this objection very clearly. He explains that the reason of this inferiority is because we are so ignorant of the true methods of forestry, and our wood is faulty because we practise over-thinning. If we grew our trees in close order the annual rings would close together and the timber would be slow-grown. The lecturer cited examples which clearly proved that excellent timber can be grown on British soil if due attention is paid to the correct rules of forestry.

According to Dr. Nisbet, nine-tenths of our imported timber is of the coniferous class, that is to say, pine, spruce, fir, larch, cedar, etc.

So far back as 1813, *The Quarterly Review*, in raising the question of British-grown forest trees, drew attention to the value of the larch, the

introduction of which "formed a new epoch in the history of planting."

"A tree which in fifty years will produce a beam equal to an oak of more than twice that duration, while, in contradiction to every other example, the durability and hardness of the wood are in no degree affected by the rapidity of its growth; a tree which, if the oak should fail, would build navies, and if the forests of Livonia or Norway or Canada were exhausted, would build cities, is an acquisition to this island almost without a parallel."

Sir Dietrich Brandis, F.R.S.,¹ during a discussion on afforestation before the Society of Arts, stated that there was no country in Europe with a climate to be compared with that of England for the growth of coniferous timber.

Before we constructed our war-ships of iron they were built to a considerable extent of British oak, which was found in practice to be exceedingly durable. At the present time railway companies use British oak in preference for the manufacture of carriages, and Irish oak has a particularly good reputation. When Richard II. (1377-95) wanted fine oak for the new roof of Westminster Hall, it was from the forests of Kilkenny that he drew his supply, and the roof still exists.

Second. It has been objected that the storms which sweep over the British Islands would hinder profitable forestry. Are our islands, however, more

¹ Founder of the Indian Forest Department.

exposed to storms than Sweden and Norway, or Russia, where furious blasts sweep over the land, with nothing to impede their force west of the Ural Mountains? In Scotland, the county of Inverness has about 170,000 acres of woodland, yet the trees seem to thrive extremely well in spite of the easterly gales which blow with tremendous force across Europe.

When the Romans made their first settlement in Britain a large portion of the island was covered with forest trees. These chiefly consisted of oak, beech, hornbeam, Scots pine, birch, ash, willow, alder, yew, and hawthorn; subsequently various coniferous trees, such as spruce, different firs, and larch, were introduced. It is, therefore, perfectly clear that the storms did not hinder vast forest growth in former times.

Third. It has been objected that the population of England is too dense to permit of extensive woodlands.

Of course the question of density of population could not apply to Scotland, Wales, or Ireland, but it is estimated that in England alone there are 461,164 acres of waste land which could be afforested with profit. Moreover, Belgium, with a denser population than England, has 17 per cent. of her entire area under wood, while we have for the United Kingdom only 4 per cent. It should also be remarked that Belgium has an average gross income, derived from 1,303,735 acres under

public and private forests, of about £4,000,000,¹ which might be considered after paying for management, interest on capital for purchase of land, etc., as one million net. If we received the same proportionate profit on our woodlands, covering rather more than 3,000,000 acres, our net income would be nearly £3,000,000, representing a capitalised value at twenty-five years' purchase of nearly £75,000,000. Yet so inefficient is our system of forestry that in the aggregate our forests actually represent a dead loss instead of a profit.

Should our legislature contemplate afforesting, there are certain points connected with the subject which will require careful consideration, as waste land is almost entirely in private hands, and private proprietors rarely care to afforest. Even poor land, which under wood plantation would eventually yield far more than by retaining it as pasture, does not give the return for many years. The initial outlay also is considerable, being from £4 to £6 per acre, so the private owner has neither the capital nor inclination to embark on an industry of which the expenses will be immediate but the profits distant. At the same time it would be a great desideratum if owners could be induced to engage extensively in afforestation, and perhaps judicious legislation might encourage them to do so, though it is to be feared that the latest trend of legislation

¹ Sir Herbert Maxwell's paper in the *Journal of the Society of Arts* for 31st March 1905.

gives small encouragement to enterprise on the land.

In view of the importance of this subject it might be well for the Government to create a distinct Board of Forestry, and to endow forest schools in Scotland, Wales, and Ireland, similar to that already established in England. Once this were done there would appear to be three methods of afforesting, each of which might, according to circumstances, be attended by success.

These are—

First. To encourage landowners to afforest.

Second. To give permission to County Councils to purchase lands under well-defined limitations, and to plant on them.

Third. For the Government to acquire land and afforest.

The above three plans have all been, and are now being, carried out in Belgium with markedly good results.

Always remembering that what is worthless as arable land and poor as pasturage may be very suitable for the plantation of certain kinds of trees, especially of the coniferous class, an Act might be passed providing that in all cases in which plantations, woods, or coppices were managed according to a method approved by the Board of Forestry, the assessments of every kind and rates on the land should simply be in accordance with its rental value in its natural condition as prairie land. Also that

the valuation for succession duty should simply be of the same rental value. Further, the option might be given to the proprietor of either paying the various assessments annually, or allowing them to accumulate at say $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. compound interest, until the timber on the estate should have matured.

In England the State or local government bodies might, as in Germany, France, and Belgium, acquire by purchase and afforest waste lands. It has been proved on the Continent that this process can be so conducted that eventually the entire expense incurred is returned, with, in addition, a handsome revenue to the country.

For the following reasons it would seem that afforestation could be undertaken by the State (under which term I include all public bodies) with greater chances of success than by trusting entirely to private enterprise:—

The State can borrow money at the cheapest rate, usually about 3 per cent., sometimes less.

The State does not die or pay estate or succession duties.

The State can therefore wait for a return of the money laid out.

There is no danger of State property being squandered, damaged, or alienated by a reckless or extravagant heir.

The State can always guard public property against depredation much more efficiently than can a private owner.

According to Dr. Nisbet's opinion, the best periods for felling certain forest trees so as to procure the highest remuneration are set forth in the following table :—

	YEARS.
Larch, Scots pine and spruce	50-60
Silver fir	60-70
Ash, elm, and sycamore	50-60
Beech	90-120
Oak	120-150

Still the State would be by no means at a total loss pending the time when these trees came to full maturity. Douglas fir, for instance, may be felled within forty years from date of planting, and produces a valuable crop. There is a very large and continual demand in the mining districts for pit-props, and these are usually supplied from Norway and Sweden; they consist of the necessary thinnings of forest growth, and these are cut when about fifteen years old. Afforestation would enable us to supply these pit-props ourselves instead of buying them from abroad. By judicious planting, also, soil too poor to be used as arable land or for pasturage, or even for certain kinds of timber, will grow acacia trees, which in twenty or twenty-five years will give good pit-props, and it has been found that this wood resists the effects of bad air and high temperature better even than oak.

The augmentation of fruit culture and other industries has of recent years increased the demand for basket-ware of different kinds. In 1908 we

imported baskets to the amount of £215,788, yet the osiers from which they are made can be grown in the United Kingdom, but as osier-growing is remunerative in two or three years, more attention to it would increase the home industry of basket-work. Were our Government also to commence afforesting, it might be well to adopt the methods pursued in Belgium which have been attended with such success, and which would probably be that best suited to the British Isles. It should also be distinctly remembered that forestry is practically a lost art with us, and to make it a successful industry it would be well to secure the services of foreign experts, at all events for some years to come.

In the recent Report on Afforestation the Commissioners suggest a process for afforesting 9,000,000 acres; this would represent a productive investment which would be financed by a loan, the sum required for the scheme standing at £2,000,000 a year. The interest of this, it is suggested, should be defrayed out of taxation; and the afforested area—unless managed on New Forest principles—would become more than self-supporting after the fortieth year. After eighty years the results would be eminently satisfactory, for calculating the full cost of afforesting at 3 per cent. of accumulated compound interest, the State would be receiving annually $17\frac{1}{2}$ millions sterling, which would represent $3\frac{3}{4}$ interest on the entire sum expended. In other words, the State would

be in possession of a property worth £563,000,000, which, after paying all expenses calculated at 3 per cent. compound interest, would leave, as I have remarked above, £107,000,000 over and above the total cost.

For obvious reasons the idea of beginning to afforest 9,000,000 acres at once could not be entertained for a moment, but the Commission suggest that 150,000 acres should be planted annually. Thus the 9,000,000 acres of afforestation would be completed at the end of sixty years, and each area on being felled would be replanted, this being considered the best rotation to secure a sustained yield of timber.

The question of employment connected with afforestation is an important one. The Commission calculates that for each block of 150,000 acres permanent employment would be given to 1500 men. There would be temporary employment for many more during the winter months. In addition to this an almost equal number would find employment in the incidental and subsidiary occupations connected with forestry. Consequently as each block was taken in, year by year, and afforested, the process would, *pro tanto*, tend to solve the problem of unemployment. This problem becomes more acute during the winter months, but it is just during the winter months that the extra temporary employment would be given.

The average sum of £2,000,000 per annum,

constituting the successive loans, will be spent and circulated in the country, so that in fact, according to the scheme suggested, the Government will borrow from the nation, but neither the interest nor the capital will be lost to the nation. The employment of both will create a vast asset which will eventually repay principal and interest, leaving about £107,000,000 as a surplus, and yet the increasing capital borrowed will represent increased and well-diffused circulation amongst the very classes who now endure the condition of chronic distress. Is not the plan advised by the Commission for producing our own timber supply in every way a better one than for us to drain the country annually of about £25,000,000, which will probably run to double that sum in the near future? The millions we send away for what we can produce ourselves are irredeemably lost to us while they enrich the foreigner.

The question of afforestation, looked at economically, has one important aspect which should not be lost sight of. Evidence was given before the Commission that land of very low agricultural value becomes highly profitable when planted. It was stated that "in Denbigh, larch sixty to seventy years old, grown at an altitude of 1200 feet on land of very low value, has been sold at £100 per acre." . . . "In Inverness-shire, on land worth one shilling per acre of rent, Scots pine, badly planted and severely damaged by squirrels,

realised at sixty years £43 per acre." . . . An instance was given besides of barren sand dunes of no value whatever having been afforested, with the result of producing a good and profitable crop of conifers. Sir Herbert Maxwell referred to a plantation of Douglas fir in Perthshire "for which, when forty years old, £200 per acre was offered by a timber merchant."

I have treated the foregoing subject rather exhaustively and in detail, because up to the present it does not seem to have been regarded by the public with the degree of attention which its importance calls for, and few seem to realise how great the issues may become if our rapidly passing opportunities are much longer neglected. As a measure of self-protection the governments of the United States and Canada may be obliged to place a heavy export duty on timber, and to retain this duty until the process of natural reproduction of forest growth balances the consumption. It can be easily understood, however, that this must involve the lapse of many years, varying from fifty or sixty to one hundred and fifty, from date of planting. It would certainly not be wise to trust to Russia and Scandinavia for our future timber supply; the best authorities are agreed that the Norwegian forests have been so overworked that a falling off in the timber export cannot be much longer delayed. It is very ominous, besides, that the size of the timber imported from the Baltic

countries is gradually diminishing, a sure sign that the larger trees of mature growth have been cut, and the market is only supplied from those which are more or less immature.

The Report on Afforestation, published in 1909, is certainly the ablest, boldest, and most momentous pronouncement as yet made on this question. It is much to be regretted, therefore, that it should have been largely obscured from public attention by the fact that it is published as a mere sub-head of the operations of a Commission primarily dealing with the comparatively trivial subject of Coast Erosion. Taken together with the Report of the Departmental Committee of 1902, it may certainly be said to clear the way for action. How much longer will that action be delayed? The timber-famine is advancing upon us with giant strides. Its effects are even now clearly perceptible in the increasing price and deteriorating quality of varieties greatly in demand, such as yellow pine. It takes thirty-five or forty years for the most rapidly growing of our timber trees to mature; yet our statesmen waste their time and energy in petty intrigues, and lavish millions of the nation's hard-won wealth in devising plasters for economic sores which such treatment can never heal and will too probably aggravate. What will be said of them in the near future by those who have to pay for their blind neglect of the needs and warnings of to-day?

CHAPTER XI

THE HUNTING GROUNDS OF CRÆSUS

Origin of deer forests in Scotland—Depopulation of the Highlands—How it may be combated—Deer preserves and forests—Economic gain by turning the former into the latter—Financial methods—Need of a national party to promote national objects.

A CENTURY ago there were only five deer forests in Scotland. Now there are about one hundred and eighty. It is thus stated in the *World's Work and Play* of 1905. Of course several proprietors may own a deer forest between them, and one proprietor may own more than one deer preserve, but on a rough estimate it may be supposed that there are about one hundred and eighty proprietors. The official figures give the land under deer forests as 2,920,097 acres; therefore, supposing my calculation to be correct, some one hundred and eighty men own nearly 3,000,000 of acres as large proprietors in Scotland, the total area of the country being 19,456,000 acres. The process of converting grazing or arable land into deer preserves seems to be going on rapidly, judging from the following figures given by Mr. W. C. MacKenzie in an

article on the subject in the *Independent Review* of February 1906.

Acreage 1883.	Acreage 1898.	Acreage 1904.
1,709,892.	2,510,625.	2,920,097.

In considering the above statements there are some points which require attention. To avoid misconception it must be borne in mind that the so-called deer forests are not covered by wood, but are open wastes and heathery mountain-sides; in fact it would be much more appropriate to call them deer preserves, as they are usually destitute of woodland. In former times the mountainous districts were populated by a healthy, hardy race of Highlanders, who gained their living in the rich pure air of Northern Scotland by cultivating the arable ground in the valleys, by sheep-farming, and by engaging in fisheries along the coast. The alterations in these conditions have been due to the operation of certain economic causes, the chief of which are as follows:—

When in former years there was a duty on imported wool, sheep-farming in the Highlands paid well, but in 1844 the article came in free, and from that time competition tended to lower the price. During the American Civil War the industry revived, but it afterwards languished, and is now gradually passing away. Thus Highland proprietors found themselves with large tracts of ground gradually becoming less productive on their

hands, and with steadily diminishing incomes. The wealth, however, of certain classes was rapidly augmenting, rich men from the South began to bid for grouse shootings and deer forests, the facilities for travel increased through the Scottish mountain districts, and by degrees mountain sheep-walks were converted into deer preserves. Rich men were contented to pay large rentals for them, and it must be said that the growing fashion of deer-stalking saved certain proprietors from heavy loss or absolute ruin.

The present situation, therefore, is as follows: Foreign competition has reduced the price of Highland wool so much that sheep-farming as an industry is becoming unremunerative. Deer preserves pay better than mountain sheep-walks, and therefore by the working of an economic law the latter are being converted into the former. Sheep-farming, if carried on under profitable conditions, would employ a much greater number of men than are required to look after deer preserves, and not only this, but during the winter the deer are obliged to vacate the high grounds and to go to the low-lying lands in search of shelter and herbage. As a consequence, a certain amount of arable land is of necessity added to the deer preserves, but arable land formerly maintained a much larger population per acre than either sheep farms or deer preserves. Hence the lamentable fact that while in former years large portions of the High-

lands were depopulated to make way for sheep, large areas have been, and are now being, further depopulated to make way for deer.

The question as to Highland deer preserves, and the depopulation which has ensued from their creation, has attracted considerable attention of late years. Viewed from the national standpoint, it is of course undesirable that a hardy population living in a healthy climate should have to migrate to the colonies or to the slums of lowland towns. In place of the former occupiers there is a comparatively small number of gamekeepers, gillies, and underlings, non-producers, scattered through the depopulated tracts which are rented by a few wealthy men for the purpose of some weeks' deer-stalking each year, and the entire system, therefore, represents what is distinctly not the greatest welfare for the greatest number.

The evils attending the facts of which I have given the above summary are so obvious that it is perhaps unnecessary to dwell on them further, and the question presents itself, is there a remedy for this undesirable state of things, and how can it be applied? To tax deer preserves so heavily that their area would in time be reduced to a minimum would entail heavy loss on all, and possibly financial ruin on some of the present proprietors. An expedient of this kind has, indeed, been proposed, but it would be harsh and unjust unless compensation were given, and even then the object of repopulating

the Highlands would not be attained by that device alone. To transport a lowland Scotch population to Highland valleys by building crofters' houses, supplying the emigrants with farming implements, cattle, seed, and subsistence money for the first year or two, would be difficult and costly—it might be said impracticable, unless to a very small extent. Besides, as long as foreign wool is admitted duty free, Highland sheep-farming would not be very profitable, unless certain measures were instituted to neutralise the effects of foreign competition. Therefore, under existing circumstances, neither the creation of crofters' holdings on a large scale nor the substitution of sheep farms for deer preserves can be economically successful.

As a means of overcoming the above difficulties without inflicting loss on the Highland proprietors, I would venture to make the following suggestions: In the foregoing chapter I dealt with the urgent necessity for afforesting, as far as possible, certain tracts in the United Kingdom which the Commission on Coast Erosion and Afforestation have considered as available for planting. The amount which could be planted with profit in Scotland alone is estimated at 6,000,000 acres, and undoubtedly a very large proportion, probably the greater part, of this is included in the deer preserve tracts. For the reasons which I have already adduced in the foregoing chapter, the question as to whether it is better for the community at large that this

area should be tree-planted or left as it is at present, can only be answered in favour of the former alternative. At the same time it is clear that except in a few very exceptional cases, where the proprietors are extremely wealthy men, and willing to plant on a large scale, the process can only be carried out by the State, and it is well, in considering the question, that this fact should be thoroughly recognised.

There should be no great pecuniary difficulty in acquiring land for afforestation, as the following figures will show. I quote them from an article evidently inspired from a very well-informed source, and published in *Chambers' Journal* of 22nd April 1905, under the heading "Deer-forests Economically Considered": "The rental (of deer forests) is from 7½d. per acre in Sutherlandshire to 1s. 6¾d. in Caithness-shire." In Argyle "the land afforested is only worth 8d. per acre." For Inverness-shire "the deer forest rent per acre is 10½d." For Ross and Cromarty the deer forest rent per acre is 11½d. As a rule the poorest land is devoted to deer preserves, but it should be remembered that land which cannot be cultivated as arable ground, or which may give only poor returns for grazing purposes, may become highly profitable if scientifically afforested, as in France, Germany, and Belgium.

It is clear then that the Government might make terms with most of the Highland proprietors

which would give them not less, but even a higher, rental than they receive at present, and yet the State, instead of incurring loss when the forest trees came into maturity, would eventually be in possession of a valuable national asset.

The process of afforesting the Highlands would of itself bring a considerable number of employees and their families to those districts; consequently, with the gradual influx of a fresh population, a demand would arise for arable land which is now used as deer preserve. Considering the matter, therefore, as one involving the best interests of the community, it would seem most desirable to prevent as far as possible the further appropriation of land for deer preserves, and to promote the settlement of a mountain population in the now unoccupied wastes. This being the case, legislation might perhaps deal with the question on the following lines:—

Any further ground used as deer preserves might be subject to a tax which, if not actually prohibitive, might considerably limit such future appropriation. The Highland sheep farmer is hampered to a certain extent by the expense of transmitting his produce to the ports and market towns. Here, I think, the State might come to his aid by the construction of a system of light railways, which, having been tried as an experiment in the west of Ireland, have proved very successful. By their means the Highland crofters and sheep

farmers would be able to send their produce to the best markets at a cheap rate, the wool could be sold at a larger profit than at present, and if, under these improved conditions, the land under sheep became more valuable than it is now when let for deer-stalking, the revival of a decaying industry would tend to repopulate many of the deserted Highland districts. It has been suggested that deer forests should be assessed on their sporting, instead of their agricultural value. Were this done, considering the wealth of the class who rent deer preserves, it is probable that the increased assessment would be paid as an increased rental, as regards a portion of the land reserved for deer. At the same time the measure would tend to assist the process of converting deer preserves into forest land, sheep farms, or cultivated ground, but as some of the present proprietors might suffer on account of a decreased demand for deer-stalking, it might be more equitable to impose the tax when the Government should be prepared to take up land for afforestation, and to construct the light railway system as before proposed. The large Highland proprietors would not have much reason to complain if the State were to offer for their deer preserves an income in perpetuity which would represent an amount as great as, or even greater than, that which they now receive as rental for deer-shooting purposes, more especially if the option of afforesting themselves were given to them.

For the effectual working of the scheme which I have presented, a certain obstacle must still be recognised. Some large Highland proprietors, who might not wish to undertake afforestation of portions of their own estates, might object to surrendering areas of waste ground to Government for the above purpose. The objection would be a sentimental one, as the plan I propose is based on the assumption that were any plantable area, at present a deer preserve, to be secured by the State for conversion into woodland, the annual rental of such preserves should be secured to the proprietor. This could be arranged by payment of a fixed sum, calculated at so many years' purchase, or by allowing the rental to remain as a fixed annual charge on the property. The above-mentioned objection might spring from selfish and unpatriotic motives, but it would be well for obstructive proprietors carefully to consider the entire situation as well as their present position, even from their own special standpoint. I think this situation may be represented in the concrete by the following facts which, I presume, will not be contradicted.

The depopulation of the Highlands has been, and is still going on, owing to certain causes which I have detailed.

For the reasons which I have also given, this process represents a distinct and serious loss to the community. Now that large masses of people are growing up mental and physical degenerates, it is

of the greatest consequence to induce the formation of a vigorous rural population in the now unoccupied healthy districts of our country.

The cultivation of arable ground will support more people per acre than forest land. Afforestation over tracts of country affords of itself far more employment than sheep-farming; but, as I have before shown, numbers of local industries, now non-existent, would, and indeed must, spring up in consequence of and in connection with afforestation.¹ Sheep-farming will give more employment than is required for deer preserves.

Public feeling, especially in Scotland, has been aroused on the subject of Highland depopulation, and there are good reasons for believing that this feeling will not die out until some remedy be found and applied. We pay annually about £50,000,000 for imported cattle, sheep, and dead meat, and more than £27,000,000 for foreign wool, but it may be fairly presumed that Highland cattle and sheep will feed on ground which will support deer. Let us suppose that certain portions of the Highlands, suitable for grazing purposes, were thus utilised, at all events a portion of the money we now pay for foreign meat and wool would remain in the country, and assist in maintaining a healthy rural Highland population.

A great democratic force has now assumed the reins of power, and it shows no signs of diminishing

¹ See previous chapter.

in strength. For many years past English democracy has been discussing with growing vehemence rights which were deemed sacred and inalienable, even in this generation, when the country was governed by an oligarchy of nobles, capitalists, and large landlords. These discussions amongst the leading minds of the rising democracy have not been always characterised by a sense of justice, moderation, or discrimination, sometimes not even by ordinary common sense.

Democracy in power has always shown itself much more tenacious of its own rights than inclined to accord a fair consideration to the natural inherent rights of its political antagonists. It is frequently wanting in breadth of view, and has advocated measures which, on practical test, prove to have been one-sided, short-sighted, and fallacious. Had it not been for these disqualifications, British democracy would long since have been, and would for ever remain, the most powerful dominant force which has ever ruled over British possessions.

Another force is now gaining power which is not identified with any one political party, but the members of which observe certain growing evils distinctly pointing to national decadence, and therefore national danger. This advanced section, which may be said to represent the principles of common sense and of national before class interests, has certain aims and objects, amongst the leading of which are the following :—

To foster the growth of a rural population instead of that which crowds into the unwholesome lanes and foetid slums of our towns. To stimulate our vanishing industries, and to revive those we have lost. To utilise as far as possible the natural products of our country so as to provide ourselves with those necessaries of life which we are able to produce, but for which we pay annually such vast sums to the foreigner. To utilise the great mass of human waste material which, as beggars, loafers, vagrants, able-bodied paupers, and habitual criminals, all social parasites who live on society or prey on it, constitutes a danger and deteriorates our race. To see that our national defences are, what at present they distinctly are not, thoroughly adequate to the defence of the magnificent empire won by our predecessors, inherited by us. In fact, this element of progress virtually aims at cultivating a social renaissance, which may dissipate many great existing evils now growing up luxuriantly and weed-like in our ever-changing civilisation. While there is yet time it aims at arresting national decay, and even averting some quite possible unexpected and sudden national disaster.

Viewing the foregoing, would it not be well for the Highland proprietors to throw themselves into line with the party of progress and discuss a *modus vivendi*? An arrangement might arise from this which would be patriotic, beneficial to the community, and would at least secure themselves from

pecuniary loss, and very probably add to their incomes. It is almost certain that these proprietors might make better terms for themselves now than they could in some years to come, and it is never advisable to act so as to be obliged to look back later on with regret for lost opportunities.

CHAPTER XII

OUR NEGLECTED GARDENS

Imports of fruit—Causes of the backwardness of British fruit culture—Preserved fruit—Lesson of the Channel Islands—Cases of success in England—Artificial drawbacks—Tenure of English landed property—Free Trade in land—The law of entail—Necessity for its abolition—The *conseil de famille*.

DURING the year 1909 we paid away over £5,000,000 for imported fruit of varieties which could have been produced in the British Isles. Thus we import yearly apples, cherries, peaches, nectarines, currants, gooseberries, grapes, pears, plums, strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, and nuts, raw apples alone costing us more than £2,000,000.¹ With the exception of grapes, we could have grown all of the above ourselves in the open air, and for grapes, which experiment has demonstrated can be grown very profitably under glass, we paid £508,111. If it pays to grow apples for the English market in countries such as Canada and different parts of the United States, including distant California, how is it that, when land is going out of cultivation and starving workmen ask for

¹ TRADE AND NAVIGATION ACCOUNTS for 1909.

employment, we cannot grow fruit at our own doors to supply our home market? It might be supposed that the laws governing the principle of supply and demand would have long ago settled this question. That they have not done so argues something essentially wrong in our economic system; therefore the reason or reasons ought to be sought out and the remedy applied if possible. On examination it will be found that the causes are several, existing quite independently of each other, but they could all be dealt with; and were this done in a practical, common-sense manner, a very important productive industry could be so thoroughly established as to become highly profitable.

In the October number of the *Quarterly Review*, 1903, an article appeared on the subject of fruit-growing which is well worthy of attention, as it presents at least some of the causes which have hampered the industry up to the present time. Amongst the obstacles to success are mentioned the high charges and delays of the railway companies, producing frequent complaints on the part of fruit-growers. The fruit marketing system also is very unsatisfactory; the grower who consigns his fruit to a salesman has no means of knowing if he receives the price paid by the retail dealer, less the fixed commission. Unfortunately, it is the custom in the retail trade to charge inordinately high prices; thus, by reducing the demand for fruits, an artificial glut is produced in the market.

The retail dealer exacts a large profit on a small sale in preference to a small profit on a large one, and this naturally creates the glut in the wholesale markets. By this system the fruit producer obtains far less than his legitimate profit, and in some years, when fruit is very plentiful, there is so little demand at the prices charged that a large portion of the crop goes to waste.

For the above obstacles to success in what is a potentially very lucrative industry, a remedy suggests itself which is so obvious as to occasion surprise that it has not been acted on before. Fruit cultivation in Great Britain is principally confined to the following eleven counties:—Kent, Hereford, Devon, Somerset, Worcester, Gloucester, Middlesex, Cambridge, Norfolk, Hampshire, and Essex. Six of these counties divide between them three-fifths of the apple orchard acreage of the country. Suppose that, to begin with, the fruit producers of the above districts were to avail themselves of the principle of co-operation, they could arrange to have their central dépôt, or several of them, in London, and even in other large towns. A corporate body, such as the above, would be in a very advantageous position to make satisfactory arrangements with the railway companies for carriage of the produce in large quantities, as by these means the supply would be far greater than at present. The price to the consumer might be somewhat lower, but as the consumption would increase *pro rata*, unquestion-

ably the grower would gain, as he would always find a ready sale for a much larger amount of fruit, and a steady, reliable market instead of a precarious one. Viewing also the highly uneconomic way in which the fruit market is managed, it is quite probable that the grower would receive the same, or even a higher price per cwt. eventually, than he does under the existing faulty conditions.

An apt illustration of how faulty are these conditions may be judged from the fact that in June 1905 a ton and a half of strawberries were imported from Breda, in Holland, to Swanley, although Swanley is the centre of a strawberry-growing district. Again, we receive from Brittany nearly 800 tons of blackberries every year; these are plucked from the hedgerows by women and children. By a very sensible co-operative method the fruit is taken to *dépôts*, and after collection it is transmitted to the London market to be made into jam. Recently something of the same system has been pursued in districts near London, but if only worked methodically, and extended, the home market for blackberry jam could be amply supplied by our own hedgerows. The truth is the British farmer seems to despise fruit growing. It is not only that he fails to take advantage of co-operation in transport and sale, he does not apply himself to fruit and vegetable cultivation according to the methods which experience has shown to be the best, his very mode of packing is primitive and

retards success ; he therefore produces an inferior crop, and is worsted by foreign competitors.

It is the opinion of the best authorities on horticulture that in no country of the world can such finely flavoured keeping apples be grown as in England, yet it seems that some London fruit shops have practically given up selling British apples because their customers like those from America and Tasmania better. In *The World's Work and Play* of April 1905, there appears an article on Fruit Farming by Mr. S. L. Bastin, and the writer cites the following case, when a few years ago he visited an apple orchard in the West of England :—"The trees bear plentifully of what were supposed to be good eating apples, but on sampling the various kinds hardly one was found to be what would be called a finely flavoured fruit." He alludes to another case of a Somerset gentleman who, having more apples one season than he knew what to do with, offered to send some to a friend providing he would pay the carriage. The distance was only a matter of twenty odd miles, but inquiry disclosed the fact that the cost of transit would be greater than the price at which the friend could buy American apples in his own town.

Mr. Pratt, in his recent work on agriculture, presents the following instance in his own personal experience.¹ He says : "To test the matter for myself, while writing this chapter, I sent to a farmer

¹ THE TRANSITION OF AGRICULTURE.

in this country for a hamper of English Blenheims. The hamper duly arrived, and I found on the top a fairly presentable lot, but underneath, mixed up with a certain proportion of good-sized specimens, were many that were miserably small, with a considerable number of windfalls and bruised and worm-eaten apples that should have been kept back for the pigs."

Indeed, abundance of evidence demonstrates that if our farmers would give up their antiquated and careless habits, if they would only reduce fruit culture and fruit packing to a science, and pursue it with the intensity of the foreigner, if they would avail themselves of the means before indicated to ensure the best markets, they would soon find it a most profitable industry. English fruiterers continually say they dislike dealing in British-grown apples, simply because they are packed at random and not graded. As a fruit dealer once remarked to me, "The fruit growers in this country throw their apples into the crates like coals, large and small, good and bad, all together." It is the foreign custom, however, to classify the description of fruit, so that on lifting up the lid of the crate the class to which the fruit belongs and the proper price can be discovered at a glance. In Canada the apple industry is regarded as a matter of national importance, to such an extent that the Government has passed a Fruit Marks Act, by which the grading of apples and the branding of packages with well-

defined descriptive marks are made compulsory on all fruit exporters. The care taken in packing foreign fruit is also very noticeable, as in the case of plums, apples, pears, apricots, and peaches, each piece is wrapped in paper to prevent friction, bruising, and the resulting decay. It is certainly most unfortunate that such a large portion of our agricultural classes are so wedded to ancient customs. Any project which is what they call new-fangled stands in their minds as self-condemned, and they fail to see the advantage of working on those co-operative lines which have already proved so efficacious in the cases to which the principle has been applied.

In years when the fruit harvest is a good one it not unfrequently happens that the market is overstocked. Then the price offered to the grower is so low that it does not pay to send the produce to London or other large centres, and he has actually to employ labour to take off the fruit. This being the case, it is extremely surprising that every year we import tinned and bottled preserved fruits, and a large proportion of these are of the kind commonly grown in this country. The average amount of preserved fruit of all descriptions imported into the United Kingdom annually is valued at about £700,000; thus in good fruit years we absolutely waste a valuable product which could be preserved and bottled by a simple process. It could be then sold during winter time at a price

which ought to leave a large margin of profit after paying expenses. It should be noted also that we pay about £245,000 a year for imported fresh flowers. Surely these could be grown equally well in our southern counties, and a profitable industry could be thereby fostered amongst small holders. The possibilities of lucrative horticulture in the United Kingdom, if conducted with economy and judgment, may be estimated from the fact that in the neighbourhood of Paris fifty years ago from £18 to £24 was paid *as rent* per acre for land used as market gardens, and now the rents are much higher. At Montreuil 750 acres belong to 400 cultivators. On this ground peaches, pears, and vines are grown, and the culture now produces on an average £56 per acre every year. Plums are cultivated largely, in some districts producing an annual income of from £29 to £48 per acre.¹

The statistics regarding fruit and vegetable culture in the Channel Islands are also significant and instructive. The soil in both Jersey and Guernsey is not naturally rich, but it has been made very productive owing to the excellent methods practised by the inhabitants, who are thus able to supply the London market with great profit to themselves. About twenty-seven years ago £10 per acre was generally paid as rent for land in Guernsey, certainly a high rate for what was mostly light soil. In due time, however, some experts in

¹ Kropotkin, *FIELDS, FACTORIES, AND WORKSHOPS*, p. 106.

fruit culture under glass, having visited the island, were able to demonstrate to the inhabitants that with proper management the land could produce from twice to five times the wealth then derived from it.

The advice was followed, and the instruction utilised by the intelligent inhabitants, whose land soon became much more valuable, and now men are willingly paying £30 per acre annually for this garden ground. Notwithstanding the poorness of the soil, the profits of fruit and vegetable culture are so great that land is sometimes purchased outright at £600 per acre, nor can it be a matter of surprise that there are practically neither poor nor beggars in Guernsey.

The chief supplies for the London market from the Channel Islands, which have now become veritable hives of industry, are grapes, tomatoes, pears, peaches, melons, cucumbers, plums, nectarines, strawberries, French beans, asparagus, potatoes, etc. It seems strange, therefore, that these fruits and vegetables are not more largely produced in our southern counties and the south of Ireland, on much richer soil and within easy reach, not only of the metropolis, but also other large centres. The truth is, that the articles could be produced under like conditions of land tenure combined with intelligent management. There are, no doubt, climatic differences in favour of the Channel Islands, but they are not so great as is often supposed,

and they certainly do not account for the vast difference between the utilisation of land for market-gardening in the Islands and at home.

In the Channel Islands the productive ground is divided into small holdings, generally cultivated by the proprietors themselves, though of late years, since fruit-growing has become so profitable, the small holdings are sometimes subdivided and let, as we have seen, at very high rents. The transfer of property is easy, and, being free from the difficulties which attend that process in the United Kingdom, favours the creation of a small proprietary. The actual possession of land by the cultivator has been followed by the best results. It is obvious that this principle might become a great incentive to industry, and in few places do we find a people more happy, contented, and self-reliant than in the Channel Islands.

In certain portions of the United Kingdom, where of late years fruit cultivation has begun to be intelligently conducted, the results have proved to be most beneficial. These have been especially noticeable in Wisbech, for example, where recently the industry has spread very rapidly. The Report of the Departmental Committee on the fruit industry of Great Britain, issued in the summer of 1905, contains much valuable evidence on this subject. As an instance, Mr. William Welchman, a solicitor of Wisbech, who himself farms thirty-five acres of orchards, was asked, "Do you know what

is the return of money to your district throughout the year?" He replied, "It must be something enormous. It acts and reacts throughout the whole of the district. It employs the husband, the wife, the children, the baker, the grocer, the merchant, the shopkeeper, the retailer, and the wholesale man. It means a benefit all along the line. It is astonishing."

We thus see that in a comparatively small district well-conducted fruit culture gives healthy employment, promotes circulation of money, and produces comfort, well-being, and contentment. Of what enormous benefit it would be, therefore, were the industry on similar lines carried out in those portions of the country adapted to it. If such results also have been achieved locally, and only with reference to horticulture, how striking would be the change over the country, how widespread would be the prosperity of all classes, were agricultural conditions and farming generally in a state which would speedily be prevalent, were we only to listen to the dictates of common sense.

It is true that since the fruit seasons of various countries do not correspond with that of the British Isles, our present method ensures us a good supply of fresh fruit all the year round. At the same time it is a fact that even during our own fruit season we import yearly large quantities of precisely the same descriptions as those with which we only partially supply our markets. The importance of

the subject may be realised from the fact that were we to become our own fruit-growers merely so far as our climate and soil permitted, we should retain a very considerable portion of the sum varying annually to a point between five and five and a half millions sterling which we now pay the foreigner, and this sum, instead of leaving the country, would circulate amongst the rural industrial classes in a very well-diffused manner, bringing comfort to many a sordidly impoverished home.

Some very significant evidence was elicited by the Departmental Committee on fruit culture as to the additional employment of labour and the increase in the value of land consequent on fruit culture. One of the witnesses, himself a fruit-grower in Worcestershire, stated that fruit-growing would find employment for fully five times the amount of labour used in ordinary farming. Mr. Wood, of Swanley, a fruit-grower on a very large scale, stated that fifty acres of fruit, properly cultivated, would cost more money in labour than 1000 acres of ordinary corn land, and he put the average labour bill for fruit cultivation at about £25 per acre per annum. This view was confirmed by many of the witnesses examined, fruit-growers or experts. Another witness, also a fruit-grower, stated that the population of his parish, where fruit was not grown until he went there, had increased 25 per cent., and that had fruit not been planted, he felt sure the population would

have declined by the same amount through the falling off in the growth of corn. He added that there was now work for the people all through the winter. The Committee distinctly endorsed this evidence by reporting that in their opinion no better means could be devised for bringing people back to the land than an extension of the fruit industry where it could be done profitably.

That the fruit industry can be carried on and extended very profitably was amply borne out by the evidence collected as to the large increase in the value of land where the cultivation was conducted on modern principles, and the Committee reported to that effect. Thus, when visiting the Evesham district, they observed land which only a few years previously had been let for ordinary agricultural purposes at not more than £1 an acre, but which at the time of the visit fetched £6 an acre per annum as a fruit plantation. One of the witnesses, a fruit-grower from Hounslow, deposed that he knew of a piece of open land for which the rent was £3 per acre, while on the other side of the hedge there was similar land for which the tenant was paying £10 per acre, simply because it was under fruit. Another witness, the Secretary to the Blairgowrie Fruit-growers' Association, stated that in the Blairgowrie district fruit-growing had increased the letting value of the land from 25s. an acre up to from £4 to £12

an acre, and that the selling value of land varied from between £15 and £20 to from £50 to £100 per acre.

The evidence laid before the Departmental Committee speaks for itself, but it must be said that several drawbacks and difficulties connected with the industry were enlarged on. The witnesses complained of excessive railway rates, preferential rates, unpunctual deliveries, bad handling, pilfering, inadequate service, and refusal to pay claims. There was besides the question of foreign competition and tariffs hostile to British fruit. Apparently some well-founded complaints were made as to unfair assessment in rates for culture under glass. Thus a Scotch fruit-grower stated that in the Clyde valley, land used for fruit culture under glass was assessed at the rate of £160 per acre per annum. This he considered pressed very hardly on the grower. Another fruit-grower in Sussex stated that the average rate of assessment at Worthing was £117 per acre for ground under glass. The beneficial results to be anticipated by the encouragement of such an important industry as fruit-growing in the British Isles must be varied and far-reaching. Considering this, and also the fact that the drawbacks and difficulties complained of are none of them insuperable in their nature, it is obvious that legislation should deal with the subject when possible, by applying the most efficient remedies, and that the railway companies

should in their own interests endeavour to eliminate all just causes of complaint.

The advantages of fruit culture are so obvious as to become a subject of national importance. Why, then, cannot it be made a palpable success over a large portion of the United Kingdom, where the conditions of soil and climate are so highly favourable? I have enumerated some of the obstacles in the foregoing pages, but a powerful hostile factor remains which merits attention.

I presume it may be said, without fear of contradiction, that with few exceptions the so-called landholders of Great Britain are not in reality owners, but have merely a life-interest in properties which are strictly entailed, often to the third generation, and on prospective unborn heirs. The farmer or fruit-grower who may be, as, however, he seldom is, in England or Scotland, absolute owner of the land he cultivates, knows well that every tree he plants, every field he drains, every piece of ground he brings into better condition, increases the value of his property. If the same man paid rent for his land, holding it on a lease, he would not only increase the value of another man's property by improvements, but he would have no security for enjoying the fruits of his enterprise, intelligence, or outlay of capital beyond the term of his lease. On this falling in, his rent might be raised in consequence of his own improvements, more onerous conditions might be exacted in grant-

ing a fresh lease, and in fact he would be subject to the possible greed or caprice of his landlord.

It may be fairly conceded that the English proprietor is, as a rule, neither greedy nor capricious; on the contrary, the individual type of the class is an educated gentleman, generous and just, deservedly popular with his dependants; both his example and influence are beneficial. At the same time there exists no guarantee that he may have these and other desirable qualities, and even if he has them, his heir or heirs in entail may have just the opposite. The cultivator who, wishing to engage in fruit culture, erects hothouses and greenhouses, plants orchards, etc., can legitimately expect large returns; but these do not come for a few years, and his time of occupation is limited according to his lease. It follows, therefore, that a very strong incentive to enterprise and the outlay of capital is absent, on account of our present system of land tenure, and to this must be largely attributed our backwardness not only in fruit culture, but in agriculture generally.

If this subject be carefully examined, I think it will be seen that the present system of land entail is distinctly responsible for much which is anti-progressive, far-reaching in its effects, and a palpable hindrance to national prosperity. Its tendency is to retain land for generation after generation in the possession of a class who, receiving their rents half-yearly, are thereby not driven by

necessity to exercise their mental faculties.¹ Our every-day experience demonstrates that by a universal and not unprofitable law of nature, mental as well as physical qualities become atrophied by disuse. On the other hand, in the case of a man who leads a strenuous life, cultivating his intelligence, and his habits of energy, thrift, and industry, the tendency is for his offspring to develop these qualities. So long as conditions call for their exercise they become accentuated and established, commanding ultimate success in the race of life. It would seem, therefore, that

¹ The same, indeed, may be said of other property than land. A vast amount of English property is held on terms by which the life-owner is artificially precluded, in dealing with it, from either exercising his virtues or suffering from his faults. It is a system radically inconsistent with progress.

Sir John Lubbock (now Lord Avebury), the well-known naturalist, gives some very interesting particulars on the subject of the decay of mental and physical qualities in a race by disuse. In his work on ants, bees, and wasps, he states that slave-holding ants appear gradually to lose power of attending to the ordinary functions of their own life. For instance one species, *Polyergus rufescens*, one of the Amazon class, presents a palpable object-lesson on the degrading influence of slavery, as this variety has become completely dependent on its slaves. "Even their bodily structure has undergone a change: the mandibles have lost their teeth, and have become mere nippers, deadly weapons indeed, but useless except in war. They have lost the greater part of their instinct; their art, that is, their power of building: their domestic habits, for they show no care for their own young, all this being done by slaves; their industry—they take no part in providing the daily supplies; if the colony changes the situation of its nest, the masters are all carried by the slaves on their backs to the new one; nay, they have even lost the habit of feeding." Huber placed thirty of them with some larvæ and pupæ and a supply of honey in a box.

landed proprietors should, in their own best interests, refrain from sinking into the position of mere rent-receivers. Neither should artificial restrictions hinder the acquisition of land by those most capable of utilising it.

At present land can be entailed successively on individuals of three successive generations, or a still larger number if more than one be taken from a single generation. One or all of these may be unborn even at the time of the testator's death. Each of these individuals has thus merely a life use of the property, and as the last of the above

"At first," he says, "they appeared to pay some little attention to the larvæ; they carried them here and there, but presently replaced them. More than one-half of the Amazons died of hunger in less than two days. They had not even traced out a dwelling, and the few ants still in existence were languid and without strength. I commiserated their condition, and gave them one of their black companions. This individual, unassisted, established order, formed a chamber in the earth, gathered together the larvæ, extricated several young ants that were ready to quit the condition of pupæ, and preserved the life of the remaining Amazons."

In writing of another species of slave-holding ants, the *Anergates*, he says: "We may safely conclude that in distant times their ancestors lived, as so many ants do now, partly by hunting, partly on honey; that by degrees they became bold marauders, and gradually took to keeping slaves; that for a time they maintained their strength and agility, though losing by degrees their real independence, their arts, and even many of their instincts; that gradually even their bodily force dwindled away under the enervating influence to which they had subjected themselves, until they sank to their present degraded condition, weak in body and mind, few in numbers, and apparently nearly extinct, the miserable representatives of far superior ancestors, maintaining a precarious existence as contemptible parasites of their former slaves."

successors can entail in his turn, and usually does so, the general tendency has been to create a race of hereditary landholders. Supposing, merely for argument sake, that the law of entail were to be annulled completely, and a simple system of registration of title introduced, and that land were to be made as easily transferable as stocks or shares, there can be no doubt that an immense quantity of the land of Great Britain would pass away sooner or later from the present proprietary class to another who would be most probably more energetic, more skilful, more progressive, and generally better adapted to turn it to good account than the former owners. The change would therefore be clearly in favour of the general community. In one generation the standard of intelligence would rise very considerably amongst the landholding class, and be it observed, it is these who, by their position, should take a leading part socially amongst the rural communities in which they reside.

At the same time I do not suggest any sudden and violent change in the law of entail. Such legislation would at once have the effect of throwing a large quantity of land on the market, and the value would thereby become seriously depreciated. Besides this, a drastic measure of the above description would be simply confiscation of the rights to which the prospective heirs had previously been entitled by law, therefore a clear

injustice would be inflicted. There is no reason, however, why the law of entail should not be altered very beneficially by legislation of a prospective and progressive character. It might be arranged for the present that landed property could only be entailed on one individual instead of three, and never on any one unborn at the time of such testator's death who was outside certain degrees of consanguinity with the testator. This measure would tend to release a large portion of land now bound in entail. But the process would be gradual, the rights of present heirs in entail should remain untouched, and the eventual result would represent a great national advantage.

Certain arguments have frequently been used in favour of the present law of entail. It has been urged that amongst all classes there are individuals who are wasteful, extravagant, selfish, and reckless, of low intellectual power, and deficient moral sense. Were such men and women to come into unrestricted possession of large properties, fortunes would be dissipated in a lifetime, or even a few years, old family estates would be sold for the benefit of bookmakers, turfites, parasites, swindlers, and courtesans. Ancient families holding time-honoured names and proud records would be broken up, and prospective inheritors worthy of a distinguished ancestry would, by the fault of a single characterless proprietor, be reduced to indigence and obscurity.

It is certainly true that amongst different sections of our population, by no means excluding the wealthy, leisured, and cultured class, worthless types do make their appearance from time to time. The mental and moral standard of these is not so low as to warrant their being placed under restraint as dangerous to other members of the community, but they are by no means fit to be entrusted with the unrestricted control of money or property. It seems, therefore, distinctly unjust that other, possibly very worthy members of a family should be deprived of their presumptive rights by the folly of the fool or the faddist, the reckless misconduct of the profligate or the dishonest. The law of entail may, and often does to a certain extent, guard family interests, though there is no guarantee for their preservation should the entail end, as it sometimes does, with the worthless type. Indeed it is usually from the extravagance of such that old family properties have at times passed into other hands, but is there no way in which property could be preserved from the reckless or the vicious, without any undue infringement of legitimate rights?

In France the law distinctly recognises that the worthless types before mentioned do make their appearance from time to time in family life, and that, owing to their folly or misconduct, relations might be cast into poverty. Here the law steps in, guarding not only the relations from the mis-

doer, but the misdoer from himself. A family council (*conseil de famille*), composed of those within certain degrees of consanguinity with the objectionable property-holder, assemble for discussion. On production of evidence that the said proprietor is by his conduct or mental incapacity unfit to exercise the full rights of ownership, the family can lay such evidence before the law court. The entire case is then thoroughly sifted, and the court is empowered, should it see fit, to become trustee for the property. Rents from land or houses or interest on investments are then paid to the owner as they fall due, but the corpus cannot be touched by him or her, and when death supervenes the property goes to the legitimate heirs. There are many who think that a measure based on this French law might be introduced into England. Possibly such a one could be framed which, while still carefully safeguarding equitable personal rights, would defend many a family from lamentable poverty arising from the caprice or folly of a relative.

I do not by any means wish to imply the desirability of the landed gentry vanishing as a class, believing as I do that their presence represents a distinct influence for good, and regretting that at present the country squire seems to be a vanishing quantity. In this and other chapters I have suggested measures which it may be supposed if accepted would tend to

make agriculture highly profitable; following this, land would rise in value, and the general community would gain immensely. Probably the large overgrown estates would gradually undergo a process of subdivision, and this can hardly be considered a disadvantage. In many instances the cultivators would become actual owners, but a rural gentry would still remain, probably increase in number, for the possession of land would acquire a money interest which it is now losing. Besides this, the natural charms of English country life, its health-giving influence, and the love of field sports would always form an attraction for a large proportion of the educated classes. The change of owners, so far as it went, would be gradual and in accordance with sound economic laws. The change of conditions would be assuredly beneficial, which at present they certainly are not, when we see agriculture, still our greatest industry, rapidly becoming a bankrupt occupation.¹

¹ The following moderate but most weighty statement was made in the report of the Committee on the Housing of the Working Classes in 1906: "The Committee have had evidence of the relatively excessive cost attached to the present conveyancing system for the transfer of ownership in land, and are impressed with the great economy that might be effected by a system of registration of title being made universal and compulsory throughout the country. The Committee have been struck by the relatively enormous amount of solicitors' costs in comparison with the actual value of the land conveyed, which of necessity has a repressive effect on the free interchange of land."

CHAPTER XIII

REVIVAL OF AGRICULTURE

Foreign imports of agricultural produce—Deserted fields and idlers in the towns—The secret of agricultural success—Co-operation on the Continent—The question of transition—Report of the Earl of Jersey's Committee—Apathy of the British farmer—Beginnings of co-operation—A lesson from Ireland—The work of Horace Plunkett—Mr. G. W. Russell on rural organisation—Mr. Chamberlain's scheme—Potential resources of Great Britain—Comparison with Japan—Views of Mr. Lawson on the future of agriculture—Physical deterioration—Evidence of Miss Sayer on mental defectives—Probable results of the reforms indicated.

THE agriculture of the United Kingdom is still our greatest industry, but unfortunately, like many others, it is a vanishing industry, casting in its retreat some very ominous shadows. One of the most remarkable circumstances connected with modern English life, in these days, too, of widely diffused education, is the astounding ignorance to be observed amongst even the intelligent classes with regard to facts on which their own prosperity and their success in life so intimately depend. Thus how few of our agriculturists know that we are paying yearly over £7,000,000 to the

foreigner for eggs alone. Of these Denmark sends us half a billion. We pay more than £10,000,000 a year to the same country for butter, and for the imported article from all foreign countries we pay on an average more than £24,000,000. We spend more than £18,000,000 on imported swine's flesh, nearly £7,000,000 on cheese, and nearly £1,000,000 on poultry, approximately £9,000,000 on fruit, vegetables, honey, etc., producible at home; more than £51,000,000 for wheat, flour, and barley, and about £50,000,000 for sheep, cattle, and dead meat, including swine's flesh.¹ It is therefore unpleasantly suggestive of something radically at fault in our social and economic system of supply and demand when we find that agriculturists are throwing up their farms because farming does not pay, that land has of late years decreased lamentably in value, that the residences of the country gentry are becoming deserted, that agricultural labourers are flocking to the towns, and that land is steadily going out of cultivation, while in the towns hordes of unemployed men truculently demand work. The immediate cause of the rural exodus is not far to seek, when we find that at present more than half of the agricultural area of the country is used as mere pasture, that in the last thirty-four years 4,000,000 acres of arable land have gone out of cultivation, and that wheat occupies only one-third of the area

¹ For these figures, see STATISTICAL ABSTRACT, 1909, Cd. 4805.

it did thirty-four years ago. In recent times arable land which had been devoted to the cultivation of barley was, in ten years, diminished by an extent which had given employment to, and supported the families of, fully fifty thousand labourers.

The first principle of the successful business man is to buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest. Should he neglect this rule, he is trampled down in the race of life by competitors who observe it. I propose to show that the British farmer fails before Continental competition simply because he has been systematically violating the above rule. He has to a large extent been buying in the dearest market and selling in the cheapest. To begin with, he works strictly as an individual; he buys singly from the manufacturer everything he requires, from his household crockery to his provender, seeds, and farm machinery. As an individual he forwards his produce to market by rail in small bulk; he therefore pays a very high price for the carriage, and not understanding the value of co-operation, he sells his goods at wholesale price.

The question now is, how is it that the Dane, the Dutchman, the Belgian, the Frenchman, and the German succeed in capturing the British agricultural market? Often subject to an inferior soil and climate, the foreigner can yet raise farm produce, send it to the ports—transport it across

the sea, and then from the English port by rail to London, where he undersells the English farmer of the home counties, and for years past has been gradually beating him out of the market. The answer is that our competitors display intelligence and common sense in their methods. These methods may not run always precisely on similar lines with each other, but the general system is the same, and it is based on co-operative principles. The entire Continental *modus operandi* has been very clearly explained in an article by Mr. Montefiore Brice, published in *Temple Bar* for May 1905. The writer states, that in France "there are more than two thousand five hundred agricultural associations for the collective sale of products on conditions which ensure a profit on the smallest articles. . . . In Germany there are more than a thousand societies for the co-operative purchase of agricultural necessities, nearly as many for production and sale, and nearly two thousand societies for receiving the milk produced by farmers and cottagers, whether by the hundred or the single gallon, and at a central co-operative dairy, and by the uniform method which can only achieve a uniform result, converting it into butter, cream, and cheese." Mr. Brice further states that Holland has rescued herself from a terrible agricultural crisis by embracing the co-operative system. Fourteen years ago there were not twenty co-operative societies in the country; to-day there are more than

seven hundred of them, with fifty thousand prospering farmers as members. In the same way the London market is being flooded by vegetables from Belgium. It has been calculated that the average return from a twenty-five acre farm in that country has been increased by £4 per acre—simply owing to co-operation and the improved agricultural system made possible by it.

The truth is, the English farmer is very prone to walk in ancient ways; he views any change with suspicion, and is reluctant to abandon methods which are almost mediæval in their simplicity. On the other hand, the foreigner is keen and thrifty—always on the alert to secure the smallest advantage, he thoroughly understands the value of attention to detail, and is ever on the look-out for the best means of making a profit in any direction. In fact, he recognises those principles which represent progress, and acts on them. The Englishman, on the contrary, lags behind, he is content to work on lines which suited his forbears at a time when the conditions of life and industry were essentially different from those which rule at present, he acts on false principles, and is consequently beaten on his own ground by the active, intelligent, alert foreigner.

Charges of handicapping home produce by unduly heavy rates have been so frequently brought against English railway companies that recently Government instituted an inquiry into the matter by means of a Departmental Committee under the

presidency of the Earl of Jersey. The report was published in 1906, and I think fully corroborates my contention as to the chief causes of the decay of British agriculture. I quote the following as highly suggestive of the apathy and backwardness of our agriculturists :

“Evidence given by witnesses on behalf of the railway companies shows that *imported* produce is carried from the ports in large quantities, in full truck loads, and frequently full train loads, while home produce as a rule is carried in small quantities and in small consignments.

“The difficulty of the home producer is that while foreign traffic is always sent under such conditions as to obtain the advantage of the lowest rates, home produce is so often sent in small quantities, and consequently fails to obtain the benefit of the special rates which the companies have put into operation with the object of inducing the home producers to send their produce or to combine to send their produce in larger quantities and better packed.

“The most effective way in which the home producers can claim and obtain lower rates, is to combine and co-operate with the object of sending their produce in larger quantities, and packed so as to give good loading in the trucks.

“The companies say they are willing to give every assistance to bring about such co-operation. Some of them point to special efforts they have made and are making in this direction, though hitherto with little success.”

Surely the last sentence throws strong light on the causes which contribute to our gradual failure in the international race of life? In continuing to deal with the subject the report says: "Combination and co-operation on the Continent have, it is stated, been of great advantage in enabling the foreign produce to be imported into this country, but here it appears to be difficult to induce the farmers to co-operate."

It must be said that, during the discussion by the Committee, the railway companies made out a rather strong case for themselves. Thus the Great Western Railway claims to have issued thousands of pamphlets to agriculturists indicating the reduced rates for larger consignments, but apparently with very small result. The South-Eastern and Chatham and Dover Railway offered ten per cent. reduction for loads of over two tons, and fifteen per cent. for loads of over four tons of fruit and vegetables; yet these most advantageous offers were only accepted to a very slight extent. Indeed, in many cases, the growers, strangely failing to comprehend the basis on which their best interests rested, split up their own individual consignments and sent them to different salesmen in order to find out who could give the best price. In the case of the London and South-Western Railway, the farmers, with the same extraordinary fatuity and short-sightedness, have neglected to avail themselves of the reduced rates freely offered.

The evidence given by one of the goods managers was very much to the point, affording a valuable clue to the reasons for successful foreign competition. He said that all complaints as to unfair preferential rates would cease at once if agriculturists would adapt themselves to modern requirements by packing, grading, and concentrating their produce for the market so that it would compete with the properly graded and packed foreign produce.

At the same time the opinion of the Committee as to the fault lying entirely at the door of the British farmer was not quite unanimous. One member of the Committee (Mr. Haygarth Brown) declined to sign the report. This gentleman's opinion was that preferential treatment is in some cases unfairly accorded to foreign produce—that, in fact, rates are charged which are lower in proportion than the corresponding rates for home produce. Considering the magnitude of the interests at stake, it might be well that all inquiry should not rest here. Mr. Haygarth Brown's opinion is worthy of attention, and if the fact should be elicited that even in some cases preferential rates have been accorded to the foreigner in such a way as unfairly to prejudice the English producer, legislative interference would be peremptorily called for. At the same time the real status of the question seems to have been fairly recorded by the majority of the Committee in their opinion that "the desirability of co-operation seems to be so

generally recognised, it is to be regretted that its adoption should make so little progress."

In view of the foregoing, it must be apparent that the question of reviving the agricultural industry of the United Kingdom has become one of supreme importance. Also, that to achieve success the antiquated methods of last century must be completely discarded, and we must adopt those which have proved so eminently successful on the Continent. It is therefore satisfactory to know that owing to the enterprise and intelligence of a few gentlemen, a movement in the right direction has been at last initiated, and the British Agricultural Organisation Society was founded about seven years ago. Worked as it is on sound principles, the experiment has so far proved to be an undoubted success. It is not a trading society, and is non-political; its object is to organise affiliated societies over the country to teach the principles and benefits of co-operation and combination, to examine the best Continental methods, and ascertain how they can be best applied to the conditions of English rural life. Thus the members of these societies can now buy their agricultural requirements at wholesale price. The use of costly machinery, owned in common, is now accessible, as it has not been heretofore, to the small holder at an almost nominal price, a steady market can be secured, and goods can be sent by railway in bulk at a large reduction in price.

It happens that in this sphere of industrial organisation we have a model nearer home than on the Continent. We should not have expected to find such a model in Ireland, firstly because of the general industrial backwardness of most of that country, and secondly on account of the political and religious feuds which unhappily divide different classes so sharply that common action between landlords and tenants, Catholics and Protestants, Nationalists and Unionists, would seem well-nigh impossible. Yet by the genius, the organising talent, and the invincible faith of one man, who must have been looked on as one of the wildest of visionaries when he began his work, this apparent impossibility has been achieved. Sir Horace Plunkett began to preach the necessity of agricultural co-operation in Ireland in the year 1894. At the outset he had to encounter the bitter hostility of, at all events, the major portion of the most powerful organised body in Ireland, after the Catholic Church, *i.e.* the Nationalist Parliamentary party. The section of this body who assumed an attitude of antagonism appeared to view Sir Horace Plunkett's programme of reform as an insidious attempt to show that Ireland could prosper without Home Rule; but however this may be, their animosity was marked and undisguised. The Church was, as a body, neutral—some clerics, however, notably the Rev. T. A. Finlay, S.J., gave invaluable aid to

the movement, and ensured that it should not bear the fatal brand of sectarianism, a brand which but for the enlightened action of these adherents it would have been only too easy to affix to it. The main backing of the movement appears to have come (besides the farmers themselves) from the progressive commercial classes, especially in Ulster; though landlordism furnished, in the persons of men like Lord Monteagle, Sir Josslyn Gore-Booth, and Colonel Nugent Everard, some very powerful supporters.

On the whole, it must be said that Ireland offered a far more unpromising field for co-operative enterprise than does England, yet the success of the movement in Ireland has been very remarkable. The associations organised and working at the date of the last (1909) Report of the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society were as follows:—

Creameries	292
„ (branches)	57
Agricultural	166
Credit societies	267
Poultry societies	24
Flax	12
Home industries	35
Bee-keepers'	3
Miscellaneous (including bacon curing societies)	12
Federations	4
Total	<u>872</u>

For doing the trading business of these societies four comprehensive federations have been formed,

the Irish Co-operative Wholesale Agency, the Irish Agricultural Wholesale Society, and two federations for flax and for poultry respectively. The output of the dairies amounts to over twenty million lbs. of butter a year. The agricultural societies are mostly for the purpose of buying manures, seeds, and other necessaries for the farm in bulk, and securing the better terms both from manufacturers and railway companies which follow from these arrangements.

As I have before stated, we pay more than £24,000,000 yearly to the foreigner for butter alone, some of which comes to the English market from distant Siberia; and the more closely the matter is examined, the clearer it becomes that Ireland could, under proper management, secure the greater part, if not the entire, of this market, properly conducted Irish dairies supplying a butter second to none in the world. As it is at present, we receive butter from many and very distant lands, our chief imports being from Russia, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, France, Australia, and New Zealand, Denmark sending us far more than any other country. Denmark has a population of 2,588,919, an area of 14,844 square miles, and is 380 miles distant from our shores. Ireland has a population of 4,378,568, an area of 31,759 square miles, a particularly good soil for dairying, and is only 60 miles from the nearest English port; why, then, cannot Ireland supply the English

market? If the bulk of the butter for which the United Kingdom now pays more than £24,000,000 annually could be supplied by Ireland, it would indeed be no light matter, as of itself it would represent an immense accession of wealth for that country. There is no doubt this could be effected by the further extension of a proper system of production, under control of the Agricultural Organisation Society, combined with an economical and common-sense method of transport. Taking the case of Denmark alone, why should we continue to pay £10,000,000 a year to that country for a product which Ireland is capable of producing, of equal or even better quality, and under much more favourable conditions of success?

According to the *Lancet*—"The butter trade is as corrupt as it can be, and fresh legislation is badly needed to stop the subtle ways of scientific injury."¹ Indeed it may be said, without fear of contradiction, that most of the butter now used in Great Britain is more or less adulterated, but were the methods I have indicated to be adopted, the character of the article would not depend on the caprice, carelessness, or cupidity of the individual vendor. Its quality would be of the highest, and it would be uniform, as it would be prepared and exported by the trained experts of the Society, the buyers would be sure of purchasing the pure article, the very best of its kind, and this fact once recognised,

¹ *Lancet*, 3rd November 1906.

Irish butter would certainly in a short time obtain command of the market.

Again, in Denmark the Egg Export Society is sub-divided into 400 minor associations, with a membership of 30,000 persons. Every individual supplying the *dépôt* of the society of which he is a member is obliged to stamp each egg so that if bad it can be traced, and persistence in sending bad eggs results in the expulsion of the member. In each district, members of the society are appointed to collect the eggs, and this collector periodically examines the nests of the poultry houses in his district, insisting on absolute cleanliness being observed. Owing to the porous nature of the egg this point is a very important one, though much neglected with us. That we should import about 500,000,000 eggs annually from Denmark, that we should pay no less than £7,000,000 a year to the foreigner for this item alone, while the article could be easily produced at home, shows in itself that there must be something extremely faulty in our methods of food supply.

The Irish peasant is intelligent, and quick to perceive where his best interests lie; so when the great and beneficial work so thoughtfully conceived and so ably conducted by Sir Horace Plunkett and others associated with him shall have become general through the country, enterprise, comfort, prosperity, will follow in its wake, and the dawn of happier conditions will break over the land.

But further organisation, more extended in area, more varied in its application, is urgently needed. In this respect, that is to say, in the organisation of a suitable supply of all the needs for a more prosperous, more humane, in every way more attractive social life, the county has lagged far behind the town. This is the theme of a very striking paper on the problems of rural life read recently before the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society by Mr. George W. Russell, editor of the *Irish Homestead*,¹ and published in the Annual Report of the Society for 1909. I make no excuse for quoting the following passage from Mr. Russell's diagnosis of the situation :—

“ The Socialist Labour combination in England, a party which is pushing its way rapidly in England, and which wins a greater number of constituencies at every general election, and which has enough votes in other constituencies to extract pledges from members of other parties, this Socialistic Labour Party wants the land nationalised in just that way. They have a belief that all land is owned by dukes, and they are trying to shift the burden of taxation off their own shoulders on to those who own the land. If the Tariff Reformers come in, these same trades unions will use all their influence—and it is a great one—to prevent any import duties on the food they eat,

¹ The *Irish Homestead* is the weekly organ of the Irish agricultural co-operative movement, published at 28 Clare Street, Dublin.

and I tell you that when an organised town population make out some kind of a cry about the wealthy classes wanting to tax the poor man's bread and meat, it engenders a kind of elemental mob savagery before which any State will give way. So here again this organised town population will want to ease its burden, and very natural it is, too. But, if you farmers are to live under a system of Protection which is only for the manufacturer, and excludes the farmer, you will be as badly hit by the new Protection as you were by the old Free Trade. I am pointing out these things to you because I want to convince you of the necessity of a farmers' trades union. You have seen how the city capitalist has come into the country and tried to wrest from you the control of butter, eggs, bacon, the marketing of your live stock, trying to push you back simply into the position of manual labourers on the land. I have tried to explain to you how these huge city populations with their organised life have affected you, and are likely to affect you—and I have not told you half. And I want to know are you not going to make a fight for the good old ancient life of the farmer? Will you not make some stand against these forces which are quickening their life and will act against you? To meet them requires a quickening of your own life. The business mind of the country must be organised to counter the business mind of the town, the political forces of the farmers must be organised to meet the organised political forces of the towns—and to meet them intelligently. For lack of this political organisation our own

movement is hampered in many ways. We can get no legislation through Parliament. We exert no force there. There is not a single Irish member of Parliament to whom we could appeal to get the Thrift and Credit Banks Bill passed, giving our agricultural banks the same powers which have made agricultural banks useful and famous institutions on the Continent. We represent almost one hundred thousand farmers, and our movement has no political influence. It was only a month ago that an attempt was made by Irish members to prevent the extension to Ireland of a clause in the Development Bill, which allowed the Commissioners to devote part of the funds under their control to subsidise the teaching of the principles of agricultural co-operation. We had the old lie trotted out—that the I.A.O.S. is a trading body, and that it had its shops everywhere. How long is this sort of thing to continue? I say once farmers realised this vast, silent, insistent pressure which is pushing them more and more into an inferior position, it would not last a year—not six months.”

This is a contribution to thought upon the economics of Ireland, and indeed of rural life everywhere, which will be new to English readers, and which I venture to say deserves their attention. If the thing can be done in Ireland, and against immense difficulties it is gradually being done, surely it can also be done here, where the need is equally great and the difficulties, on the surface at least, very much less.

Hitherto the propagandist work necessary for forming and in the initial stages for guiding and advising the Irish Societies I have mentioned has, except for a brief period when the Department of Agriculture gave some help, been paid for by the generosity of private persons who were willing to aid Sir Horace Plunkett in providing the funds necessary for inaugurating a large measure of social reform, a work which an acute foreign observer has lately stated to be absolutely essential to the economic salvation of Ireland.¹ But in point of fact it is no less essential to the salvation of English agriculture and rural industries. An English Horace Plunkett seems to be the crying need of the hour, if only the English agriculturist would learn from him the secret of success.

Indeed the crying need of the hour has already called forth a man who has vehemently proclaimed the necessity of reviving British agriculture. In clear language, with thoughtful, logical force, he also indicates the manner which assuredly, if combined with the methods I have above indicated, would speedily re-establish it as the most wealth-producing industry of our country.

Mr. Joseph Chamberlain has presented a scheme packed by arguments so cogent as to demand the serious consideration of those who are desirous of solving some of our most pressing national problems.

¹ MODERN IRELAND AND HER AGRARIAN PROBLEM, by Dr. M. J. Bonn. London: John Murray.

At the present moment, however, I only allude to the point which touches the agricultural position. It would be impossible in keeping within the limits of this work to recapitulate the exhaustive arguments by which the right honourable gentleman has supported his theories, but briefly his suggestions are, that a low import duty, not exceeding 2s. a quarter, should be imposed on foreign corn, but no duty whatever on corn coming from British possessions. It is not proposed to place any duty on maize, because it is a food of some of the poorest of the population, and also because it is to a considerable extent used by farmers for feeding their stock. A corresponding tax, however, would be placed on flour, thus, as Mr. Chamberlain states, giving a substantial preference to the miller, and consequently restoring what was once a valuable home industry. A little reflection will show how far-reaching and beneficial would be the effects of this preference, as the refuse of the wheat would be in the country instead of remaining abroad. This offal, as it is called, would give to the farmers and agricultural population a food for their stock and pigs at a rate much lower than at present, nor would the advantage be only to the large farmer. The owner of the small plot or the allotment owner would also benefit greatly, as Mr. Chamberlain is informed by a high agricultural authority that the price of this particular animal food would be such as to enable the agricultural labourer to keep two

pigs where he now keeps only one. It is not proposed to tax bacon, as it is a popular food amongst the poorest of the population, but it is suggested that a small tax of five per cent. should be placed on other foreign meat and dairy produce.

It was, however, part of Mr. Chamberlain's scheme to make considerable remissions. He proposes to take off three-fourths of the duty on tea and half of the whole duty on sugar, with a corresponding reduction on cocoa and coffee. Working out the cost of food of the agricultural labourer and the artisan from figures supplied by the Board of Trade discloses an important fact. It is found that balancing the assumed extra cost of certain articles of food with the resulting decrease in price of other articles in consequence of the above remissions, the working man would be actually able to live at a fraction cheaper than he does at present. Therefore the outcry against Mr. Chamberlain, that by his legislation living would cost more, can be clearly proved to be a fallacy. Let us assume, however, but only for the sake of argument, that the working man's food would cost him a small fraction more, instead of a fraction less, were the above fiscal operation effected, there is still another standpoint from which the subject must be regarded. Taking the following figures, merely for illustration's sake, let us suppose that a given working man's food costs him at present 8s. per week, but that

in consequence of a certain tax on foreign food it would cost him 8s. 2d. Supposing, however, that in consequence of the imposed tariff, all available land should be taken into cultivation, that the circulation and diffusion of money increased rapidly, that vast sums were retained in the country instead of being sent away from it. Let us suppose, also, that in consequence of the enormous advance of prosperity, the supposed working man's wages rose, so that he could expend 10s. a week on his food instead of 8s. as formerly, most undoubtedly the change in the condition of things would be all in favour of the working man.

It is hardly conceivable that the bulk of the voters of the United Kingdom thoroughly understand the questions involved in Mr. Chamberlain's project of fiscal reform, the immense existing drain on the country's wealth, or the flood of prosperity which is ready to cover our land if we only exercise the methods of common sense. The figures I have given at the commencement of this chapter relating only to some of our food imports and their values may possibly enlighten the British voter regarding the millions which flow from the country as the price of food, every item of which, be it remembered, is producible at home. They are startling figures, and they demonstrate that we are spending enormous sums annually and needlessly on food from abroad. If we wish, we can produce this ourselves while retaining its money value circulating in our country

and bringing the problem of the unemployed far towards its solution.

Taking one item alone, we find that in the last fifty years we have paid no less than £1,000,000,000 for imported wheat. Had this sum remained with us how different would be our financial position! The landholder, the farmer, the miller, the labourer, the land mortgagee, and the country shopkeeper would have benefited; and not only these, but that large class of workers following an infinite variety of occupations whose well-being depends on the general prosperity of the land and the diffusion of its wealth. The political opponents of Mr. Chamberlain have sounded the alarmist false note of dear food, and this has caught the ear of a large class of voters to whom cheapness of the necessaries of life must be a great desideratum. Yet a careful examination of the subject ought to show the utter fallacy and unsubstantial nature of the opposition. It is true, English opinion moves slowly, but it is veering round towards such reform of our fiscal policy as would tend to the prosperity of not only one, but every class in the community. It is highly probable that the truth of Mr. Chamberlain's principles will assert themselves eventually, though unfortunately for a time the working millions who would chiefly benefit by them may hesitate before the misleading and mischievous parrot cry of "your food will cost you more."

A question has been raised as to whether the

resources of the United Kingdom are actually capable of producing enough food for the population, even by working intelligently and under the best economic conditions, but this is a problem which can hardly be solved by mere hypothetical calculation. We have some figures at hand, however, which tend to show that were we carefully to husband those resources, as is done in certain other countries, a very much larger proportion of our food could be produced at home than at present, thus allowing us to retain enormous sums which we now send abroad, but which ought to remain in the country, thereby proportionately augmenting its wealth.

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland has an area of 77,683,000 acres, of which about 47,000,000 are under crops and grass, leaving approximately 30,000,000 of acres uncultivated. The total area of Japan amounts to 93,499,200 acres, but of this only between fifteen and sixteen millions are cultivated. A large portion of the country consists of mountain ranges, whose sterile slopes offer no reward to the husbandmen. Thus though they utilise the resources of the land, so that little which can be turned to account is neglected; though they are as intense in agriculture as in everything else which they undertake, the thrifty and strenuous Japanese only cultivate about one-sixth of their territory. From the dawn of Japan's history until about thirty-five or forty years ago

the nation produced enough provisions for its inhabitants. A comparatively small amount of rice is imported now, but the finer qualities are exported from Japan, and this necessitates the importation of an inferior article for domestic use from China, Korea, and some of the British possessions. In ordinary years it is found that the import of rice is about counterbalanced by the export, and therefore so far as food supply is concerned Japan is virtually self-supporting. We find, then, that the Japanese people, numbering approximately 47,000,000, and cultivating little more than 15,000,000 of acres, are capable of producing enough food for their own consumption. The people of the United Kingdom, numbering at present some 44,000,000, have 47,000,000 acres, or a little more than three-fifths of the entire area, under crops and grass, yet we spend more than £200,000,000 annually on food from abroad, the above sum only representing payment for products which we could grow ourselves within the capabilities of our soil and climate.

It is true that the bulk of the Japanese live on a vegetable diet, supplemented to a certain extent by fish, and the inhabitants of the United Kingdom, being mostly a meat-eating race, require more land for food production. At the same time the discrepancy in the productive power of the two nationalities must lie to a great extent in the energetic and intensive mode of agriculture observed

by the former people. It should be borne in mind also that the difference cannot be attributed to any supposed greater fertility of the Japanese soil, which, in fact, is not by any means naturally rich, being mostly volcanic or derived from igneous rocks. The cultivated portions of Japan owe their fertility to careful manuring, scientific cultivation, and the concentrated industry of the inhabitants, who, profiting by long experience, know how to make the most of their resources; this, it must be admitted, we fail to do, though possessing a far richer soil. Again, while the Japanese are carefully and skilfully making the most of that portion of their territory which is susceptible of cultivation, how do we treat our waste lands? How much of these, if scientifically treated, and if transit conditions were improved, could be converted into cultivation of various kinds, into pasture, or afforested? The methods pursued in the two countries afford a strong contrast, and the contrast, it must be confessed, is distinctly against us.

Mr. Chiozza-Money, M.P., in his book, RICHES AND POVERTY, computes that nearly the whole of the farmers of the United Kingdom earn on an average less than £160 per annum. The above author is a well-known statistician, and if his calculation be correct, it is clear that farming of itself does not offer much attraction as a means of livelihood under its present general conditions. Mr. Lawson also, in his work on BRITISH ECONOMICS,

presents some figures which amply support his view of the situation and of its serious character. He states that for thirty years the farming interest has lived on the verge of bankruptcy, "not only have farming profits for the most part disappeared, but in too many cases farming capital has followed them."

Nor does the above either represent by any means the full extent of the evil. As the writer reminds us, for every British subject born hereafter, and for every alien anglicised, so much more food and drink will have to be imported. He calculates that twenty years hence there will be at least ten million more mouths to feed, and probably another hundred millions sterling to pay. Unless, therefore, we thoroughly grapple with the present situation, we must look forward to the next generation having to meet a foreign food and drink bill of nearly a million sterling a day. Mr. Lawson's able work is well worth the attention of those interested in the causes of our agricultural decadence. He demonstrates not only the huge and rapidly growing item that food supplies represent in our imports, but also the unduly large proportion of our annual income that is spent on foreign food;

The slow progress of our home industries in general as compared with the rapid increase of our food imports;

The smallness of our exports as contrasted with

the enormous sums spent annually on foreign food ;

The steady and alarming retrogression of our home agriculture compared with the vast expansion fatuously given by us to foreign agriculture owing to unnecessary purchases of food from abroad ;

The folly of showing preference for foreign food supplies to the prejudice of our own colonies ;

That we have actually assisted in this development of foreign countries when similar encouragement might have been as easily given, and with better effect, to our own colonies, and, more than that, to our own farmers.

The dangerous position in which we have placed ourselves by allowing British agriculture to sink to its present point of decay will be clear from the following considerations. Suppose we were engaged in war against a European Power, or more probably a combination of such Powers, it must be clearly understood that we could not effectively protect grain ships coming to our ports. In such an event our war vessels would be occupied in guarding our coast, protecting our outlying strategical positions, protecting our trading vessels as far as possible, escorting troopships, and guarding our Eastern Empire.

The food supply fluctuates according to the seasons, and it has been calculated that we have usually only six weeks' supply available. Now,

were our food-stuffs from abroad cut off, or seriously diminished in quantity, food would at once be up to famine prices, millions of people would be starving, bread riots would ensue, the cry of "Cease the war" would arise from famishing multitudes, and our Government would infallibly be obliged to conclude an ignominious peace, the ineffaceable seal of national disaster and dishonour.

The case, however, does not rest on economic or military arguments alone. There is another and a very serious side to it which must now be taken into consideration. The most intelligent and far-seeing of our popular leaders should not be blind to the fact that at the present period of our history we are moving on the downward grade. Once a certain point has been attained in this course, we must be prepared to resign ourselves to that irretrievable decadence of nations which has been the fate of so many once powerful and prosperous States. That we are nearing this fatal turning-point is evinced by various conspicuous signs of the times; yet many amongst our governing classes fail to see, I might even say that they refuse to see them, still less the coming disasters which they foretell.

It cannot be denied that physical deterioration is leaving its sinister mark on masses of our population, nor is it to be wondered at when we observe those masses steadily exchanging the invigorating air of the country and its healthy rural pursuits

for the fœtid atmosphere and unwholesome environment of the slums. The inhabitants of these display the results only too surely in their anæmic, debilitated constitutions, stunted stature, and dulled intelligence. In this slum environment the moral atmosphere which forms character, and the ordinary circumstances of life which tend to form physique, are equally and highly injurious, and it is not surprising that the distressed and enfeebled conditions of health in the case of parents should produce a state of low intelligence in the offspring, giving rise in time to a very large and inefficient section of our population known as "mental defectives." The rapidly increasing number of these has become a question of such importance that Government instituted a Royal Commission to investigate the subject, and in 1904 their exhaustive report was published, giving much important and instructive evidence on the field of inquiry.

The commissioners found that besides the classes of certified lunatics and those who are denominated idiots, there exist in England and Wales alone about one hundred and fifty thousand individuals who come under the head of "mental defectives." These appear in every case to require a certain amount of provision or care; left unprotected, they suffer moral and physical degradation. Their position is a very pitiable one; they cannot compete with those of normal brain power, and are unable to manage their affairs with ordinary prudence.

Therefore each individual of this class represents a distinct loss to the State, and as the number is great and increasing, the loss must be very serious, so much so that all possible steps should be taken to prevent the increase of this unfortunate order of beings. The existence of a large feeble-minded class, which cannot be prevented from reproducing its kind, tends strongly to injure the average vitality of the race, it lowers the average national brain power, and it is associated with a strong tendency to criminality.

In September 1908 the Congress of the Moral Education Association assembled at the Imperial Institute in order to discuss those questions which led to the establishment of the Association. One of the addresses was given by Miss Sayer, a well-known lady doctor. This lady's lecture contained passages which bear so clearly on the present subject that I summarise certain of them. Mental defectives, she states, are those in whom the brain remains in some degree undeveloped during life. The mental disorder is not of a sufficiently grave nature to warrant them being certified as insane, but still they are not capable of managing themselves and their affairs with ordinary prudence. . . . It suffices to say that *morally they are always utterly weak*, and are especially liable to become the prey of the true moral defective. They are lacking in initiative, judgment and reasoning power. They have weak memories, and lie in a stupid

manner. They steal, not with the acquisitive instincts of the thief, but, lacking self-control, they will just grab at anything that comes in their way, not taking any trouble to retain it when they have got it. Their salvation lies in the fact that under suitable conditions they are very *imitative*, and therefore, if what little brain they have is stocked with good examples, they become harmless citizens. Unfortunately, however, their very existence is almost always due to bad heredity and environment. Therefore they only have bad examples, and consequently being so numerous, they form the bulk of our criminal population.

There are at present in London about seven hundred thousand children attending the County Council schools. Of these, six thousand five hundred are mentally defective, *i.e.* incapable of receiving any benefit from instruction in ordinary schools, and therefore are placed in special schools where their character and personality are developed to their utmost extent, and where they are taught some simple trade. Under constant supervision by the After-care Committee, about one-third of these contribute materially to their own support, although perhaps not more than five or six per cent. become entirely self-supporting. What becomes of the others? The girls drift into the maternity wards time after time, both sexes producing unsound children at a very early age. The boys become loafers, wasters, and criminals, spending

their lives in and out of prisons, workhouses, and asylums, it being a mere accident which they get into. Last year three hundred and twelve children left our special schools aged fourteen to sixteen. That is to say, that in the single city of London we are, from the working classes alone, wilfully turning out into the world at least some hundreds of children a year who are utterly unfit to be at large. As already pointed out, this class are not sequestered—they mix in their own class of society, they reproduce their kind, they contaminate stocks previously, it may be, free from the taint of degeneracy.

This huge and increasing evil appears to be in very large measure a feature incidental to slum life—that is, to the system which has made Great Britain a vast manufacturing district and has depopulated the country parts. When we consider that according to the latest returns there are in Great Britain only eight per cent. of the population engaged in any form of agriculture, while in Germany, in spite of her vast industrial expansion, there are still thirty-five percent., we get an idea of the extent to which rural life in our country has suffered from the reckless adoption of a fiscal system which looks only to money results, and overlooks the far more important factor of national health and vigour. What good is it to England to become the richest and most productive country of the world if in the process we turn ourselves into a population of physical and mental degenerates? Assuredly the

wealth gained by such means will prove in the end to be but fairy gold. We sell the highest and most enduring interests of the nation, and we shall be paid at last in mockery and shame.

Suppose, however, that the principles of agricultural co-operation, stimulated and supported as they should be by a wise measure of tariff reform in connection with our food-supplies, were to make way among our rural population,—suppose the latter were to adopt the Continental methods amply proved to have been successful, a great economic problem would be happily solved, the rapid decay of British agriculture would cease, and British farmers would find their incomes moving upwards with advancing rural prosperity. What an enormous benefit would thus accrue, not to a class only but to the nation at large, were even a considerable portion of the hundreds of millions we now spend on foreign produce to remain at home! It would circulate freely among classes now on the poverty-line, as the general wealth of the country augmented, while comfort and plenty would soon be brought within reach of many a now poverty-stricken middle-class home throughout the United Kingdom.

If the farming classes of our country have shown apathy and want of enterprise in the past, it is all the more desirable that those who possess local influence should use it in a matter which has become one of national importance. The landed proprietors of Great Britain belong to a leisured,

cultured class, but for years past their incomes have been shrinking owing to the depreciation of agricultural land. Would it not be well, therefore, for those proprietors to throw all their influence into the forward movement by becoming members of the British Agricultural Organisation Society, and energetically spreading its operations over the entire country? The whole question is a very wide one, by no means touching only the landlord and the farmer. Should the Society achieve the ultimate success foreshadowed by its early proceedings, and have Mr. Chamberlain's scheme as a powerful auxiliary, it would be difficult to set limits to the flood of prosperity which, spreading over the land, would rouse the middle and lower classes from their present stagnant conditions. These classes would at once begin to enter on an active, healthy, progressive national life, and the leading results might be recognised as follows:—

- (a) The rural exodus would be checked, and a healthy population would be substituted for the rapidly growing masses of slum-bred degenerates.
- (b) An immense quantity of arable land which has gone out of cultivation would return to its former condition.
- (c) A large portion, possibly the bulk, of the money we now spend for imported food would remain and circulate in the United Kingdom, and this wealth would be

diffused amongst the trading and agricultural classes.

- (d) The yearly augmenting accession of wealth circulating amongst hitherto impoverished classes, and the revival of a great decaying industry, would rapidly stimulate local trades and crafts.
- (e) The danger of food shortage in time of war would be much diminished.
- (f) Far more healthy and robust types of men would be available for service in the army than those we accept at present.
- (g) Most probably food produced in large quantities at home would be eventually cheaper than what is now imported from the Continent.

It is possible that, even making use of all our available land and employing the most efficient and economic farming methods, we might be still somewhat short of producing our full food supply. At the same time, most undoubtedly, there is a very wide margin between matters as they are and as they might be, representing a great potentiality of national wealth. An army of unemployed are ever before us, a mass of human waste material, but calling for work. Millions of acres more or less going to waste only require labour for their development and the increase of national wealth; at the same time we see hunger and want casting their unwholesome and stunting influence over millions

of our population, and producing demoralisation and degeneracy. Yet with all this, scores of millions sterling annually leave our shores in payment for what we could produce at home—millions which, in giving wide employment, would solve one of the most urgent problems of poverty.

CHAPTER XIV

AID FOR THE ENEMY

Character of the Anglo-Celtic race—Failure to deal with unemployment—Foreigners in the Merchant Service—Dangers of the present situation—Foreign pilots—Handicapping of British vessels—Leakage of official secrets—Secret orders to British trading ships—German naval development—The German point of view—Dangers of national apathy.

It may be said that every free nation has precisely the social system which is commensurate with its intelligence and general capacity. The inhabitants of these islands claim for themselves the principles of shrewd common sense, tenacity of purpose, great business capacity, foresight, administrative ability, and good statesmanship. They have exercised those qualities in times past, and in consequence the Anglo-Celtic race has played a very leading part in the world's history. At the same time, it is a grave question whether our present methods are suitable to the rapidly changing conditions of the age, and whether our present social system does not contain symptoms which indicate national decay, and which therefore require very careful attention while there is yet time to mend our ways.

It was calculated that during the winter of 1905-06 something like 800,000 men and women, the former largely predominating and claiming to be workers, were out of employment throughout Great Britain. I witnessed the march of the unemployed in London during that and the subsequent winters. Many of those composing the processions were no doubt honest, and really wanted employment, but it struck me, as it must have struck every observer, that a large proportion belonged to that idle, wastrel class which is now becoming so prevalent in our large cities. About one-fifth of the whole appeared to be of the military age for enlistment, and likely in a short time under discipline to turn into very efficient soldiers. As the army wants recruits, why did not these men enlist in the service? They would have a healthy open-air life, good treatment, light work, comfortable quarters, excellent food, and, if well conducted, almost the certainty of getting employment on taking their discharge. The answer is, they dislike the restrictions of military life, they prefer in a desultory way to do occasional odd jobs, to get doles from charitable societies, alternated by spells in the workhouse or prison, to tramp the roads in summer-time, generally living or preying on the public, and they will certainly act thus as long as the public supports them. At the same time, while hundreds of thousands demand rather truculently that the State should maintain them or provide

them with work, there is a foreign invasion of thrifty, industrious Germans, French, Swiss, and Italians who pour into England and monopolise industries formerly exclusively British. They become waiters at hotels and restaurants, domestic servants, shop-assistants and artisans, while from the middle-class houses all through England there arises the wail of the difficulty of procuring English servants.

At the present time the British Merchant Service is largely officered and manned by aliens. On March 7th, 1905, at the annual meeting of the Imperial Merchant Service Guild, Lord Muskerry spoke, and gave valuable testimony as to the danger of allowing British ships to be commanded, officered, and manned by foreigners.¹ The Guild consists of more than 13,000 British merchant captains and officers, including representatives of the principal lines issuing from ports of the United Kingdom. According to the latest returns the numbers of the various grades of aliens in British merchant vessels stand as follows :—

473 alien masters and officers. !!

3297 alien petty officers. ..

34,906 alien seamen.

Of the alien petty officers there are many no doubt who aspire to obtain Board of Trade certificates in due time. In time of war, of course, the Royal Naval Reserves must be called out, in which case

¹ *Merchant Service Guild Gazette*, April 1905.

British merchant ships would be almost entirely filled with aliens, and this fact might have far-reaching consequences. At a meeting in the Mansion House (Nov. 1905) Lord Muskerry again alluded to the lamentable fact that there were many British ships afloat flying the English flag without a single British subject aboard them, and many more with a British captain and an exclusively alien crew. In addition to this, there were many British vessels carrying foreign apprentices, possibly future enemies, to be trained in the navigation of British ships.

The matter is a very serious one when we reflect on the steady increase of foreigners and decrease of British seamen in our Merchant Service. In the words of the report of the Naval Reserves' Committee, "Since 1859 the requirements of the Navy have outgrown the power of the Mercantile Marine to supply them. The former have increased, the number of British seamen has decreased." In 1860 we had 14,615 foreigners, excluding the Lascars, now we have over 38,000 foreigners,¹ excluding Lascars, in our Merchant Service, which thus is becoming steadily denationalised; and it is only a question of time when, if the process continues, the source from which the Royal Naval Reserve is recruited will

¹ The proportion to British seamen is now (1909) about 19 per cent. It has been decreasing slightly since 1898, its maximum being almost 23 per cent.

become British only in name. Is it wise on our part to allow this process to continue, if we consider that at some future period, when engaged in serious hostilities, we should be obliged to depend on vessels commanded and manned as described for the transport not only of food but of troops and munitions of war?

On the occasion of the Mansion House meeting which I have mentioned, Sir John Glover is reported to have said that if England dispensed with her alien seamen the people would starve, as there were not sufficient men to man the ships that brought the food from abroad. The question naturally arises, if this be the case how is it that there are chronically hundreds of thousands claiming to be unemployed throughout Great Britain? Not only this, there are now about one hundred and twenty thousand generally able-bodied paupers receiving relief from a heavily taxed community, and an army of some seventy thousand lazy, degraded tramps, mostly able-bodied also, infesting our roads and living on the offerings of soft-hearted credulity. It only shows that our general labour market must be in a peculiarly diseased state when at the very time that multitudes of able-bodied men are asking for relief or employment we have to utilise about thirty-eight thousand foreigners to man our ships.

It is true that once early youth has past, men do not take readily to a seafaring life, but in order

to meet this difficulty we have merely to increase the scanty number of training ships we employ at present, up to the point which would give an adequate supply of trained lads to our mercantile marine. The main advantages of this suggestion might be summed up as follows: Our Merchant Service would be supplied with reliable Englishmen, whose early training and education had been carried on under excellent and healthy conditions. If it be true that there is not enough work in Great Britain for those willing to be employed, the question, so far as thirty-eight thousand of them is concerned, would be solved, and about £2,000,000 at present paid annually to foreign seamen would be diverted to the pockets of English sailors.¹ Every healthy, industrious, well-conducted man is *pro tanto* a valuable asset in our community, every social failure or misfit is a distinct loss. There are, sad to say, homes in English slum-land, the conditions of which are so evil that boys brought up in them are bound to

¹ The truth is, however, that lads brought up under excellent and healthy conditions would, and do, turn away in disgust from the wretched and unhealthy conditions of food, sanitation, and accomodation on some British merchant vessels. This is very largely the reason why suitable Englishmen do not take to the sea. Very important evidence of this nature was given before a recent Commission on the manning of the Merchant Service. Some owners, however, state that foreigners are preferred because they are, as alleged, generally more sober and more efficient than Englishmen.

A distinguished naval officer of many years' experience once informed me that in time of danger he preferred to command Englishmen, because they become cool in proportion as peril

turn out failures ; there are also lower-class orphans, waifs and strays, abandoned by their parents, and there are those whom the law very properly removes from their parents' homes on account of parents' cruelty. All these could be provided for by the State by being educated and trained as soldiers or sailors, and being at a certain age drafted into the army or navy, so as to become good citizens with a useful career open to them. The most intelligent, who showed particular aptitude in certain directions, might receive special instruction, thus creating valuable national assets from amongst those who otherwise would augment the already great human rubbish-heap of State-made paupers and philanthropy-made wastrels.

The lamentable conditions of slum-life, not only in London but through all our large towns, are rapidly creating a deteriorated community of puny, ill-nourished types of low mental power and

increases. He found that sailors of other nationalities lose their heads and become liable to panic in time of danger.

As legislation deals with insanitary houses, why should not the same rule apply to insanitary ships? Were Government to insist on proper conditions being observed on board British merchant vessels, the principal obstacle to the employment of British merchant seamen would speedily disappear.

It is significant that the number of indentured boys actually employed in the Merchant Service has decreased from 18,303 in 1870 to 5446 in 1907. However, there is little doubt that there would be an ample supply of English boys willing to enter on a seafaring life if they could only be sure of finding the ordinary conditions to which respectably brought up lads would be entitled.

inferior physique, without the advantage of sound moral guidance, only qualifying for the jail, the workhouse, or the asylum. This rapidly increasing number of the mentally and physically unfit, products of unwholesome slum-life, indicating widespread impairment amongst our working classes, must constitute a national danger, and remedies are urgently called for. One of these might be represented by the plan I have suggested, which indeed is only an extension of one already in force to a limited extent, but so far showing excellent results. It would arrest the process of moral and material decay while there was yet time, thereby constituting a national safeguard and advantage, by a method which would, besides, in the long-run, prove to be one of national economy and of lasting benefit to those whom it rescued. Our Merchant Service is supposed to form a great reserve for our Royal Navy in time of war, but having now some 38,000 alien seamen in our merchant ships, we must therefore have that quantity less to draw on in case of hostilities. Besides this, were we to be engaged in war, on the Naval Reserves being called out, a large proportion of our Merchant Service would be depleted of British seamen, thus leaving our trading vessels more than ever in the hands of foreigners, possibly natives of the very country or countries against which we were carrying on operations.

In May 1905 an important deputation, representing the pilots of the United Kingdom, approached Lord Salisbury on the subject of alien pilotage. During the discussion, the facts which were adduced were startling in their evidence as to our short-sightedness, and the manner in which opportunities were voluntarily placed in the way of foreign governments for obtaining very important knowledge which could be possibly used against us with disastrous results. The chief points to which the deputation called attention were the following :—

In the year 1888 there were thirty-five alien pilots in the English Merchant Service, in 1905 there were more than one hundred ; at the same time the Continental nations take particularly good care that none but natives are employed as pilots by them, and even these are State pilots. Thus even at the present time we have about one hundred intelligent foreigners gaining a most dangerous practical knowledge of the intricate navigation of our channels, ports, estuaries, and water-ways. How many of these may be in the pay of foreign intelligence departments? Undoubtedly every one of them would be quite able and willing to give most valuable information to his own government in the event of a conflict. Not only this, we allowed foreign shipmasters to obtain certificates of exemption from pilotage, the meaning of which is, that they could employ any fellow-countrymen

to act as pilots, and thus make themselves intimately acquainted with our coast-line.¹

Apart from this important question of guarding the knowledge of our territorial waters, the employment of aliens inflicts a direct loss on our English pilots. About half a million sterling a year is paid in pilotage dues by shipping, and from this, after meeting various expenses, about £200,000 is divided amongst 2430 pilots, natives and aliens, but owing to the employment of the latter an average of £82 per head is lost yearly by English pilots in the London districts alone. On the Humber there were very lately, and probably still are, fifteen working alien pilots, causing a total loss to English pilots of about £1200 a year. As it might be highly advantageous to any possible foreign enemy thoroughly to understand our coast, ascertaining the best anchorages, how and where troops could be most conveniently landed on our shores, etc., we accorded every facility for so doing. Any agent of a foreign intelligence department could gain the desired knowledge on passing a very easy examination and paying the small fee of two guineas, with 15s. for his licence; this gave the alien pilot-spy full power to search, it enabled him to make valuable reports to his government,

¹ Mr. H. J. Tennant, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade, informed Mr. Rupert Guinness in the House of Commons on March 31st, 1909, that sixty-five alien masters and mates held pilotage certificates to pilot their own vessels in ports of the United Kingdom.

and gave him the power to guide a fleet into British waters.

No nation in Europe except ourselves has allowed aliens to obtain exemption from pilotage, yet we exhibited the crass folly of permitting the dangerous practical knowledge of the intricate navigation of our territorial water-ways to be gained by foreigners, and that, too, at the very time when the Continental press was hurling the most violent abuse against everything British.

At last, though far too late in the day, the danger of foreign espionage was recognised. In June 1906 the clause prohibiting for the future the grant of pilotage certificates to aliens was, in accordance with Mr. Lloyd George's promise, moved in Committee on the Merchant Shipping Acts Amendment Bill, and accepted. So far as it went the amendment was no doubt sound, but it stopped short to a fatal extent, for it did not apply to existing alien pilots, who were permitted to retain their certificates, while pilotage licences are still granted to foreign shipmasters.

When it is remembered how elaborately the secret services of foreign governments are organised, and how freely money is expended in gaining secret intelligence, can there be a question as to alien pilots in British water-ways gaining all the information possible and disposing of it to their respective governments? Nor can there be much doubt that a large percentage, possibly the majority, of those

very pilots were in the direct pay of foreign Powers. Yet they were actually allowed to retain the positions which gave them ample opportunity of carrying out the most searching investigations in British waters. Moreover, it is clear that, as fresh aliens could not be employed, foreign spy-pilots would naturally make use of their remaining period of service in thoroughly completing any surveys which might have been imperfect. If the fact of foreign pilots becoming intimately acquainted with our coasts and water-ways constitutes a palpable national danger, as it admittedly does, surely it would have been only logical to have deprived these foreigners of further opportunities for mischief.

When any British vessel leaves one of our ports it stands examination as to whether it has the correct load-line or not, but until recently foreign vessels were exempt from this. During the many years in which this exemption ruled, a British vessel might sail from a home port and a foreign vessel might leave the same port the same day, the former was examined, the latter was not, so that the foreign vessel could carry much more cargo than ours, thus placing the English ship at a great disadvantage. This abuse was only partially rectified within the last five or six years, for I am informed that the new rule does not apply to foreign vessels trading from one of our ports to another along our coasts. The question naturally suggests itself, why have we for so many years

past accorded, and still to a certain extent continue to accord to the foreigner, a privilege denied to our own countrymen, thus creating serious prejudice to British merchantmen in British waters? It looked as if we actually wanted to fetter our ocean trade in order to stimulate that of the foreigner, and our one-sided rules, telling against ourselves, certainly had that effect.

Owing to the rapid development of science the difficulties of maintaining secrecy as to naval and military movements in time of hostilities are becoming far greater than heretofore. During the Boer campaign, information continually published in the British press was promptly conveyed to the enemy. When the news arrived in England that our fishing vessels in the North Sea had been fired on by the Russian Fleet, the British public were naturally impatient to know what would be our naval movements. This curiosity was speedily gratified, and so was that of the nation with whom we were on the brink of war, for on October 7th, only two days after the receipt of the news, the English press published, "Order to the British Fleet," explaining the dispositions of the Channel Squadron, the Home Fleet, and the Cruiser Squadron. On succeeding days further information was issued, all of which was no doubt highly acceptable to, and carefully scrutinised by, the Russian Admiralty. Admiral the Hon Sir E. Fremantle, one of our ablest naval men, is keenly

alive to the danger we incur by allowing our enemy to gain valuable press information. This officer has very sensibly suggested that a short Act of Parliament should be passed making it a misdemeanour to publish any naval or military news except what is sent to the papers by the Admiralty or War Office, the Act to be dormant, and only to come into force by Royal Proclamation on war being imminent. It would be very unwise to wait until the outbreak of hostilities, and then produce a piece of hasty and ill-considered legislation, which, when too late, might prove to have been inconclusive and defective. The question should be carefully examined, and a short Act of Parliament could be passed which would in the future guard this country against a serious danger.

The measure I have suggested would still, however, leave uncontrolled and disregarded a method of communicating news in war-time to which attention should certainly be directed. All the chief European Powers require that persons keeping carrier pigeons should register them, and foreigners are absolutely forbidden to use these birds except under very exceptional conditions. No restriction of the kind, however, exists in England, and I have been informed that a pigeon fancier in one of the southern counties continually uses them between England and the Continent. I understand also that the majority of them fly between this country and Germany. Here we

have a practice which might cause serious disaster in time of naval or military operations, and it is most short-sighted of us not to impose the same rigid restrictions on the use of carrier pigeons which Continental nations rightly deem necessary for their own protection.

It is quite natural that foreign governments should be ever on the alert, as they undoubtedly are, to gain private information regarding our army and navy, their good points or their defects. It is therefore highly desirable that, so far as possible, no effort should be spared to observe the strictest professional secrecy as to our defences and armaments. The continual leakage of information, and the opportunities given to possible future antagonists to gain valuable knowledge, certain to be made use of were occasion to arise, strongly evince the frequent and culpable carelessness displayed by those in responsible positions. On this point the following quotation from the *Morning Post* of December 24th, 1908, is significant and disquieting :—“This question of secrecy is one which affects very materially the comparative efficiency of the navy. The first and foremost offender, however, is not the press or the naval officer, but the Admiralty Office. Most of the leakage takes place there, and leaks away in a direction where nothing is heard of it. Not once or twice have confidential papers of the utmost value gone astray at the Admiralty.” When a

high-class and well-informed journal calls attention to so flagrant a danger in such a distinct statement, the question suggests itself, would *leakage* of this nature take place, for instance, in the German Admiralty? Certainly not, because the system of safeguards carried out by our neighbours is so thorough, leaving nothing to chance, that the filtering out of their naval plans or secrets would be practically impossible. Why, therefore, cannot we carry out a similar system, observing a like attention to minute detail? The fact that secret and important information is obtainable by foreign Powers can only suggest an apathy and gross carelessness which call for drastic amendment.

On November 27th, 1906, the Secretary of the Admiralty was asked by Mr. Bellairs in Parliament if he was aware that fourteen months before the details of the building of the *Dreadnought* were presented to Parliament, particulars appeared in a London technical journal giving the exact armament, speed, displacement, horse-power, nature of machinery, and other important ideas embodied in the ship.

The question was also asked whether, in the case of the submarines built in private establishments to the order of Government, any leakage of information respecting their design or the fact of their being constructed took place.

Mr. Robertson, in answer, stated that the articles published in a London engineering journal referred

to, proved to be not inaccurate, but that the particulars were not supplied by the Admiralty.

This answer can hardly be considered satisfactory ; but it would be very interesting to understand how the information was supplied, and who it was that did supply it, to the technical journal of which copies were at the disposal of every government in Europe a few days after publication. With reference to the leakage of information respecting the design of submarines built to the order of the Government in private establishments, Government officials may not be directly responsible, but why should war equipment of such a nature be constructed in any private establishments in which the desirable secrecy could not be made a condition ? Men employed in a Government dockyard, being paid official employees, could be more easily detected and then severely punished for disposing of information regarding our armaments to a foreign Power. In cases, then, where secrecy is so obviously called for, as in the construction of submarines, why should not such engines of war be constructed from first to last under strict Government surveillance by carefully selected artificers under Government control and subject to adequate penalties in case of treachery ? Well-trained but recently discharged Woolwich artisans have left our shores in considerable numbers for America, others have gone to find work in Continental factories, where no doubt their services will be duly appreciated. If we

require submarines to be constructed, and our navy brought to the highest point of efficiency, is it wise or politic to discharge our skilled Government dockyard men, obliging them to take their valuable mechanical skill to a foreign market?

In the *Daily Express* of September 27th, 1906, there appeared a notice calling attention to a serious menace involved in the fact that so many aliens were in command of British merchant ships. It appeared that the attention of Government had been called to the fact that a considerable number of British trading vessels had been captured during the Russo-Japanese war. Shortly afterwards the Merchant Service Guild of Liverpool received intelligence that, in order as far as possible to obviate the seizure of our ships, the Admiralty were about to issue *secret* orders to the commanders of British trading ships as to how they were to avoid capture in case of future hostilities, and the Guild forwarded a letter of protest to the Government. A representative of the *Express* then called on the Secretary of the Guild, who gave the following explanation, which was published :—

“There is no sentiment about our attitude. The Admiralty evidently intend that in time of war every commander of a British merchant ship is to be placed in possession of secret service knowledge with regard to the movements of our and antagonistic fleets. The public of the country cannot fail to realise the seriousness of this when it is

known that there are no fewer than 750 alien officers in charge of British ships, while on their vessels there are 40,000 alien sailors.¹

“In other words, on 80 per cent. of British shipping which is that of the tramp class, more than half the sailors and officers are foreigners. Many of these ships are engaged in carrying food supplies for this country, and the disastrous possibilities of the Admiralty proposals must be apparent.

“We have been more concerned in the matter because recently at a distribution of prizes on the training-ship *Worcester*, Mr. Lloyd George, referring to the shortage of British mercantile officers, said it was possible that we should have to go on recruiting from aliens.

“As a matter of fact there is no shortage of British officers. There are hundreds of them out of employment, and this arises from the fact that foreigners with Master’s certificates are content to serve as fourth and third officers at undercutting rates of wages so as to get an opening; and our contention is to the Admiralty, that they should make it illegal for a British ship sailing under British colours to be commanded by an alien officer.”

If the Admiralty ever seriously proposed to convey the secret information as above indicated, it is to be hoped that the suggestion has been abandoned, or at least considerably modified. The Intelligence Departments of certain foreign nations are most elaborate, very far-reaching in their

¹ It will be observed these figures relate to 1906. They have slightly altered since.

operations, and for the gain of useful information money is employed without stint. Of course there can be no difficulty in believing that a considerable number of aliens in command of, or otherwise employed in, British merchant vessels may be also gaining very important information for foreign governments. The crux of the situation is therefore as follows. On the outbreak of hostilities, should our Admiralty send secret information to alien commanders of our trading ships, that information will infallibly be at once transmitted to one or more foreign governments. Should we not send the secret information, our merchant ships will be captured as so many were, during the Russo-Japanese War. The subject is of such importance, and the national danger involved in it might at any time become so serious and so imminent, that no time ought to be lost in introducing necessary safeguards. These obviously lie in the direction of employing native-born British subjects in responsible positions, such as commanders of trading vessels, and, so far as possible, petty officers. All these, under proper management, could be in time supplied by our training-ships, but strict Government regulations, very stringently carried out, are urgently required to enforce rules the observance of which might very opportunely obviate serious disaster in the possibly not distant future.

Of late years the German Government has endeavoured to arouse popular desire for a powerful

navy, and the efforts have so far been attended with great success. On 25th, January 1900, a Navy Bill was brought forth in the German Parliament, the preamble of which was very significant. It stated that the object was to create a navy fleet of such strength that *a war with the mightiest naval Power would involve risks threatening the supremacy of that Power.*" The German people have shown themselves enthusiastic and patriotic, for the taxpayers promptly responded to the call to provide £40,000,000, in addition to the Naval programme laid down in 1900, and according to it the German Navy was intended to increase steadily until 1917, when it was considered it would be complete. This, however, was to have been effected according to the estimate at an annual expenditure of nearly £15,000,000. For some reasons best known to the German Cabinet, certain alterations were made, and it was arranged that the fleet would not be completed until 1920, though at the present rate of acceleration the latest programme should conclude by 1919. According to this scheme the German Government intends to construct a most powerful fleet of 22 Dreadnoughts, 11 armoured cruisers, 38 protected cruisers, and 144 torpedo destroyers, in addition to the present naval force. It will thus be seen that, as matters stand at present, in about ten years' time Germany will possess the largest and most efficient army, and a fleet equal if not superior to any in the world.

The strenuous manner in which the people second the efforts of their Government may be judged from the fact that a German Navy League was only established in 1898, yet it now numbers 1,250,000 members, and is certainly the largest voluntary association for patriotic purposes in Europe. The income of the League for 1908 was £70,000, and the periodical issue of their *Navy League Journal* amounted to 500,000 copies; it permeates through the entire Empire, and is unremitting in keeping up the enthusiasm of the people. The moderate interest evinced by the British population as to the condition of their maritime defences which are of such vital importance to the very existence of our Empire, contrasts rather unfavourably with the earnestness of the German. We have also a Navy League, which was established some twelve years ago. Its present income is about £3000 a year, it has a very well conducted *Journal*, full of useful information on maritime affairs; but it is taken in by a few clubs, is very rarely seen in private houses, and probably not one Englishman in ten thousand knows of its existence.

During occasional residences on the Continent for some years past I have had opportunities of gaining independent opinions from those with whom I conversed, chiefly the educated classes, as to the prevailing sentiment in their country regarding England. The collective opinion ap-

peared to me to have little variation, and if expressed by a representative German member of the class I have mentioned, might be summed up as follows :—

“We Germans, and especially the educated amongst us, entertain no intense dislike to you, but unfortunately a certain section of your tourist class who visit our country conduct themselves in a manner which does not tend to gain our respect or goodwill. True, those to whom I allude form a minority of our visitors, but this number is large enough to cast a certain stigma on others who do not deserve it. At the same time we who have resided in England perfectly understand that the ill-bred conduct of an exceptional tourist does not by any means represent the manners of educated English ladies and gentlemen. No doubt for a time the Boer War aroused a feeling of bitterness against you, but this is now subsiding as the conflict is over ; still, on account of your great national success and vast wealth, there does exist a definite sentiment of jealousy, usually felt by those who are poor towards those who are rich. This is accentuated by the fact that we believe we possess certain mental and moral qualities which, given equal opportunities, would have conferred this wealth and dominant position upon us.

“It was through hunger and hard labour during centuries that the German people have at last worked their way to their present position, such as it is. It was the very intensity of the long-continued

struggle which developed the qualities of which I have spoken, and we Germans naturally desire to turn our abilities and opportunities to account. A widespread impression is rapidly gaining ground in Germany that England is entering on her age of decrepitude; of this we see many symptoms, which perhaps escape the observation of most Englishmen. We think you show signs of physical degeneration, that certain of your most sterling qualities are not as prominent as formerly, and in fact that the process of decay has commenced. You have great wealth and a huge Empire, but if your hands become too weak to retain it the Empire must fall to pieces. To put the matter shortly, three conceptions have formulated themselves in the German mind, and they are rapidly gaining force. *First.* That at no distant period the British Empire may break up. *Second.* That if there is to be a scramble for England's wealth, trade, and territories, Germany is thoroughly entitled to have a large share. *Third.* To effect this she must have a powerful army and a fleet second to that of no other nation. We have the army; we shall have the fleet shortly, and so intend to be prepared for all emergencies."

Thus speaks and thinks the Teuton. Looking at the matter quite dispassionately, we must admit it is both laudable and justifiable for the Germans to create a powerful navy. Supposing also it were true, as so many far-seeing, intelligent Germans believe, that our Empire may break up at no distant period, and the present German dream of a great

Teutonic colonial Empire should turn out to be after all not merely a dream, or one of the pretty illusions of life, but bound to become a palpable reality, then we cannot wonder that our neighbours should take measures to have their share of the supposed moribund Englishman's possessions. At the same time we can reflect that England is an anvil which has worn out many hammers before this, and it is a hopeful sign that recently we have become not quite regardless of the danger signals to which the best informed of our public men and our journals are calling attention.

Unfortunately, the great body of Englishmen as yet do not fully realise the precarious nature of our situation both in Europe and Asia, or the disastrous combinations which might at any time be carried into effect against us. The present electorate is mainly composed of working men, and if the real issues at stake were thoroughly understood by them, they would be as true to themselves and their country, as devoted and brave, as Englishmen have always been heretofore in presence of a dangerous crisis. The real danger lies in the fact that they may not shake off the national apathy which long-continued prosperity engenders until danger becomes imminent; and then it may be too late.

Some good statesmanship and the methods of our foreign policy have been successful at different times in steering the country through unexpected

difficulties and dangerous situations. As a consequence our position regarding foreign politics has become much more secure, especially in Asia, than it was some nine or ten years ago. At the same time danger is by no means over, for there are growing forces both in Europe and Asia which must not be neglected, and by an untoward combination of circumstances they might at any time be highly inimical to us. We should carefully remember that during the Boer War a wave of intensely hostile feeling towards England swept over nearly the whole of Europe; even those nationalities whose amity we supposed we had gained joined in the outcry, and England found herself without a single powerful friend outside her own race. The foreign press and the people vehemently urged their governments to support our enemies actively, and a European combination against us was only averted, and even hardly averted, by the initial blunders of our enemy, by the fact that we had a powerful navy, and that the governments which cherished the hope of our downfall also thoroughly distrusted each other.

In 1867 Monsieur Thiers warned Frenchmen not to allow themselves to be alarmed by the "mythical figures of the Prussian army." How well his countrymen accepted the advice we know; the consequences we also know. France contentedly lived on in the paradise of false security, until

in three years' time the German battalions turned out to be not at all mythical, but stern realities, and France had to face them unprepared and when too late to retrieve the precious lost time. Would it not be well for us to take warning from this? There are still mighty interests which would benefit by the disruption of our Empire. The hostile feeling I have before mentioned, though not so outspoken now, is simply dormant; it has been by no means quenched by a few adroit diplomatic manœuvres, and circumstances might bring it forward again. In addition, a real danger exists in the probability of our being lulled into a sense of false security. The best, indeed the only, safeguard for the peaceable retention of our foreign possessions, is to be thoroughly prepared for war; we cannot afford to relax the utmost vigilance, and England must sleep in armour for many years to come.

CHAPTER XV

THE SCEPTRE OF POWER

Wealth and military power—Our export of steam coal—National purchase of coal-fields—Efficacy of the army—Lessons of the Boer War—Alternative methods of providing for home defence—Conscription—Provision for discharged soldiers and sailors—Military conditions in India and Africa—Delusion of the working classes upon Imperialism—Lord Dufferin's views on Indian Empire in relation to British working classes—Effects on India of our retirement—Summary and conclusion.

In a previous chapter¹ I have endeavoured to give some indication of the extent to which our economic policy is impoverishing this country and depleting it of its resources. But there is another than the directly economic aspect of the question. The wealth and prosperity of the country depend upon its armed force. In pursuing an economic policy of *laissez faire* we are not only directly depleting our national resources, but we are also in certain directions seriously weakening our ability to defend them against hostile Powers by sea or land.

It is not only our capital which streams off to fertilise the industries of our foreign rivals. In

¹ Chap. VI., "The Leakage of British Wealth."

1908 we exported free of duty 65,180,649 tons of coal, only about 2,000,000 tons of this being sold within the limits of the British Empire.

For naval and machinery purposes what is known as Welsh high-class steam (Cardiff) coal is considered the best in the world. We should carefully recognise the fact that although the coal supply of the British Isles is as yet very large, it is strictly a limited quantity ; Nature has long ceased to produce this article of most vital necessity. The Welsh steam coal, the only kind, as I understand, supposed to be used by the Admiralty on our warships, represents a fast diminishing quantity on account of the demands on it for home and foreign use, as immense quantities of this unique product are exported annually. It follows, therefore, that the nation would acquire a most valuable property were it to obtain exclusive possession of the Welsh coal mines. According to a statement in *The Navy* this transaction as regards high-class Welsh coal could be effected for less than £50,000,000.¹ The price would be large, but the advantage gained would be very great and of paramount importance. It must be borne in mind that a fleet at sea, burning the smokeless coal of Cardiff, has a signal advantage over one burning bituminous coal. Again, the sum thus expended would not represent a dead loss in any sense ; it would appear as a highly valuable investment, and

¹ *The Navy* for May 1909.

could be so arranged as eventually to cost the British taxpayer nothing, as I hope to demonstrate. It is true that recently oil fuel has been coming into use in the navy, but the danger of relying for war-purposes on a motive power which cannot be supplied from within the United Kingdom is so obvious that the exclusive possession of the Welsh coal-fields is likely to remain, as far ahead as we can see at present, a most valuable advantage to this country.

In 1908 the total of coal of all descriptions, coke, and manufactured fuel exported from the British Isles amounted to 65,180,649 tons. If we deduct about 2,000,000 tons sold within the Empire we find approximately 63,000,000 sold to foreign nations for the use of their warships and industries. Were we to place a tax of 1s. 6d. a ton on all coal thus exported it would yield us the sum of £4,725,000 annually. As there is a considerable average yearly increase of export, it might be expected that the yield in future would be much larger.

Supposing our Government paid for the Welsh coal mines by a loan of £50,000,000 at three per cent. interest, amounting to £1,500,000 a year, the latter sum deducted from £4,725,000 would leave a profit of £3,225,000. Were this to be treated as a sinking fund, the entire sum would be paid off in about fifteen years. This is supposing that the quantity exported did not increase; but as I have

said the average annual increase in past years has been considerable, therefore it may be supposed that the export would continue to augment to a certain extent, and if so the purchase money would be liquidated all the sooner. The Government would then retain the high-class steam coal for naval purposes or for home consumption, while retaining besides a most valuable national asset without any burden or additional charge on the British taxpayer, and ordinary coal would still be exported subject to the above tax. Our present position is this. We provide the foreigner with high-class coal at a cheap rate, thus aiding him to compete successfully with British industries, while the foreigner is building up a formidable tariff wall against our industries, some of which have been already ruined, and others are dwindling. This at a time when the most vigorous of our working classes are leaving the country in multitudes because it no longer affords them a means of subsistence. Looking at the subject from this standpoint it may be asked, does the position represent a phase of national wisdom or national folly?

During the debate in Parliament on July 21st, 1909, some information was elicited calculated to produce an uneasy feeling amongst those who maintain that our national defences are in a satisfactory condition. It was admitted, in answer to questions from Captain Craig to Mr. McKenna, that North Country coal instead of Welsh coal had

been supplied to certain vessels in the Fleet, and that some of the coal thus issued had been un-screened. Much more important and very disquieting was the further statement that North Country coal had been obtained "for reasons connected with the threatened coal strike in Wales." The ominous significance of this statement may be conceived on reflection that Welsh coal is the best steam-producer in the world, and, as we have said, is specially valuable in naval war on account of its smokeless character. Therefore on these very qualities might depend the issue of a great naval battle, and consequently even the fate of the Empire itself. Yet we cannot escape from the fact that at the period mentioned only a diminished supply was at the disposal of the Admiralty, as a proper stock had not been kept in hand. Let us suppose the by no means impossible contingency, that a sudden emergency arose calling on us to defend our shores; as matters stand at present we might find ourselves dependent for success on the state of the Welsh labour market and the goodwill of some thousands of miners who have already formed a very powerful trades union.

There are those who may say that in case of a popular war a strong feeling of British patriotism would prevent a Welsh miners' strike at a time when such would mean a national disaster. Quite possibly, and a war to repel an invasion would no doubt be popular. But we may be at any time imperatively called on to engage in hostilities for the

protection of most important foreign possessions, and it is by no means certain that such policy would be properly understood by, or be in accordance with, the sentiment of partially educated men having the crudest notions of Imperial policy or obligations. They, through their delegates, would infallibly argue that their action in striking need not arrest the war, that the escape from the difficulty was in the Government's own hands, that nothing more was required than for the nation to yield to the men's just demands, *i.e.* whatever terms they should choose to consider and dictate as such. Then all would be well, and the war might continue according to their goodwill and pleasure.

The possibility of such a dilemma arising at a time of some supreme national crisis is sufficiently disquieting. When viewing the subject in the light of former strike transactions probability might be regarded perhaps as a better descriptive term than possibility. Is it wise, therefore, for the nation to submit even to the bare possibility of such an eventuality at a period when it might well mean irremediable national disaster, and perhaps the permanent descent of Great Britain to the position of a third-rate Power? One question must suggest itself: can we adopt an adequate safeguard against a conceivable great national peril? Should such a safeguard present itself, surely it ought to be utilised without delay. Nor is it wise to postpone its adoption until probable danger becomes stern

reality, when a frantic national effort to discover a remedy might be answered in the accents of despair—too late!

Were the suggestion of the national purchase of the Welsh coal-fields to be adopted, I think a scheme might be formulated which, if carried out with judgment and discretion, would in future eventualities place the Government beyond the reach of embarrassment or dictation as regards our vitally essential supply of naval coal. I would suggest that once the purchase were effected, the men employed in the Government mines should be considered as belonging to a *service*, and engaged as such, being paid at the current rate given by mine-owners, six shillings a day. After a given number of years such men should be entitled to a pension, which might be to a certain extent contributory. The supervisors or foremen should have a position equivalent to that of non-commissioned officers in the military service, and these might be with advantage selected from petty officers of the navy, or the non-commissioned classes in the army, the executive being composed of men experienced in mining work. A well-paid service such as this would certainly attract numbers of the working population, so it would be easy to carry out a system of selection regarding character and capacity. It has been observed that men who have for some time been subject to discipline are naturally more amenable to authority, evincing

besides a greater aptitude for working in concert, than those who have not. It might be well, therefore, that men who retired from the naval and military service with good characters, in addition to proper physical qualifications, should, if they volunteered for Government mining work, have a preferential right to such employment.

To summarise the advantages accruing from the measure suggested :—

- (a) The country would in a given time become possessed of an enormously valuable national asset, the acquisition of which would simply cost the British taxpayer *nothing*.
- (b) At all times future Governments would be in exclusive possession of a product of the highest quality yet discovered, and especially conducive to success in naval war, yet only existing in limited quantity. For this reason alone it is most essential we should retain it in our own possession.
- (c) If the plan suggested were feasible, its adoption would render the Government independent of possible caprices or combinations at a period of national emergency.

As the mining workers would be recruited for a given time under well-defined conditions, entailing adequate pension on termination of service, the

probability of anything like a general strike occurring would be reduced to a minimum. Indeed, under a system of carefully devised rules and regulations, the bare possibility need not exist. Cases of misconduct could be investigated by committees of the executive officers, and serious misconduct could be visited by dismissal, with deprivation of pensioner's discharge as at present in the military service. In fact, in order to avoid future untoward complications, the service should be distinctly military in character and constitution. The workers, as well as those holding positions equivalent to those of officers and non-commissioned officers, should be engaged, and remain while in the Government mining service under the Mutiny Act and Articles of War, thus ensuring discipline. This is a very serious consideration in cases where thousands of men work under Government officials in a most important national service, essential in itself to success in war.

Should the sentiment of the country hesitate to approve of this scheme which I have sketched, and should no other which might be deemed its equivalent be adopted, then the seven and a half millions of British voters should carefully consider this point. In any future naval war, involving perhaps the maintenance and stability of the Empire itself, the continuance of that war under the highest conditions tending to success might remain at the goodwill alone of a certain portion

of the Welsh mining population. Would this condition represent national wisdom or good statesmanship?

Some modern English writer has expressed his opinion that the next twenty-five years will prove a very critical period in our nation's history. There are other close observers who think the period might well be shortened, and that quite possibly within the next decade a crisis may develop itself and decide as to whether we are to remain an Imperial race, ruling a world-wide Empire, or whether we are to decline into a very second-rate Power, playing but a moderate part in the arena of European politics.

Governing power has been conferred in a greater degree on the Anglo-Celtic race than on any other, and up to the present it has proved itself very efficacious in the spread of enlightenment and civilisation. So long as this governing intelligence retains its force and vitality, so much the better for the race and for others subject to its influence; but are there not signs that this once virile and energetic force is now becoming relaxed and languid? In Egypt, South Africa, and India, with its 300,000,000 of our fellow-subjects, we see chronic unrest, strong underground forces perpetually working against us, and it must not be supposed that periods of apparent quietude represent a coming feeling of goodwill to the governing power. Frequently the unrest in subject com-

munities is all the more dangerous if it works secretly ; but volcano-like explosions might occur at an unexpected time, and the time might be selected during a political crisis threatening the safety of the Empire.

The plain if unpalatable truth is, that amongst certain races which we have been called upon to govern, the Briton is ceasing to be regarded with the degree of respect formerly accorded to him, and he occupies a far less commanding position in their political sentiments than he did even in the earlier part of this generation. The glamour which attached to his personality is passing away with his prestige, but prestige amongst certain of the races whom we govern counts far more as a dominant factor than it does with us. The question, therefore, whether our army is in a position to respond as it ought to the sudden and severe strain which the great tension in European or Eastern politics may at any time place upon it, is of much deeper concern than may be apparent on the surface. A situation which, on the surface, and from the European point of view, would be merely awkward, might well prove fatal in India. Bearing this fact in mind, let us turn our attention to the condition of the military forces which are supposed to protect an Empire comprehending one-fifth of the habitable globe.

The defects of our army system have been thoroughly demonstrated by the proceedings of the

Royal Commission and abundant recent literature, therefore it is unnecessary to dwell on them now *in extenso*, but it would be advisable for us to consider the following facts. The rank and file of our regular army is composed generally of the fag-end of our working classes ; men recruited from the slums of our large towns, and not, as formerly, healthy peasant boys. Our present soldiers are therefore frequently unsound in health owing to bad conditions of life in their youth, they have nothing like the stamina of the men of forty or fifty years ago, and they are often mentally feeble. The difficulty of getting recruits, such as they are, is so great that we have been obliged to lower the standard of height and reduce the number of inches of chest measurement ; therefore, were we to be engaged against a European conscripted army, our forces, composed of some of the weakest and intellectually poorest elements of our population, would be confronted with the choicest manhood of the enemy's country. I would now ask, are we wise to entrust the honour of our country and the maintenance of our Empire to such defences as we have at present, for we have discovered by a very unpleasant process that our army, composed of British-born soldiers, with a large infusion of bad elements, is too small, that it is very costly, and certainly not highly efficient. Its organisation has proved to be loose, disjointed, liable to break down under a sudden or severe strain. Our officers are un-

questionably brave and devoted, yet our staff officers, though generally intelligent, are selected by a system which sometimes admits the incompetent and undesirable.

The Territorial force, regarding the numbers which have engaged, has fallen short of the expectations which were formed of it. The spirit of its members is no doubt excellent, and they possess a much higher standard of intelligence than the rank and file of the regular army. A very large proportion, however, is composed of immature lads, whose scanty training is quite inadequate to transform them into steady and efficient soldiers. Our best military experts agree that neither our regular army nor our auxiliary forces are at present in a state to contend successfully against a highly trained and thoroughly organised Continental army corps. It follows that so long as the above conditions exist we must remain in a very undesirable and even dangerous position. Our best military authorities have urged a modified conscription, but the hitherto insuperable bar to that measure lies in the powerful objection the British workman entertains to any form of compulsory military service. For unfortunately the great majority of our working-class electorate do not think imperially. They have never been taught to do so. In a sense they are patriotic up to a certain point, but it would seem that the preservation and consolidation of the Empire is not a burning question with them. The

prestige connected with the ownership and government of a vast Empire seems to be a negligible quantity in the mind of many a working artisan, whose narrow groove of thought is guided by the petty interests of his daily life. To such a one the greater questions of Imperial policy do not appeal, for he does not understand how his personal well-being and prosperity depend on them. The hostile attitude constantly displayed by workingmen representatives towards every form of military training, the recent attack by a Trades Union Congress on the Territorial Army, are indications which cannot be misunderstood.

An unfortunate and dangerous sentiment is springing up amongst many of this class that, at all events to them, the maintenance of a widely-extended Empire is not of any material use. They hold that it provides well-paid appointments and employment for those in various higher strata of society, the workman not being, as he considers, a participator in those emoluments. That, in fact, if all foreign possessions were allowed to drift apart the working-man elector would be quite as well off as before, if not better. It would be very well if the Little England party could only appreciate the true significance of the political doctrine they entertain and the destructive nature of the fallacies they aim at propagating.

The Cape of Good Hope, indeed South Africa generally, may be called the strategic pivot which

gives us an important coaling station and keeps communication open with our Eastern dominion and Australasia. Egypt gives us another strategic point of communication, and if either of these was lost to us the other would become of incalculable value in the preservation of India. Supposing we relinquished our hold on both the Cape and Egypt, it would simply mean that we resigned a secure hold on India also. It would be well for the electorate calmly to recognise how this would affect their own interests. The necessity of maintaining a safe connection with India may be judged from the fact that, although we receive no direct tribute from the country, yet indirectly by means of trade profits, pensions to civil and military officials, etc., the British Isles benefit by £20,000,000 yearly. This sum is very well diffused, and circulates freely amongst the masses; therefore were such a source of national income cut off, the misfortune would be widespread and disastrous to those very masses. In support of my contention I may quote from a speech made several years ago by the late Lord Dufferin when dealing with the subject:—

“ I am sure I am not guilty of any exaggeration when I say that in my opinion were anything to derange, or weaken, or interfere with our East Indian possessions, there is scarcely a cottage in Great Britain and Ireland, or a household in the manufacturing districts of the United Kingdom

which would not be made bitterly to feel the consequences of so lamentable a calamity."

There are many problems which must tax the capacity of our statesmen during the first quarter of this century. One of the severest is comprised in the fact that while the electorate is composed of seven and a half millions of voters in round numbers, three-fourths of these have not studied the contemporary history of their country from the Imperial standpoint. When popular leaders tell the masses that the British Isles are sufficient for the masses thereof, and that foreign possessions do not contribute to the welfare of the working man himself, he, in accordance with the credulity of his class, is apt to take the statement for granted. Here the supreme importance of the position is evidenced from the fact that, by a large majority, it is the proletariat vote which may at any time decide crucial questions of home or foreign policy.

If once, under a dangerously mistaken conception, the policy of relinquishing our foreign possessions were seriously carried out, the wealth which now accrues to us from the vast interests connected with their retention must also be relinquished. What might be called our spending classes would be ruined, but the ruin would fall with terrific force on the masses of working men whose very maintenance must necessarily depend on those moneyed classes. The disappearance of capital would mean the

wholesale disappearance of employment. Those composing the British proletariat might look with indifference on the extinction of income pertaining to those occupying other and higher social positions. They would, however, evince less indifference if they understood the real truth, that the wreck of the Empire, followed by the ruin of the classes, would also bring ruin to the homes of the working men themselves. There ought to be no difficulty in demonstrating this, yet unfortunately the workmen whose votes now represent the governing force of our country do not generally understand it.

Amongst the leaders of the proletariat throughout the United Kingdom there are doubtless men whose motives are sincere, whose aspirations, not prompted by sordid self-interest, are, if mistaken, purely patriotic. I would ask such, would it not be well to examine from every standpoint the serious political problems with which we are confronted? Would it not be well, while avoiding class feeling, to apply calm judgment and discrimination to the consideration of possible results and consequences which, if disregarded, might hurry on our nation to disaster?

So far, judging the matter from our own standpoint; but how would our loss of India affect the Indians themselves? In this case the sole controlling force which now restrains multitudes of antagonistic races, fanatically professing divers religious beliefs, would cease to exist. The clash-

ing of interests, the hatred of opposing creeds, the memories of past history, the rivalries of vehement warlike races, would be called into fierce existence, once freed from the supreme governing power. Before three months had elapsed there would issue from the Indian box of Pandora such a swarm of dire calamities as would leave Hindostan in a hopeless chaos of disorder, and a wrack of bloodshed throughout the land. Would this be an appropriate termination of a century and a half spent in the task of educating, elevating, and regenerating hundreds of millions of our Asiatic fellow-subjects? Yet we must look forward to this, in addition to losing a national income of £20,000,000 per annum, if we relinquish our Eastern Empire and adopt the political creed of the Little Englander.

I may quote, in this connexion, the declaration of Mr. Syed Ameer Ali, in his speech delivered to the Eastern Question Association (*The Times*, 3rd February 1910). He said:—

“The time may come at some distant future when India may be able to dispense with the great help England is rendering her by the loan of her sons, by the loan of their lives and labours, in the work of development, political, moral, and economic. But that time has not arrived yet. Every heart which is loyal to India, from the prince to the peasant, realises it. They all feel that severance of England’s connexion with their country would

usher in a period of anarchy, disorder, rapine, and slaughter, fierce religious and racial conflicts, compared to which all that has gone before would fade into insignificance—ending ultimately in a worse foreign domination than ever.”

He added the following significant and certainly not uncalled-for remarks :—

“ In saying this I do not lose sight of the fact that a great deal may be done to improve the relations between the East and the West . . . What is needed is an attempt on the part of those who are vested with authority, or who, from the accident of belonging to the dominant races have a certain prestige, to remember that they are placed among sensitive races, proud of their lineage, proud of their old civilisation, keenly resentful of any disregard of their feelings or prejudices, or of contempt for their race, but as keenly grateful for courtesy and geniality springing from the heart.”

Let me, in concluding these studies upon the dangers and the needs of the hour, recapitulate the points upon which I would desire to fix the most earnest attention of the reader. We are surrounded by dangers from without—dangers which must inevitably exist in a more or less threatening form so long as the British race continues to hold the vast and desirable heritage bequeathed to it by the valour and the statesmanship of our forefathers. It is idle to suppose that this heritage can ever cease to be an object of envy to powerful races whose period of national expansion came later than ours, and

who find the way to empire barred in every direction by the bayonet of a British sentry. We believe, however, that we hold this Empire of ours not merely by the right of the bayonet, but because, allowing for everything that may justly be alleged against our rule, we consider that we are capable of governing the many races under our flag in a spirit of liberty and of justice—the corner-stones of prosperity and of progress—of which hitherto no other colonising power has given evidence. But we cannot hold it by moral qualities alone. Strength must maintain what strength has won, and that strength must be concentrated at the heart of the Empire. The keys of our world-power are in the British Islands. I have therefore reviewed the modern condition of the British Islands at the beginning of the twentieth century from the two points of view most pertinent to the inquiry—the economic and the military. Under both these aspects very much appears to be desired—there is clear evidence of an enfeeblement in the national character, a want of grip, of foresight, a weak opportunism in all departments of life, and perhaps most ominous of all symptoms, a tendency, partly due to a despicable popularity-hunting, partly to a sincere but misguided philanthropy, to pamper the pauper and the criminal, and to heap burden after burden on the thrifty, hard-working, self-denying portion of the community for the sake of a vast and growing army of State-aided and largely State-created wastrels.

A statesman who will recognise these evils, and who will boldly summon all the yet sound and courageous elements in the nation to back him in dealing drastically with them, will, I cannot but believe, meet with a wide and whole-hearted response. Drastic as his measures may have to be, they will be far more merciful than the penalties which Nature will assuredly exact if her plain warnings are neglected and her known laws violated, until the heart of the nation has grown so corrupt that an inward reform is no longer possible. The situation is critical. Britain, once governed by an aristocracy, then by a more or less enlightened middle-class, is now practically in the hands of a democracy. Democracies have never in history succeeded in retaining an empire, but a democracy intelligent and far-seeing enough to realise the ruin which our present courses are preparing for its own hearths and homes, is by no means an impossible birth of Time. There are grounds for great anxiety; there are as yet none for despair. But we are nearing the precipice every day. Will the good sense, the patriotism, the courage of the nation awake in time? Or shall we drift on in our Fool's Paradise, accumulating year after year the sad and shameful records from which, it may be, some historian now even living shall write the history of the Decline and Fall of the British Empire?

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