

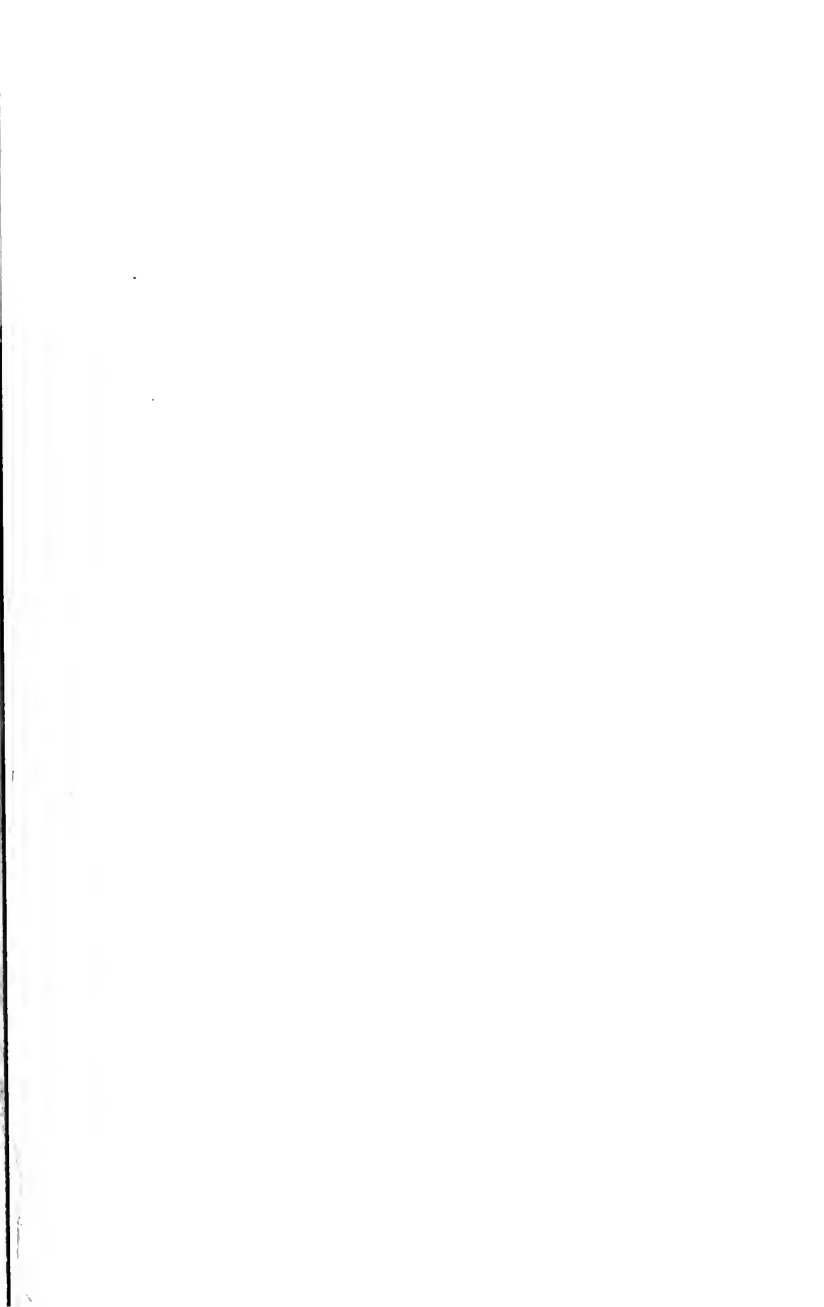
THE MURDER
OF AGRICULTURE
A NATIONAL PERIL
DISASTROUS RESULTS TO THE NATION

BY

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INTRODUCTION

A PROLONGED and determined crusade is as urgently needed in these modern days as when the burning eloquence of Peter the Hermit drew the armed hosts of Europe to the attempted rescue of the Holy Sepulchre. The battles now to be waged are not against the Saracens, but against the forces of ignorance apathy and criminal neglect, which have wrought, and are still causing, havoc in our own country.

It must be manifest to all keen observers that unless the people and the legislature are soon aroused from their Rip Van Winkle sleep to a full realisation of the insidious manner in which these enemies of our race have entrenched themselves round about us, hemming us in on every side, the direst perils and disasters must await us. "A strong man armed keepeth his house in peace," but for many years past we have been living in a Fool's Paradise, and have allowed ourselves to be beguiled, surprised and handed over to our foes, bound hand and foot in fetters stronger than those which the mighty Samson awoke to struggle against in days of old. It is with reference to such foes that the warning voice is now raised.

The first object aimed at in this book is to focus the attention of the people on the phenomenal, widespread, and yet unnecessary poverty which exists in the United Kingdom as an inevitable result of neglecting the land industry, as well as on the uselessness of all effort,

With this conviction should come a realisation of the serious injury inflicted on the British people by the party spirit which is dominant in Parliament, and of the utter hopelessness of getting any real measure of national usefulness passed through the two Houses until this insane and destructive party spirit be kept in check by the common sense of the people and the mandate of the body-electorate. Then should follow a recognition of the absolute necessity of curbing the spread of Socialism by creating an atmosphere of peace and prosperity among the people, instead of the foul miasma arising from the poverty and discontent in which millions of our fellow countrymen live to-day.

The monstrous injustice of forcing upon the people a mass of pauperism, widespread unemployment, and a lower standard of comfort than is necessary, because of the weakness of Governments and the trickery of political parties, has been fully illustrated in these pages. These, and kindred vital questions, including that of calling for such an amendment of the fiscal laws of the country as would afford the same protection to our own industries, land or otherwise, as is accorded to them in every civilised state in the world, plead earnestly for early solution.

Those, therefore, who will come over the border line of apathy, indifference, prejudice and ignorance, to help in the crusade against the hydra-headed evils and injustices described in detail in the following chapters, will do more to assist in the progress of their own country and in the well-being of their own people, than those who gave to the world the railroad and the telegraph.

THE MURDER OF AGRICULTURE

CHAPTER I

THE CURSE OF POVERTY—CAUSE AND EFFECT AND PALLIATIVE MEASURES

THE poverty of the people of the United Kingdom is as widespread as it is phenomenal; it presents one of the most difficult social problems to the Government of the day; its solution puzzles and confounds all sections of the great political parties, and it affords so extensive a scope for charitable effort that philanthropists have begun to despair of ever being able to grapple with it effectually.

A Dread
Haunting
Shape

It has become so rampant as to be almost aggressive, and being for ever with us it has assumed a dread haunting shape that overshadows the legislature and frightens and appals the people.

Many an Act has been passed by Parliament, and many a relief measure undertaken by the multitude of small municipal authorities throughout the country, with the object of improving a position of affairs which to-day is admittedly as bad as, or even worse than, it was five, ten or twenty years ago, but it is clear that all Parliamentary and Municipal effort has been in vain, and that vast sums of public money have been thrown away on measures which have not proved even palliative.

Poverty has indeed, cast a deep gloom over the whole nation, and not even our legislators and municipal councillors may hope to escape from its paralysing influence. We are all, therefore, naturally enough, interested in the question and desirous at least of studying it from a point of view that will enable us to help in its solution.

Complete
Change
Required

The entire question relating to the poor of this country is in a most unsatisfactory condition, and it is certain that unless the British tax-payers look at the matter from a totally different point of view from that from which they have hitherto been accustomed to regard it, and demand a complete change in the administration of the laws relating to the subject, their millions will continue to be spent annually to no purpose, save to maintain the upkeep of an enormously costly administrative staff which does no real good.

Ample justification for the most drastic change in the Poor Laws in the first place, and then in their administration, will be found in the simple fact that, in spite of the enormous amount of public money spent annually by the State in its endeavour to meet the requirements of the case, poverty still exists in a widespread and most acute form; poverty and its offspring—dull apathy, drunkenness, and that nerveless inertia which is so hard to stir.

Poverty is no respecter of persons—it is the common lot of millions of our fellow-countrymen. It is to be found in the homes of the poorly paid clerk, the typist and dressmaker, the shop-assistant and small tradesman, as readily as in the slums of our big centres of population; while among the poor gentlefolk who

quietly starve and perhaps die, some of the saddest cases of the kind are to be met with.

It is an evil which is ever growing; a curse which has fallen on the people as a deadly blight, and the evil is not to be uprooted and cast out, or the curse removed, by the adoption of ordinary methods.

We must battle with poverty as with a mortal foe, but we must realise and frankly admit that the old methods of warfare have failed, that our weapons are obsolete, our tactics faulty to a degree, and that unless we draw up a new and altogether different plan of campaign, and arm ourselves with modern and more effective weapons, we shall never carry the war to a successful issue.

New Plan
of
Campaign

But before we take the field against the foe let us ask why he is there, why Poverty exists at all, and if Poverty is really a necessary result of human life.

There is always a good reason to be found for the existence of a thing if we look deep enough; if we seek for Cause rather than for Effect. Poverty exists as an Effect, and it is because we have hitherto attempted to deal with *effects*, instead of seeking out and uprooting the *cause*, that we have signally and persistently failed.

Who, for example, knowing that sixteen millions of the public funds are spent by the State annually in the relief of only the most acute form of pauperism, and that still vaster sums are given every year by philanthropists and the charitably disposed (which embraces all classes of the community), can say that we are right in dealing with Effects instead of Causes, *when it is seen that the people still suffer from Poverty, and the results of poverty, more acutely than ever they did?*

If we then regard poverty as a result of something else, and then regard that something else as a thing to be sought out and fought with, we shall, at all events, have got on the right track at last.

We may take it for granted that, as a rule, a man does not become poor because he likes it; on the contrary, he struggles against poverty with all the strenuousness he is capable of, and generally makes a good fight of it till he is fairly beaten. His most persistent foe, in nearly all cases, is want of work, and this lack of employment, he finds to his cost, is pretty general, for *the supply of labour is always greater than the demand.*

But *why* is the supply of labour always greater than the demand? Why is it that in all professions, trades and industries, when we advertise for one man we get applications from hundreds? Why is it that the building contractor, who puts up a notice outside his works at eight o'clock in the morning that "hands" are wanted, replaces it by another at noon the same day intimating "no more hands wanted"? The reply will be found in the indisputable fact that our present means of employment, our professions, trades, manufactures and other industries, are *totally incapable of affording full employment to the entire working population of the country*, and that the labour market is always congested.

The clerk, typist, dressmaker, milliner, shop-assistant, "hands" in textile factories, navvies, dock labourers, are all subject to the pressure which congestion of labour involves; they have been sufferers from it for many years as they are suffering from it to-day; and it is absolutely certain that unless other, readier and more

stable forms of employment are found for that large section of the working community, which existing professions, trades and manufactures cannot employ, and will not be able to employ, the congestion must continue and the people must suffer.

CHAPTER II

SHORTAGE OF WORK IN OUR TRADES AND MANUFACTURES—HOW TO EMPLOY THE SURPLUS POPULATION

SOME of the publicists of the day, elated with the expansion of our national trade and fondly believing that the present tide of commercial prosperity will bear us along to a haven of rest and security against all our social and economic troubles, point to this trade expansion as a sure means of relieving the situation. Even so high an authority as Mr Balfour, in his speech on the introduction of the Scottish Land Bill on March 20, 1907, is reported to have said:

Our Manu-
facturing
Resources

“ But everybody who either opposed the abolition of the Corn Laws, or favoured them, must have been, unless he was an idiot, perfectly conscious of the fact that that exposed agriculture to all the difficulties of *foreign competition*, if foreign competition should arise, and that it was deliberately intended by its authors to stimulate that great growth of the manufacturing population which I view without dismay or regret, because I recognise it is the only possible mode in which the population of this country can largely increase or its wealth augment, to meet the great Imperial needs with which we have to deal.”

If Mr Balfour has been correctly quoted—and this

seems beyond question, as all the newspapers substantially agree in their reports—then it is clear that that gentleman still believes in our manufactures as the national pabulum, the only source from which we may hope to draw those ever-necessary supplies of men and money, upon which depends the existence of the Empire.

Let us see if these statements will bear the test of truth and experience.

A writer in *The Contemporary Review* for April, 1905, says:

“ The total loss of capital invested in agriculture, which has taken place since 1874, owing to the decay of our rural industries, has been estimated to amount to the colossal sum of £1,000,000,000; but it seems likely that the estimate is too low, and that the total loss is about twice as large as the whole amount of our National Debt.”

If the axiom holds good that the people cannot become impoverished without the State Exchequer suffering, owing to the shrinkage in the taxable area of the country which must inevitably result from such a condition, then it seems clear enough that, in building up our manufactures at the expense of our agriculture, the State must have lost vast sums since we commenced to neglect our great land industry; it will, perhaps, never be clearly demonstrated what we *have* really lost, but anyway the sum is colossal.

It may be contended that the increased manufacturing wealth will compensate for loss of agricultural wealth, but this could not be maintained, because, quite

Loss of
Agricultural
Wealth

apart from other considerations, the demand for manufactured goods naturally expands as the world's population increases, and prosperity spreads. It therefore follows that had British agriculture remained in a prosperous condition, manufacturing wealth must have been greater than it is now, because of the greater purchasing power which such prosperity gives.

Then in regard to manufactures being:

“ The only possible mode in which the population of this country can largely increase,”

the actual facts of the case appear to be in direct opposition to the contention.

The Government Emigration Records show the following figures:

From 1853 to 1904, when trade was not so flourishing as at the present time, 9,773,704 persons emigrated from Great Britain and Ireland, of which Great Britain accounts for 6,294,954 and Ireland for 3,478,750, or an annual average for that period of 187,956 persons.

Later figures show that during the five years ending 1905, upwards of 1,700,000 people, or an annual average of 340,000, emigrated from the shores of Great Britain, excluding Ireland; while in 1906 the enormous total of 557,815 persons emigrated from the United Kingdom.

If these figures prove anything it is this, that despite the vaunted trade expansion and the growth of our manufacturing industries, the people of this country find the necessity of emigrating in alarming numbers every year, while the millions that are left behind experience ever-growing difficulty in obtaining employ-

ment. It therefore becomes evident that the Leader of the Opposition was himself so imperfectly acquainted with the subject as to give effect to utterances which can serve no purpose but to mislead his Party, and all that large section of the electorate who will not think this matter out for themselves.

Mr Balfour is an able debater, a capable and astute leader of a great party, and he is, moreover, no mean, pettifogging politician, but a wise and far-seeing statesman, who compels the respect and admiration of even his political opponents; but he is, nevertheless, human, and liable to human fallibility. In this instance he has obviously committed an error of judgment.

In discussing so momentous a question as that involving the welfare of a people, we cannot permit our judgment to be influenced against our own convictions, even by so great an authority as the ex-Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

Let us now look at the matter from one or two other points of view, just to see if Mr Balfour's contention that in manufactures will be found the

“ Only possible mode in which the population of this country can largely increase, or its wealth augment, to meet the Imperial needs with which we have to deal ”

can possibly be justified by the experience of the past.

Success is a standard by which we may fairly measure most things in this world; and if a work yields good substantial results and stands satisfactorily the practical tests of ordinary life, it may safely be called a success.

Mr Balfour's “ only possible mode ” of dealing with

the question has, as is well known, been tried for the last thirty years or more, and it has failed so unmistakably as to result, firstly, in an actual increase in the number of paupers, which the State has to keep in its work-houses; secondly, in a huge surplus of unemployed, which is the bugbear of each successive Government; and thirdly, in a still greater mass of necessitous people of all classes, who, but for the continual effort and material aid of that multitude of philanthropic people who give unknown millions annually, would surely starve and die.

It may be contended that although these are facts plainly stated and legitimately quoted, they nevertheless need not necessarily apply to the future, because the expansion of national trade is so phenomenal and so abiding as to preclude the possibility of its failing us as a sure means of affording employment for every worker in the country; but it is obvious, from the experience of the past, that such a contention would be as unreliable and dangerous as it is specious and misleading.

Our national trade has passed through periods of phenomenal expansion and great prosperity time and again during the last fifty years or so, but what has it ever left behind save periods of reaction and depression, of lack of work and widespread distress, wherein Government aid on a liberal scale has been found necessary to save people from starving, and private charities have been sorely taxed to help the helpless?

Other
Means of
Wealth

Nobody despises our trades and manufactures, and we have not the slightest intention of under-estimating their enormous value as highly important and essential

factors in the commonweal; indeed, it must be admitted that they are as essential to our welfare as the sun's influence is essential to the planet on which we live. But here we must draw a firm line of demarcation. Trade and industries are certainly among the highest essentials to our existence as a great nation, but they are not the only ones. If we trust entirely to them we fail, as we have seen, and we must not fail any longer. We must supplement these means of wealth, greatness and prosperity, by other and surer means, that are not subject to outside influences, but that will afford unfailing employment to all who adopt them, quite irrespective of market fluctuations and trade depressions.

These means are to be found in the land, and only in the land. The land in every country but our own forms the staple industry, and constitutes the chief means of employment, with the result that in every case there is no such thing as widespread poverty and a huge mass of pauperism, as *we* know it.

Do not let us pass by this startling fact without considering what it means, for upon it hangs the welfare of the British nation.

We are, generally speaking, an untravelled people and a busy people. If we go abroad for our short summer holidays, we go for pleasure, and do not bother ourselves about the institutions of the country we travel in, or its trade, industries or constitution. If we go to Belgium, for example, we are more interested in the splendid Palais de Justice at Brussels, and the weird collection of paintings at the Musée Wiertz, than in the wonderful agricultural system of the country.

But when observation becomes necessary and comparison essential in national interests, we must no longer ignore, as of no moment, what other nations have felt constrained to do in the common interests of the people; if we do, we shall become criminally negligent.

**Universal
Agriculture**

There is not a country in Europe but has recognised long ago that the highest form of universal agriculture is as essential to the welfare of the people as the sun is to the solar system. They have seen that although commerce and industries are valuable and even necessary factors in building up the prosperity and greatness of a country, the land is even a far greater factor. The land is the source from which life itself springs, and it must therefore form the basis of all human effort. Neglect the land, and the real wealth of a country at once declines. Cultivate it highly, and real abiding wealth increases, full lucrative work is found for the people, prosperity develops and poverty disappears. This is not a theory of economics but a LAW, and those who care to study the matter for themselves will find that it is a law which knows no change.

We alone of all nations of the Western world have thought fit to deride that law and to set it at naught. Years ago, in the pride and full plenitude of our commercial and industrial success, we cast aside almost scornfully the nation's great agricultural industry, and opened our free trade flood-gates to the world's earth productions. "We will manufacture for the peoples of the earth, and wax fat thereby," said we in our arrogance, "and they shall grow our corn: they shall be our hewers

of wood and drawers of water." We were to be lords of manufacture and they—slaves of the soil.

A singularly bold idea was this of Richard Cobden, and had it been realised our position would have been unique in the world's history; but, "the best-laid schemes o' mice an' men Gang aft a-gley"—*other* nations also saw the necessity of developing *their* manufactures, and they would not have international free trade, and so the great "Free Trade" scheme was foredoomed to failure. Among other things, we have let in free the land products of other nations, but in so doing we have killed the people's greatest industry, and we shall presently see how terribly we have suffered in consequence.

Mr Balfour's "only possible mode" will not then be found in manufactures, but in the LAND and only in the land.

The
Best-laid
Schemes

CHAPTER III

THE SACRIFICE OF AGRICULTURE—SOME OF THE
COST

IN a work like this it is impossible to do more than glance at one or two aspects of a question that has so many features, any one of which might well form the basis of a ponderous academical work. All that we can do, therefore, is to show, as briefly as possible, the enormous loss the country has sustained, and how materially the neglect of our land industry has helped in building up the poverty of the country—poverty so widespread and phenomenal as to stand apart from that of all other countries in the Western world with the single exception, perhaps, of Russia—and then point out how heavily the burden of poverty falls on all classes.

The total area of the United Kingdom is given as 77,684,000 acres, of which 43,673,000 are returned as “cultivated.”

There are 12,789,000 acres of mountain, heath and grazing land, nearly all of which could be brought under the plough and profitably tilled.

Then there are 3,070,000 acres of woods and plantation, largely consisting of what are called “sporting” estates.

We are here dealing with a cultivable area of about

63,500,000 acres. The following table will show the position:

Cultivable area	63,500,000	Uses of the Agricultural Area
Area given as under cultivation . . .	43,673,000	
Area actually in crops	12,992,531	
Area under grass and pasturage . . .	34,078,526	

Here is disclosed the unpalatable fact that of what Government calls the "cultivated" area, only 12,999,000 acres are actually under tillage, while all the rest—34,000,000 acres—is under grass and permanent pasture.

If we add to this enormous untilled area the 12,789,000 acres of mountain, heath and grazing lands, and the 3,070,000 acres under Woods and Plantations, we have the formidable area of 49,859,000 acres of land *lying untilled*.

Now it follows in logical sequence that if a country allows its land to remain untilled, and a vast extent of splendid arable land to run to grass, grazing lands and heath, it fails to turn potential energy into an active living force.

In other words, no country in this world can afford to allow 50 millions of acres, out of a possible cultivable area of 63 millions, to run to waste without suffering terribly for its folly. Let us see how it has affected us.

If we look at the question first from the point of view of the people, i.e., how it affects our workers in the matter of employment, we find the land industry of the United Kingdom employs and supports to-day only 3,900,000 persons, or about *one-fifteenth* of the population.

Rational
Method

France employs and supports about three-fifths of its population, Germany about one-third, and Hungary about two-thirds by the land industry; and if we choose to follow their example by introducing a common-sense, rational system of agriculture, a universal system of small holdings by occupying owners and reasonable land tenures all round, we should be able to employ and support at least *one-third* of our population, or, say, 10 to 14 millions of our people on the land.

But there is really no necessity to push the matter to extremes, and this is only intended to show what our land is really capable of.

There is, however, every necessity for the people of this country to be awakened from that deadly lethargic sleep into which they were plunged by the preaching of a false prophet. Cobden and his disciples were fervid reformers, strenuous in their efforts, sincere in their convictions, and completely successful in their campaign. They fought long and well for what they considered to be a good cause, and they carried a large section of their countrymen with them.

They won the battle, but in winning it they destroyed agriculture, and in killing the land industry they murdered the people's best friend and greatest ally.

The deadly effects of the campaign were not felt at once; the great land industry was hard to kill, and it survived for a time.

Here is what Ernest E. Williams, author of *The Imperial Heritage, Made in Germany, The Foreigner in the Farm-Yard*, etc., has to say on the subject in *Our National Peril*.

“ It was not all at once that agriculture began to die. Just as a man may, by some foolish course of living, sow in his system the seeds of death, and yet continue for some years afterwards in fair and apparent health, so it was with English agriculture. The ‘ natural protection ’ of distance, which Cobden promised to the English farmer, did shield agriculture for a time. The prairies of North and South America were as yet sparsely employed in arable cultivation, and apart from the comparative smallness of the foreign wheat supply available, a lack of facilities for transportation, and the high charges for freight, did give the farmer protection against foreign competitors, even after the duties were removed. But all through the intervening years the foreign wheat lands have been developing, railways have made a mesh over them, and the seas are now so crowded with ships that they are carrying grain across the Atlantic for a penny a bushel, and in some cases actually as ballast.”

It was *then* that the country commenced to feel the loss of its great staple industry. Labour difficulties became acute and employment hard to obtain, and it soon became apparent that despite the lavish optimism of the Cobdenites, our much vaunted manufactures and world commerce were *not* capable of giving employment to the whole of the workers of the kingdom, and that vast numbers would either have to starve or emigrate. They chose the latter course, and a tide of emigration set in which has deprived the Kingdom of millions of its best and strongest, for we must always bear in mind it is the hardy, strong and vigorous who emigrate, and not the timorous, weak and shrinking.

**Emigration
to Avoid
Starvation**

The following table, compiled from *The Statesman's Year-Book*, will show how terribly the nation has been drained of its robust manhood.

From 1815 to 1860 the emigrants from the United Kingdom totalled 5,046,067, but let us also deal with several later periods.

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Yearly Average</i>
For 46 years ending 1860 (1815-1860)	5,046,067	109,697
For 10 years ending 1870	1,967,570	196,757
For 10 years ending 1880	2,228,396	222,839
For 10 years ending 1890	3,555,655	355,566
For 10 years ending 1900	2,661,832	266,183
1901-1904	1,592,237	398,059
1905 and 1906	1,017,732	508,866

These figures, terrible as they are in their significance, only tell one story, and it is this: The people's greatest industry, having been killed by a cruel but mistaken policy, millions of England's sons and daughters have found the necessity of leaving the country which gave them birth, to—AVOID STARVATION!

And we are further alarmed by the startling fact that in spite of the enormous expansion of national trade which has been experienced during the last few years, this appalling drain on the manhood of the country is still found to be a *pressing necessity*, the aggregate for the years 1905 and 1906 being 1,017,732, or an average for the two years of 508,866; in other words:

“THE HEAVIEST EMIGRATION DRAIN SYNCHRONISES WITH PHENOMENAL TRADE EXPANSION.”

Now if great expansion of national trade means anything at all, it certainly should include, among other things, full work and prosperous times for the people; and without being over sanguine we should certainly safely calculate on *that*. But as a matter of fact it means nothing of the kind; it only means, in this connexion, that fuller work may be found for a time for those who are already engaged, but for that vast throng of those unfortunates who are not engaged—and these are in their hundreds of thousands and their millions—as the emigration returns prove, there is NO WORK and NO HOPE.

In plain, terse English, your Cobdenites, free traders, political economists, or whatever cult they may belong to, have, between them, killed the NATIONAL INDUSTRY, the chief source of the people's support and employment, and have given them nothing in return save a lot of vapid promises and an international trade policy of so Utopian a nature as to result in nothing but poverty to millions of our countrymen.

And it is just here that we should do well to bear in mind that most of these millions who have been driven from their country by inept fiscal laws were of the body electorate, and had an inalienable right to participate in and benefit by the wise and well-considered legislation of those whom they sent to Parliament to govern in the interests of the body politic. Every one of these unfortunates, and every one of those who are being exiled to-day, have a well-defined grievance, nay, a just cause for deep-rooted, bitter animosity against any government and its followers who, solely for political

The
National
Industry

motives, bolster up a system which long experience has proved to be as faulty as it is fatal.

And what of those who stay at home to share with their wives and families in the evils which a misguided fiscal policy must necessarily produce?

Are we
Content?

Have they no grievance against their rulers? Can they look around and say—We are content? Is work so plentiful with them, so stable, so remunerative as to cause them to say, We have nothing to complain of? Can they say that our professions, trades and industries are so exigent in their demand for labour that a man is snapped up by one or the other of them the moment he is out of employment? Do we, as a people, in short, find that the labour supply is so scanty, the demand so great, and employment of all kinds so certain and so well paid as to have justified the destruction of our great land industry years ago?

These and similar questions we should ask ourselves to-day in all seriousness, and with a firm determination to get an answer of so unmistakable a nature as will clear up, once and for all, much that is doubtful and obscure.

We don't want to be humbugged any longer by the specious promises of political economists, or by a host of publicists who write glibly enough on every subject under the sun, and who, by the subtlety of their arguments and flowery rhetoric, can almost prove that black is white. Nor are we to be cajoled any more by this political party or that, who, to serve its own interests, will set up any cry or party catchword just to attract the votes of the large, easily-deluded section of the

British public which will not think matters out for itself.

The prevailing poverty of the people and the eminently unsatisfactory condition of the entire question affecting labour, have brought us face to face with a grim fact, and we are at last going to probe the matter to the bottom, and settle it in our own way.

CHAPTER IV

DESTRUCTION OF THE NATIONAL INDUSTRY—ALARMING
EFFECT ON THE LABOUR MARKET

THERE is a kind of ceaseless barter going on in this workaday existence of ours, and each one of us should be careful in ascertaining beforehand that we shall get fair value in exchange for that which we give up. But in spite of this we do often neglect these little points on which so much depends, and then we suffer in mind, body or estate. The same precaution should be taken by nations as by individuals.

When we were offered a change in our laws agricultural over half a century ago—a change which was to do such great and wonderful things for us as a people, and among others, convert Great Britain into a land flowing with plenty for all and lots to spare—did we count the cost? Did we sit in judgment on the case and calmly sift the evidence for and against, and then proceed to pass a well-considered decree; or did we too readily believe what we were told by one party to the suit, and then pass a hasty, ill-considered, *ex-parte* judgment?

That we took the last-mentioned course is unfortunately too well shown by the many evils which have grown out of our actions: evils which are so widespread among the people as to demand our best and immediate consideration and decisive action.

In the latter part of the first half of the nineteenth century there was, perhaps, as much need for reform in the fiscal administration of the country as there is today; few of us, therefore, would care to carp and cavil at honest attempts to relieve a strained position; but as the best and surest way to arrive at the true value of a thing is to measure it by the amount of success it yields, let us test what our forefathers did for the country by this standard.

To prove the utter and complete failure of the Cobdenite, FREE TRADE, or whatever system we choose to call it, we should calmly view the position from all points, without prejudice and without political bias, because *if we attempt to adjudicate on this momentous question with a mind tainted by the faintest tinge of partisanship, we shall surely fail.*

There is no need for elaborate statistical tables or reference to official documents to prove our case here, for the facts are patent to all; and these facts, unpalatable though they must be to all those who uphold in its entirety our present fiscal system, declare the utter worthlessness of a policy which was going to give the people of this country full work and general prosperity, good times all round, and employment for everybody.

Humbug! sheer humbug, and folly; and fools, indeed, were we to have believed so long in a scheme which carried with it, from the period of its inception, the germs of its own destruction. How could any scheme of the kind succeed that aimed at the DESTRUCTION OF A GREAT NATIONAL INDUSTRY, an industry which is as

Change in
Agricultural
Laws

essential to the people's existence as water is to the living plant? But *experientia docet*.

We too readily believed what we were told by a false school of teachers, and we have suffered, aye, suffered so long and so terribly that we are at last forced to realise that our position is so full of peril that unless we take this matter into our own hands and settle it in our own way, it will end in individual ruin and national disintegration.

We find ample evidence on every side that there is not work enough for the people; that distress and poverty abound, and that the standard of living among a large section of the working classes is far too low; far below what it need be; a standard of living, with not a ray of hope or comfort in it, and of so mean a nature as to be a positive injustice.

We find in every trade, profession and industry that the supply of labour *always largely exceeds the demand*, and this means general *precariousness* of employment, a low wage standard, and certainly a case of NO WORK for many.

We find that, owing to increased cost of living, the uncertainty of employment and the domestic necessity of "making both ends meet," women have entered the labour market as competitors in many branches of employment which till quite recently were exclusively reserved for men. And we recognise that as the employment of women is a necessary part of the economic system of the country, and that it is sure to increase rather than decrease, it is essential that the field of labour should be generally enlarged so as to prevent

that overcrowding which rendered labour conditions so hard in the past, which does so at present, and which will make them absolutely hopeless in the future.

We have at length realised that there is no chance of relief coming to us under the existing system of political economy, which relies solely upon trade and manufactures and the professions to support the people, and takes no account of the great land industry of the country. We are forced to realise that in the land lies the people's best and surest chance of *permanent* employment, and, moreover, that this form of employment is not subject to the same fluctuating disturbances which beset *all other forms of occupation*.

Judged, then, by the infallible standard of RESULTS, our forefathers' policy has brought about a state of affairs never dreamt of by them, whereby great loss has fallen upon the people; upon those whom it was their intention to help and foster.

It then becomes quite clear to us that with suitable land tenures, whereby every good, industrious tiller of the soil may have the opportunity, under equitable provisions, of acquiring proprietary rights, and with reasonable assistance from the State in certain directions, the land would not only be capable of giving profitable employment to the *whole of our English workers*, but would, at the same time, relieve the congested labour conditions of all other industries and professions, and result generally in those obvious advantages which equilibrium of supply and demand in the labour market involves.

It is absolutely clear to us that to establish a balance

of power between employer and employed means, among other things, greater independence of labour, full *permanent* work, better wages, and, generally speaking, a higher standard of comfort for workers.

Having these considerations firmly established in our minds, we can then voice our demands with the certainty that we are asking for that which is not only reasonable, fair and just, but absolutely essential in the interests of the people as in those of the tax-payer and the State; the commonwealth is involved in the question, and it is, therefore, of momentous importance.

We want *co-operation* between agriculture and manufactures.

Mr Ernest Williams, in one of his works on the subject, *Our National Peril*, says:

“Agriculture is not only the greatest wealth-producer amongst all the departments of industry, but the manufacturing industries themselves depend upon it. . . . Agriculture and manufactures, living side by side, support each other even physically as well as economically, as the most elementary chemistry will explain to you; and when they are wedded in the same community, wealth and economic well-being are produced and conserved to an extent which is not possible when they are divorced.”

A misguided policy divorced the great land industry from manufactures years ago, and bitter experience has taught us that a cruel wrong was wrought, and that these two great industries should now come together again.

DESTRUCTION OF NATIONAL INDUSTRY 27

We may now proceed to count the cost of our too ready credulity, and there is, I fear, nothing but a record of loss and disaster all along the line.

The unfortunate policy that we are committed to by a band of fervid but misguided zealots, has as surely encompassed the destruction of the people's great source of wealth—agriculture—as their prototypes, nearly nineteen hundred years ago, brought about the destruction of Jerusalem.

Landlords have, as we have seen, lost, at the lowest estimate, £1,000,000,000 of their capital. Farmers' capital has shrunk by another £150,000,000, and there has been far-reaching loss to all who depended upon agriculture for their support—agricultural implement makers, harness makers, carpenters, blacksmiths, masons, mechanics, labourers, all of whom have had to leave the rural districts for the urban, and helped to swell the already overcrowded ranks of labour in our centres of population.

The State then comes in as a great loser, whose tale of losses is counted by many millions annually, and the ultimate result of it all is that the entire burden of our folly or madness falls, as such burdens always must fall, *on the people*,—the working classes and the taxpayers. Colossal
Losses

It is obvious that if a man loses a portion of his capital, his income shrinks generally in exact proportion to the shrinkage of capital, or, to put it in a more concrete form, it is clear that a man trading with £10,000 is sure to derive a larger income from that amount of capital, other things being equal, than he would from £5,000.

The loss of £1,150,000,000 (*eleven hundred and fifty millions sterling*) in landowners' and farming capital means, at only four per cent profit, an annual loss of income amounting to the colossal sum of £46,000,000 (*forty-six millions sterling*) to landlords and farmers alone.

But before we proceed further with this matter, let us make it quite clear to that section of the public which generally dismisses such questions with the euphemistic "bally rot," that there is no "bally rot" here, but hard grisly facts.

A more concrete example, which, although arrived at by different methods, illustrates the same principle, is the following:

Of the land "under cultivation," we find that over 34,000,000 acres are in grasses and pasturage.

Good pasturage to-day commands as much rent as good arable, because, owing to the general neglect of agriculture, *there is little or no demand for land for arable purposes.*

Restore agriculture, however, to the place it ought to occupy as the central industry of the country, and must occupy before we can employ the people and bring about a general state of prosperity, and good arable land at once assumes a value far higher than any pasturage could command. Three to five pounds per acre would be a common rental for arable land under a sensible agricultural system; 15s. to 25s. per acre is a common enough price to-day.

Assuming for the moment that arable land, under more favourable conditions, would command only £1

per acre more than pasturage, we have by our neglect encompassed a loss on this item alone of £34,000,000 per annum in landlords' revenue. Add to this the 20,000,000 acres—the difference between what Government calls the "cultivated area" of 43,673,000 acres and what students of the subject call the "cultivable area" of 63,500,000 acres—most of which could be profitably tilled, and you have a vast area which, if brought under the plough, would in time be worth £1 to £2 or £3 per acre. Practically the whole of this land to-day produces nothing.

Vast
Uncultivated
Area

Assume again that this land would produce a small all-round rental of £1 per acre, and allowing for a liberal margin of from six to eight million acres of rocky land, or other land unsuited for tillage, the landlords are suffering a further loss here of about £12,000,000 to £14,000,000 per annum in revenue.

These two items alone represent a loss to landlords' income of from £46,000,000 to £48,000,000 per annum.

The next loss is to the State Exchequer. We all know that if a man be taxed on his net income the State revenue decreases in the exact proportion to the decreased income. If landlords' and farmers' income has decreased to the extent of £46,000,000 annually, it is clear that a great shrinkage in the taxable area of the country must have taken place, while the Government revenue from income-tax must also have decreased with it. This means, at one shilling in the pound, an annual loss to the State of £2,300,000—*two millions three hundred thousand pounds sterling.*

Now it should be borne in mind that every penny of

this falls upon the British tax-payer, that docile, patient, burden-bearing creature, the British tax-payer, that anomalous production of civilisation, the "tax- and rate-payer."

This man is a phenomenon; his hand is constantly in his pocket to pay the piper when he is not permitted to call the tune; to pay for what he has not ordered and does not want. He is always being called upon to "shell out," in consequence of the ineptness of Government administration and the bad trading and reckless extravagance of municipal bodies. This product of civilisation is a grumbler yet uncomplaining, he barks but does not bite; he has at times a ferocious aspect, but within he is as harmless as a cooing dove, and, take him all round, he is as good-natured and gullible, and as squeezable as a good "tax- and rate-payer" need be.

He is, indeed, such an anomaly that in many instances he does not really know that what the State spends comes out of his pocket. How often it is said, "Oh, it does not matter, the State will have to shell out," as though the State derived its income from sources altogether apart from the direct and indirect taxation of the people.

Now we all object to taxes in any shape or form, and would gladly rid ourselves of the burden if we could, but however much we may object to them, we all admit that taxation is as necessary in the administration of the affairs of the nation as sunshine is to the growth of flowers.

**The Patient
Tax-payer**

The patient way in which the British tax-payer has borne the heavy burden of the South African War tax

for years longer than it was necessary, proves how ready he is to play his part as a loyal citizen and bear the heavy burdens imposed upon him by those whom he elects and sends to Westminster to legislate in the interests of the Empire.

He is, however, forced to realise at last that his docility and patience have induced the building up of a system of expenditure in respect to Poor Law administration, and similar subjects, so lavish and wasteful, and withal so useless and ineffectual, as to amount to a public scandal and a positive injustice to every taxpayer in the kingdom.

He is also forced to recognise that his apathy in regard to fiscal affairs has resulted in maladministration to such an extent as to cause widespread loss to State landowners and farmers, as well as poverty and misery to the working classes, and it has cast upon the tax-paying community far heavier burdens than there is the least necessity for, burdens of which they are heartily sick and tired, because they know, from bitter everyday experience, that all effort is futile, and that these burdens are borne without affording the least real relief to those for whose benefit they were imposed.

He sees that the whole question is becoming more difficult and menacing each year, that the poverty of the people has become so prevalent as to demand more and more attention and support from the State and the charitable public, and that it has, in fact, become the most important question of the day. It looms largely in the Government programme of work in every session; it forms the basis of all Socialist agitation and

enterprise; it is a favourite war cry of all the people's champions, and we are so accustomed to its presence among us that we have come to regard it as an integral part of the social fabric, *a necessary result of human life*.

A Heritage
of the Ages

We believe it to be a "heritage of the ages," that it always has been and always must be, and that there is no use in trying to get away from the fact. Poverty we say is just one of the effects of human existence, as wealth is another; it always has existed and always *will* exist, and there is really no use talking about it.

No use talking about it! Is there not? Nevertheless, *let* us talk about it in order to see if what we say in this respect is not one of those human fallacies which are as plentiful as blackberries in autumn, and only require a little pricking to prove what airy bubbles they are in reality. We think there is no use talking about the question of poverty, because it is a common belief that it cannot be done away with; we think like this, in other words, "because everybody thinks so."

For thousands of years everybody believed that the earth was the centre of the universe, and that the sun revolved round this planet until Copernicus and Galileo proved to us that the very opposite was the case.

Who believes to-day in this fallacy?

CHAPTER V

POVERTY NOT A NECESSITY—CONTRASTS IN HOME AND FOREIGN STATISTICS

NOW let us put this belief in the NECESSITY of poverty to the test. Poverty as *we* know it; poverty that is more widespread and which costs this country, with a population of about 43,000,000, immeasurably more than it costs any other civilised country in the world; some £16,000,000 annually, apart from all charities of a private and personal nature.

Let us, first of all, turn to our near neighbours across the Channel for comparisons.

France has a population of 39,000,000 and spends 45,000,000 francs, or £1,800,000 on her poor, but this sum is the aggregate of both State contributions and private charities.

Germany has a population of upwards of 60,000,000. No statistics have been compiled since the year 1895, but there is very little actual pauperism outside of the capital, Berlin.

Holland, with a population of 5,591,695, spends about £1,629,201 on her paupers.

Switzerland, with a population of 3,250,000, spends about £635,000.

Austria-Hungary, with a population of 26,969,812, spends about £1,156,000 on the poor of the country.

Denmark, with a population of 2,588,919, spends about £464,000.

Italy, with a population of 32,966,307, spends about £1,240,000, although, strictly speaking, there is no pauper rate and no pauperism.

Leaving the Western States of Europe and going across the Atlantic, we find that, although the United States of America have Poor Laws, they are not bothered with poverty; in fact, the whole question over there is of such insignificance as to be hardly worth recording. The expenses of the Almshouses is given at something over 2,409,000 dollars, or about £481,000 annually. The population is about 80,000,000.

Effect of
Comparison

If we then turn to the other side of the Western world and seek for comparison in the United States of America for example, we still fail to find anything like a parallel to our own case, or the least justification for the belief that poverty, as it exists in our country, is an inevitable result of human life and therefore a NECESSITY. On the contrary, both in Europe and America, the general belief is that, although there is bound to be a certain proportion of necessitous people, chiefly consisting of the old and infirm, the sick and young children—orphans principally—anything like widespread poverty is an anomalous condition and therefore *unnecessary*—an *accident*, in short.

It is interesting to note in this connexion that in Holland mendicity and vagabondage are treated as a crime, and persons convicted of it can be placed in a State work establishment. The Dutch, at all events, are no believers in poverty being *a necessary result of human life*.

And we notice that there is very little pauperism in those countries where mendicity and vagabondage are criminal, and treated as such!

The first great lesson to be derived from these statistics, is that ours is the only country in the world which has set up an elaborate and costly system of pauper administration, whereby, by legalising unlimited pauperism we actually increase poverty, by encouraging improvidence, thriftlessness and a careless disregard of individual responsibility. The feeling that has been engendered in a very large section of the British working classes by this legislation of wholesale pauperism is this:

“ I'll do what I can to get a living, but if I don't succeed—well there's always the ' House ' to fall back upon, which is a blessing. At any rate there's always State aid for the asking.”

Now if there is anything in life calculated to rob a man of grit and backbone, of stamina, energy and stalwart independence, to entirely deprive him of that masculine vigour which is his pride, it is the feeling that the State is always ready to dry-nurse him, to supply him with food, raiment and light work the moment he feels inclined to accept such aid.

Such knowledge reduces a man, bit by bit, to a poor, feeble, inert creature, fit only to be cast up as a fleck of frothy scum from the sea of human workers. Men of this type, and there are plenty of them in the great army of toilers, soon fall out of the ranks and drift onward to the workhouses and casual wards, or seek outdoor relief from the many Poor Law offices scattered broadcast all

**Result of
Legalising
Pauperism**

over the kingdom. Thenceforth these flabby specimens of humanity fasten themselves on to these institutions and become a lifelong burden to the rate-payers and tax-payers of the country.

**Human
Wastrels**

Then there is a great lesson to be learned from the wastrel type: your slouching, dirty, public-house corner loafer, the frowzy tramp, professional beggar, *et hoc genus omne*. These creatures muster in their thousands; they are a curse to the tax-payer, a shame to all honest workers and a scandal to the country.

The working man is forced to rub shoulders with the loafer daily, and he cannot escape from his touch. He swells the ranks of the honest unemployed in their labour demonstrations merely for what he can get out of it, but he has no intention of doing any harder work than this. He makes a brave show in all such processions, because of his rags and tatters, and because his name is legion, but the real working man knows him to be a fraud and a sham, and would willingly rid himself of his presence if he knew how. The British working man holds in supreme contempt this despicable wastrel, and would loyally support any measures that would get rid of him.

These human specimens are lost to all sense of shame; they whine and cringe, or bully and bluster; they cajole and flatter, twist, turn and dodge; they will do anything for a living, from house to house begging and petty theft up to highway robbery, but they will not *work*: that is the only thing they will *not* do; and yet our comprehensive and lavish system of giving away public money applies equally to this human scum as to the deserving poor. The law is: "No man shall starve," and although

this law, under proper conditions, may be a merciful, just and even a necessary law, let us, in the name of common sense, safeguard the position by seeing that these conditions are of a nature that are at least fair and equitable to those who supply the funds—the British tax-payer—while not being hard and impossible to the poor. The present system is one-sided and unjust to the country; it enables an army of loafing vagabonds to fatten on mis-spent public funds; it encourages vagabondage among a certain section of the working classes, which, in this unfortunate country, finds employment hard to get and still harder to retain, and it is a disgraceful scandal to the nation.

Our present Poor Laws would be open to widespread abuse, and therefore unsuitable, even under conditions where every honest worker in the Kingdom could find employment at fair wages, which would enable him to live comfortably and without fear of the future on the proceeds of honourable toil; but even under such conditions it would be found that that section of the community which will *not* work under any circumstances would still be able to live in idle vagabondage just as easily as it does to-day.

Will the people of this country *never* arouse themselves to a sense of the monstrous abnormality of these Poor Laws, and the cruel wrong they do to the whole nation? Cannot they see that, although they were framed in a spirit of generous philanthropy and administered in foolish indulgence, they have, nevertheless, brought nothing but shame to the working classes by sapping their manhood; and gross injustice to the tax-

Gross
Injustice
of the
Poor Laws

payers, by imposing on them heavy burdens, which serve no purpose but to pamper the thriftless and encourage the worthless?

When our forefathers framed these Acts, they were full of the same Utopian ideas that filled Richard Cobden's ardent breast. They held the idea that we were to be the manufacturing lords of the earth, and that our great and ever-growing industries would find lucrative, lasting employment for all our workers. They were full of beliefs in our greatness; in the phenomenal prosperity that would attend their country; and being full of these pleasant thoughts they were as broad in their views and as generous in their impulses as a man is when he is filled with the good things of this life. But, alas, their ideals were foredoomed to failure. Had these generous legislators known that pauperism, which they had provided for with such lavish liberality, would grow into one of the biggest items of public expenditure, the present Poor Laws would never have come into existence.

Poor Laws we want, because every great country should support its poor. But Poor Laws, like all other laws, should be drawn up with the nicest consideration for every section of the people. Let our Poor Laws be comprehensive and even generous, but let them provide only for *the support of the aged, infirm and deserving, those who have been rendered poor by no fault of their own*. Let us provide liberally for this class of paupers, but here let our provision cease.

Not
Utopian
Proposals

It may be said: "This scheme of yours is as Utopian as the one you condemn, because it presupposes a condition of employment for all which does not exist." Pre-

cisely! but why not *create* such conditions! It would be easy enough to do so, if the people would only give Government the mandate; but if they will not do so, if they are content to do nothing but grumble, then they must abide by the consequences of their own supineness.

As matters now stand, these Poor Laws constitute one of the gravest scandals of modern times.

Herein lies an injustice so palpable and widespread as to need no demonstrating here. Every rate-payer and tax-payer in the country has been fully cognisant of it for years, and has chafed under the soreness which this shameful and yet altogether unnecessary burden causes. But nothing of any *practical* value has been done. The recent victory of Reform over Progressive Socialism in the London County Council, and amongst Poor Law Guardians, may check reckless expenditure in certain directions, and thus give some relief, but the great scandal of POOR LAW EXPENDITURE has not been touched, and millions of the taxpayers' money are, in the meantime, being squandered annually.

Why is it, in spite of the fact that the Government and all classes of the community are fully aware of this gross scandal, that it is allowed to go on year after year, and decade after decade, unchanged? Why is it that each successive Government finds the necessity of providing, in their budget, the prodigious sums that are spent annually on pauperism?

There is only one reply: Because in sacrificing its greatest industry—agriculture—the greatest trading and manufacturing country in the world, with its mighty Empire stretching to the confines of the earth,

The
Sacrifice of
Agriculture

and thus possessing all the inherent properties of phenomenal wealth and general prosperity, is *being compelled to recognise the necessity for poverty and the legislation of pauperism as a national institution.*

Why should this be so? Because we have listened to the false doctrines of a band of fervid, but wrong-headed, zealots, who were only capable of looking at a great fiscal question from one narrow point of view, instead of studying it from the many sides which so broad a question always presents.

Every question in this world has more than one side to it; and because we, in our blind credulity, obstinately refused to acknowledge this cardinal fact, we have wrought incalculable injury to the whole nation. The masses and the classes, employer and employed, capital and labour, Radical and Conservative, are all equally involved in the general loss, and none have escaped the blighting influence of our folly.

Let us recognise the fact that we *have* erred; that in our desire to improve the position of the people we have cast away the substance for the shadow; that certain alterations are essential in our fiscal arrangements, and we shall soon retrieve our position and build upon sure foundations a great structure of national prosperity. If we neglect to do this, poverty and distress will increase, and our ruin as a great nation will surely follow.

CHAPTER VI

NATIONAL PAUPERISM AND TAXATION—POVERTY AND
PRIVATE CHARITIES

THE question of National Pauperism should be considered from a point of view that is practically ignored by the vast majority of people, particularly that section of the community which is especially benefited by the constant outpouring of spontaneous philanthropy.

We, as a nation, have become so familiar with this widespread poverty and its dire results, that the heavy imposts of Government and the stupendous efforts of the philanthropic public in aid of the poor are regarded as a necessary item in the economy of life; while the poor themselves look upon the prodigious charities, to which we shall presently refer, as a matter of course, indeed, as a right.

We have seen to what extent tax-payers are called upon by the State to assist in relieving our pauper population by *direct* taxation; let us now form some estimate of the extent to which the well-to-do people of our country help the poor in a more general, though indirect, manner.

It is impossible to arrive at anything like accuracy in respect to the value of this indirect aid, because of the lack of statistical information on the subject; and also because those who give do not care to talk of their charities; we must, therefore, fall back upon a process

Enormous
Indirect Aid
to the Poor

of deduction which will enable us to form some general idea of the immense importance of the well-to-do classes as the most valuable asset in the national life.

Let us take Hospitals first, for in this branch of philanthropy we have *Burdett's Hospitals and Charities* to guide us.

In 1903 the income of our Hospitals amounted to £2,500,000 annually.

This vast income, with the exception of "Contributions from Workpeople" and "Patients' Payments," which represent six per cent. of the income, comes annually from the philanthropic well-to-do, either from annual subscriptions, donations, legacies or investments of moneys originally left to hospitals by charitable persons.

Capitalise this annual income, and we shall find that at four per cent. it comes to about £62,500,000. The well-to-do classes of this country have, therefore, set aside the stupendous sum of over sixty-two millions sterling out of their wealth, so that the poor and needy, the sick and suffering among their fellow-countrymen may have the same benefits of medical and surgical skill, and be as tenderly cared for under their bodily afflictions, as they are themselves.

Then there is a large number of charities, apart from Hospitals, such as:

Charity Organisation Societies.

Ambulance Associations.

The Salvation Army.

Church Extension Association.

Aged Pilgrims' Friend Society.

Hundreds of Societies of various kinds for benefiting the poor.

Orphanages by the score.

Industrial Homes of various kinds.

Asylums for all sorts and conditions of poverty, and Benevolent Associations of every imaginable description.

After dealing with one hundred and eighty-six of these institutions out of the multitudes that are in existence, and leaving out of calculation all that:

- (1) devote their funds to spiritual aid to the poor;
- (2) that are partially self-supporting by payment from inmates;
- (3) that are in any way connected with trades or professions;

it will be found that the aggregate annual income amounts to the colossal sum of £1,533,821.

Capitalise this in the same way as the income from Hospitals, and there is the enormous sum of £38,455,525 as a further contribution from our well-to-do countrymen, in aid of the poor and needy and the destitute, the outcast women, the poor little waifs and strays, the afflicted and the suffering, and all that human flotsam and jetsam cast up on the shores of our land by the turbulent waves of human life.

Now we come to the greatest of all these prodigious charities, the like of which cannot be found elsewhere in any civilised country in the world, not so much because our foreign friends are lacking in the quality of mercy and benevolence, but because there is no *necessity* for it in other countries.

**Far-reaching
Private
Charities**

These far-reaching *private* charities ramify through all classes of society, and yet show no sign of their presence. This is the charity that “vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up”; it does its work silently yet surely, and it seeketh no reward.

Which Ex-
tend from the
really Poor
to the
Wealthy

This form of charity is practically universal in our land, and its power is potent and far-reaching. It commences where the great organised charities stop; it takes up the work they are unable to do, and enormously supplements, in a quiet, unobtrusive, unseen manner, that work in the broad field of philanthropy which the visible charity organisations are not destined to touch. This form of charity is as widespread as the ocean and as all-embracing as the sun’s light and warmth; it extends to all sections of the community, and none are neglected or forgotten. Its donors are to be found in their millions, for all classes are engaged in the good work. From the small shop-keeper or the needy clerk, the poorly-paid shop-assistant, from the artisan and working classes themselves up to the King in his palace, and even from the little children who are encouraged to give their pence, does this constant stream of charity flow, and it may be truly said that one half of the people of this country is engaged in helping the other half.

That this is literally true may be proved by the test of individual experience. What man or woman is there among us who does not give even a trifle in charity? We know that practically every one of our friends does something for charity’s sake.

“I can’t do much but, thank God, I can do something to help,” is a saying common even among really poor

people, while among the wealthier folk philanthropic work, in its many ramifications, is a recognised form of daily duty.

Our own personal experience tells us that there is no family, or one or more members of a family, who are not engaged, directly or indirectly, in some form of charitable work.

Hospitals, homes, asylums, and the multitude of charitable institutions, together with the numerous bazaars, concerts, dramatic performances, street collections and entertainments of various kinds, which are in constant evidence, are but the outward and visible sign of that deep current of public sympathy with poverty, which flows on silently yet irresistibly, carrying on its broad bosom a message of love and material aid to those who, but for it, would be poor indeed.

Charity so unostentatious, so unobtrusive and modest, so silent and yet so universal, is obviously difficult to discover, and more difficult to tabulate and chronicle, yet it is a mighty power in the land, exercising a widespread, powerful influence over those poor stricken ones of this country who are in sore need of that material aid from their fellow-creatures, without which their lives would be but a living death.

The Mighty
Power of
Charity

Wine, beef tea, jellies, soups, fruit, tea, coffee, and other articles of diet innumerable, together with tobacco, coal, clothing and other material comforts, are among the many gifts bestowed on the poor and needy, daily and hourly; and as this form of assistance is liberally supplemented by monetary aid from about *one half of the adult population of the country*, the donors

probably amount to upwards of twenty millions of people.

Some of these are too poor to give more than a few pence now and again, or a little food; others give more liberally, according to their means, while others give their hundreds and thousands of pounds, many of the wealthy setting aside a certain part of their vast income for this unostentatious work, quite apart from their great public gifts to hospitals and other charitable institutions, which are blazoned abroad in the newspapers.

From the following examples we may be able to deduce something that will enable us to form a crude idea of the colossal proportions of that beneficent shape called CHARITY, whose radiant form is ever brightening the homes of those who are in sore need of her ministering grace.

The table is compiled from information supplied by personal friends, of what they pay in poor-rates and what they give annually in private charities.

The persons enumerated may be regarded as representative, as it will be seen that they are drawn from many grades of society; while the amounts paid in Poor Rates and Charities are the average of several years:

Occupation	Amount paid in Poor-Rates			Amount given in Charities		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Domestic Servant	None			1	10	0
Artisan	None			15		0
Small Shopkeeper	3	14	0	2	10	0
Bank Clerk	None			4	0	0

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Occupation	Amount paid in Poor-Rates	Amount given in Charities
Private Secretary on small salary	None	2 10 0
Lady of small means	5 1 1	25 0 0
Country Gentleman, moderate means	6 4 5	21 0 0
Novelist	4 18 3	81 10 6
Retired Military Officer	9 10 0	45 0 0
Bank Manager	13 8 4	53 15 6
Manufacturer	16 0 0	1,270 19 11

These figures prove that a vast amount of money must come from the pockets of the British public every year, although the actual amount may never be ascertained.

We may, however, partly by a reference to statistics, and partly by a process of deduction, arrive at a fairly approximate total.

In regard to the distribution of national wealth, statisticians are agreed as to how a part of it, at all events, is divided among the people, and the following tables, compiled from well-known works on the subject, will show how much of this wealth is accounted for.

**Eloquent
Private
Charity
Statistics**

Census returns also indicate how the people fall under the various age groups. The last statistical information on the subject shows that while 360 persons in every thousand fall under the age of 15 years, 640 in every thousand of the population were of 15 years of age and upwards.

The estimated population of the United Kingdom to-day exceeds 43,000,000, and on this basis we have an adult population of 27,520,000.

48 THE MURDER OF AGRICULTURE

Deducting from this total the paupers, say 1,200,000, and another two millions of necessitous people who have nothing to give, and we have a residue of 24,320,000.

Then cut off your misers, curmudgeons and persons of that ilk, who will not part with a penny under any circumstances, and number them at the odd 320,000, and you still have 24 millions of good citizens who help their fellow beings according to their means.

The following statement shows that 435,614 of the large philanthropists are accounted for.

INCOME OF PRIVATE PERSONS

INCOME OF FIRMS

Income Exceeding	and not Exceeding	No. of Persons Assessed	Estimated Amount set aside for Charity	Total Amount for Charity	No. of Firms Assessed	Average Amount of Income Assessed	Estimated Amount set aside for Charity	Total Amount for Charity
£	£		£	£		£	£	£
50,000	...	25	4,000	100,000	11	102,015	500	5,500
10,000	50,000	213	2,000	426,000	96	18,614	300	28,800
5,000	10,000	446	500	223,000	1,737	7,140	200	347,400
4,000	5,000	302	200	60,400	886	4,580	100	88,600
3,000	4,000	523	100	52,300	1,463	3,500	100	146,300
2,000	3,000	1,385	50	69,250	2,771	2,559	50	138,550
1,000	2,000	5,941	20	118,820	7,046	1,540	20	140,920
...	1,000	358,505	10	3,685,050	44,264	382	10	442,640
		377,340		4,734,820	58,274			1,338,710

No. of Firms Assessed 58,274
 No. of Private Persons Assessed 377,340

Total Amount of Charity from Firms £1,338,710
 Total Amount of Charity from Private Persons £4,734,820

Total 435,614

Total £6,073,530

We have now to deal with about 24 millions who are always ready to do something for *charity's sake*. But it is just here that we must resort to some process of deduc-

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tion, because this good work remains unrecorded and untabulated.

Divide the 24,000,000, say, into four groups of 6,000,000 each, i.e., those who give £7 10s., £5, £2, and 10s. each, and the result is:

6,000,000 at	£7 10 0	=	£45,000,000
6,000,000 at	£5 0 0	=	£30,000,000
6,000,000 at	£2 0 0		£12,000,000
6,000,000 at	10 0 0	=	£ 3,000,000

Total 24,000,000	£90,000,000
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It may be contended by some that the estimate of £7 10s., £5, £2, and 10s. for the four groups respectively, has been put at too high a figure, but careful inquiries will prove that the estimate is, if anything, too low.

We will now weld all these figures into an intelligible whole.

Here is the statement:

1. Income of Hospitals	£2,500,000
2. Income of Charitable Institutions	1,533,821
3. Income from Bazaars, Concerts and other entertainments (estimated)	200,000
4. Amount contributed by private persons and firms assessed by Government	6,073,530
5. Private charities (unrecorded)	90,000,000
Total	£100,307,351

Contributions in kind, such as food, clothing, coal, etc., have been purposely left out of consideration, be-

cause of the difficulty of arriving at a fairly approximate amount, but the total annual value would be enormous.

Enormity of
National
Poverty

Now in regard to these stupendous figures it will surely be said by a certain section of the public, which sneers at charity and scoffs at anything that is noble and elevating in human life, that this plain statement is all "bunkum" and "rot," and that it is put before the public with some deep, hidden purpose.

The reply to the latter part of such a contention will be found in the pages of this work, as its purpose—that of arousing the people of this country to a sense of the enormity of our national poverty—is plainly set forth herein. The answer to the first part of their contention is that those who care to consult any of the statistical works on the subject can speedily satisfy themselves that there is no "rot" in the matter at all.

Whitaker's Almanack, for example, for the year 1907, shows that sixty testators alone left as much as £4,486,440 in charities in 1906; while in regard to the many millions of our compatriots whose ear is never deaf to the voiced or mute appeal of the poor and needy, where is the man who can say: "I don't believe they give so much as you try to make people imagine." This giving, however, is, thank God, as widespread as the Heavens, and as life-giving and comforting as the warmth we get from the blessed sunbeams.

But the question has to be asked: what is this stupendous charity worth? what real lasting good does it do to those whom it is our desire to help on in the world, when vast masses of our people remain sunk in the slough of poverty?

We have contended elsewhere in these pages that the £16,000,000 of State funds spent on pauperism is, in itself, a monstrous injustice to the British tax-payer, particularly so because there is no real necessity for poverty at all in our country; but what is this comparatively insignificant sum when set side by side with the colossal amount subscribed annually by a philanthropic public? Oh! the shame of it all! that our Governments and our political parties have permitted this foul thing to fall upon our people as a deadly blight, because, forsooth, the righting of the wrong would have clashed with party interests, and perhaps unseated the Government that attempted it.

The British people and the British tax-payers have a deep-seated grievance, and they should wage a bitter, deadly feud against that principle in our political life that has only served the narrow selfish policy, on the one hand, of building up a few individual reputations, and in amassing large individual wealth; while on the other it has resulted in nothing but poverty and degradation to the great masses of our countrymen and countrywomen.

CHAPTER VII

HOW WAR WOULD INTENSIFY POVERTY—GRAVE PERIL
TO THE NATION

LET us now try and realise what would happen to us if war broke out between this country and one or more of the great European States; and let us not shirk this question as we shirk so many others, because war is imminent unless we change much that is objectionable, both in our international policy and in the internal economic conditions of the country.

The recent experiences of the South African War teach us that when war breaks out, even in remote parts of the Empire, markets at once become disturbed, "corners" are formed, supplies are "held up," and prices advance all along the line.

General
Rise in
Prices

We remember going into a shop to buy some silk socks; prices had considerably advanced, and we asked the reason why. "The war has affected the price," was the answer. "But," we remarked, "we don't get our silk from South Africa." "Oh," said the shopman, "I don't know about that, socks are dearer, anyway."

Do not pass this little incident over with a smile, for it is no laughing matter, but one of serious import and full of tragedy.

War with a great European power means far more to the people of Great Britain than the South African

affair did, and it is our business to understand what it does mean to us.

Here is an extract on the subject from the work before quoted: *Our National Peril*.

“ Now think what that [a barely fourteen weeks' supply of wheat in the country just after harvest] would mean in time of war. I mean a war waged against us by one or more great naval Powers. ‘ Oh, but the Navy,’ perhaps you say. But does it not strike you that perhaps our Fleet would have something better to do than convoy grain ships across the Atlantic during war time? that its operations might be seriously hampered by having to perform this big service? Easily, then, the country might run short of food; for it is not only wheat, but all sorts of foodstuffs, for which we are largely dependent upon imports. That is to say, famine prices would at once result. Corn merchants estimate that the commencement of a naval war against this country would mean the immediate rise of wheat to anything between one hundred shillings and two hundred shillings a quarter. What would be the effect of that to-day upon the working classes? With trade disorganised, and wages therefore lower or non-existent, it would mean grievous suffering, bread riots, revolution—unless the country sought peace at once upon any terms the enemy would give it. But would there be any grain to convoy? By a few smart and secret operations agents of the enemy could *corner* the world's wheat supply; and as this would be the most effectual method of bringing England quickly to her knees, it is more than probable that such a course would be followed.”

When one attempts to portray what would be likely to happen under given conditions, people as a rule dismiss the matter by saying: "Nonsense, you are a croaker" (provided the picture you have drawn be an unpleasant one), and with an inconsequent remark they proceed to the consideration of more congenial subjects.

If the same plan is adopted here, we shall be criminally negligent of our own most vital interests, and we shall, moreover, court and richly deserve any disaster that may hereafter befall us as a people. We are not in the habit of croaking more than our neighbours, but if we commit folly, we like to see what sort of a position our folly is likely to land us in.

**Our
National
Peril**

There is no croaking or pessimism about the living truth so clearly set forth in *Our National Peril*, for as a people, *we are in grave danger*, and it is well that a man here and there should point out the truth.

"By a few smart secret financial operations, agents of the enemy could corner the world's wheat supply."

"Oh," says your man whom nothing will convince, "Government would never allow that, nor would the Colonies ever sell to our enemy in war time."

Government would doubtless take every precaution to prevent food-stuffs finding their way into the enemies' country, and the Colonies might not sell openly to our foes, but that could not prevent the "corner." The Continental Powers are not fools, and with a number of secret agents and unlimited funds, the stuff would be "cornered," and prices would advance to hundreds of shillings a quarter; to a price, in short, that would mean starvation to millions of our unfortunate people.

We must not forget in this connexion that we are a nation of free traders, and hold that nothing must ever be allowed to interfere with the sacred and inviolable rights of free and unrestricted intercourse between buyer and seller, or with the natural operation of the law of supply and demand.

We stand for the principles of absolute freedom in all commercial transactions, and it may well be asked, who is to stop the operations of an army of secret agents who would be let loose on the world's corn markets *some time before war is actually declared?*

Are we so foolish, so blind as to believe that the Power or Powers we wage war with do not know our weak places as well as we do? And do we suppose that they will not strike hard at the weakest points in our armour of defence before they attack us in our strongest? Do we fondly believe they are so ignorant of the game of war as not to know that the surest way to victory is by starving us into submission, and if we so believe, are we to hug these fond but fatal fancies to our hearts, even to our own destruction? Will nothing stir the mass of inertia, that terrible lethargy born of false beliefs in the inviolability of our insular security, that robs us of virility and renders us flabby and nerveless? And are we for ever to do nothing but sneer at the idea of foreign invasion and scoff at all attempts to make ourselves so strong, independent and self-supporting, as to render successful invasion wellnigh hopeless? Are we never to put ourselves in that position which will so neutralise the evil effects of war as to result in neither permanent injury nor disaster to us as a nation?

False Belief
in our
Insular
Security

We fervently hope not. We have done much to weaken our position by Utopian legislation and an inane fiscal policy; we have sacrificed our best interests in regard to agricultural matters, and we have, in consequence, impoverished the people to an extent that finds no parallel in any civilised country in the world; but we surely cannot carry this destructive policy through to our utter ruin.

Royal Commissions have reported on this momentous question time and again; able writers and public speakers, moved by loyalty and patriotism, have for years past sent their warnings to Governments and their message to the people, but so far, alas, without the slightest result. Governments still continue to show more interest in the petty, political conflict which wages round the contest for a seat, than in the safety of an Empire, while the people remain sunk in the slough of apathy and indifference.

Admirals, generals, statesmen, have spared no time and trouble in bringing this vital question home to the British Parliament and the British people.

Here is what Admiral Harding Close said on the subject in 1903:

“ We spend thirty-one millions a year on the Navy. You might as well chuck that money into the sea for all the good it will do, for what is the use of our going to sea and winning battles of Trafalgar if we leave a starving population behind? . . . It is no use your boasting that we have a powerful Navy, and that, therefore, having command of the sea, our food supply is safe. You cannot get a naval officer to say so. We never had command of

the sea, so far as the protection of our merchant ships is concerned. If there was a period in the history of this country when we might say we had command of the sea, surely it was after the battle of Trafalgar, when there was not an enemy left on the sea. Yet after that battle, hundreds of our merchant ships were captured; and it will be so again. We cannot protect our merchant ships; the thing is impossible. The true blockade will be the impossibility of our ten thousand slow merchant ships obtaining any insurance, and being laid up as the United States merchant ships were laid up when the *Alabama* was about. This will prevent the weekly arrival of the four hundred merchant ships which bring us our food, and cause panic on the corn-market, the enemy having made food contraband of war."

Such views as these are held by quite a host of far-seeing patriotic citizens, whose sole desire is to safeguard the country from those deadly perils which beset us, owing to our utter dependency on outside aid for our daily supply of bread and other food-stuffs.

Now it stands to reason that if our outside supplies in war time cannot be safely convoyed and absolutely guaranteed, even by a powerful two-power standard Navy, we must secure ourselves by the development of our internal resources, and that we can do this with the greatest possible ease will be seen in later pages of this work.

CHAPTER VIII

SOME RESULTS OF FISCAL MALADMINISTRATION—THE
GAINSBOROUGH COMMISSION

IF we put the question of NATIONAL POVERTY to the fiscal test, we shall see how much our ineptness in that direction is answerable for.

In determining this question let us beware of playing into the hands of any political party. It is one of those cases that a man must decide upon the evidence before him, and not be influenced by pleaders for or against. Because we have listened to those who had some purpose to serve, some political party to help, we have suffered as no nation of modern times has suffered, and we must listen to the time-serving politician no more.

Evidence of widespread havoc is, alas, too manifest on every side; a ruined land industry and all that it involves; a terribly congested labour market; lost manufacturing industries; dearth of employment and vast masses of unemployed; exhaustion of national energy by the constant drain of compulsory emigration, and a mass of pauperism, the like of which is not known in any civilised country in the world.

The incident of the 3,000 English dockers at Hamburg in the spring of last year, shows the ease with which foreign markets can be supplied with the overplus of British labour, while the discharge of artisans from the Woolwich Arsenal about the same period and the imme-

diate recourse to emigration which followed, proves how precarious employment is in this country, and how difficult it is to get fresh work.

Here is what *The Daily Mail* said on the subject of the Hamburg strike, on April 13, 1907:

“ Whatever may be the ultimate result, the struggle incidentally will have the effect of enabling some 3,000 English professors of the theoretical cheap loaf to earn their daily bread for a few days longer. I am becoming accustomed to the spectacle of the English *Arbeitswillige* (glad of a job) gladly picking up the scattered crumbs of Germany's industrial prosperity, but still it seems to me a strange plight for Englishmen to be reduced to. . . . The men were working willingly. They had, for once in a way, a job which English industrial conditions failed to provide, and one could only feel glad to see them still cheerfully employed. But quite half the crates and packing-cases of German manufactured goods they were cheerfully loading for transport over sea bore in stencilled black letters the familiar legend, ‘Made in Germany,’ which indicated that they were destined either for England or for English Colonies. Displaced English labour reduced to getting a living by helping to displace English manufactures.”

What a depth of bitter humiliation and cruel irony there is for the English people in that last sentence. *Displaced English labour reduced to getting a living by helping to displace English manufactures*, and, alas, it is true. Not only is it true, but if Germany, or other countries which have built up a solid wall of hostile tariffs

against our manufactures, wanted English labour by *tens of thousands*, they would get them with the same ease with which Hamburg got her 3,000.

Displaced
Labour and
Manufactures

Let us now find out what this means, for we are face to face with a strangely anomalous position. On the one hand, we have the Government and Free Traders pointing to the expansion of national trade as indicating national prosperity; and on the other, the Tariff Reformers pointing to congested labour markets, the masses of unemployed, the precariousness of employment, lost industries, and the phenomenal pauperism of the country (compared with every other civilised country in the world), as indicating commercial atrophy and national decline.

This sums up, approximately enough, the exact position of the two great contending political parties of the State, and we will now settle the matter by the sure test of practical common sense.

In order that we may have and retain a perfectly free mind on this subject and other matters affecting the commonwealth, we have for some years past cut ourselves adrift from every political party in the Kingdom. We care not which party may be in power, nor are we concerned with what they call themselves. Liberals, Liberal-Unionists and Radicals are meaningless terms to us. We want good government, and we judge only by results, which is the one safe and practical way of deciding a question.

Here is presented a strange spectacle—the people of the greatest trading and manufacturing country in the world gladly accepting employment even for a few

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weeks, from our greatest commercial and industrial European rival, because they cannot find work in their own country. Couple this fact with others of a like nature—widespread distress, the congested state of labour in all professions, trades and industries; the existence of phenomenal pauperism and the necessity of legalising it as a State institution; the stupendous sums spent on pauper relief each year; the cruel drain on the virile energy of the nation by the constant and ever-increasing stream of emigration—and the very natural and common-sense conclusion is arrived at that the social and economic condition of the people *is as bad as it can be*: that our fiscal administration is fatally wrong, and that unless we alter and amend it, irrespective of the feelings of this political party or that, we shall simply bring about the disintegration of the Empire.

Political parties and political economy enthusiasts will, no doubt, say that this method of reasoning is faulty and the conclusions wrong. The individual reply to this is obviously: "*My* social and economic position has been rudely assailed; *my* interests are at stake here; *my* pocket has suffered; and in spite of what these gentlemen tell me I am going to settle this matter at last *in my own way*. I will take my own course in spite of the fact that our import and export trade is apparently in a flourishing condition, because I find that this one thing alone does not, and cannot, constitute in itself all the many factors that are essential to ultimate success and prosperity. I find that the wonderful cry of the party in power, that great trade expansion means NATIONAL PROSPERITY is as false and misleading and as fatal

Does Trade
Expansion
Mean
National
Prosperity?

to the real interests of the PEOPLE as such political cries and catchwords usually are.

“ I find that trade expansion, despite the wonderful things claimed for it, means prosperity to a comparatively small number of manufacturers and commercial men, but the same dead level of *non-prosperity for the masses*: the same sordid, narrow, mean, half-fed struggling existence for *millions* of workers; and my faith in the *universal* benefits that are said to come out of great trade expansion is dead; killed by the falseness of its own doctrine.

“ I find that the great party warcry of the CHEAP LOAF is as false as it is destructive, because, despite its attractiveness, it has done no more for the PEOPLE than has any other political catchword. I look around me on all sides and instead of finding thriving, prosperous conditions and a fair average standard of material comfort among the masses, I find, on the contrary, there is excessive poverty and a general average of wretchedness, denoting a precariousness of life which has no parallel in any other country. This CHEAP LOAF cry, which was set up as the watchword of a scheme which was going to bring about NATIONAL prosperity, has robbed the people of the means of earning the wherewithal to buy the so-called cheap loaf, and the cry is nothing but a mockery and a delusion. What is the use of promising a man cheap bread if you deprive him of the means of earning money to buy it with? If the promise were worth anything would hundreds of thousands of our workers be on the brink of starvation to-day? Would work be so difficult to get and hard to retain?

The Cheap
Loaf
Cry

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Would the great UNEMPLOYED question be so prominent, pauperism so rampant, poor-rates so high, excessive emigration so necessary, and widespread despondency among our working classes so pronounced if there were anything of value in this often used and much-vaunted cry? ”

The reply given above is one that will be found in the mouth of any tax-payer who has thought this matter out in a rational manner.

When we look about and carefully note the sad state our people have been reduced to since they commenced to follow after this wretched phantasm, we wonder if there be a man among us who, in his heart, really believes that the cheap loaf is anything more than a party cry raised for the purpose of catching the voter?

Does our great array of workers who, although in employment to-day, may—owing to the uncertainties which enshroud the labour market question—be out of work to-morrow, really believe in the efficacy of this political war cry?

British workmen of late years have taken a keen interest in national politics, and quite right too, for they have a considerable stake in the commonwealth, and it is fitting that they should look after their own interests. They are stalwart fighters and loyal partisans, and constitute in themselves a powerful division of the great political army; but quite apart from the faintest trace of political bias can they honestly say, that even if the cheap loaf cry were capable of conferring on the people the *one benefit of a cheap loaf, it has not, at the same time, deprived them of quite a number of economic advantages*

which enormously outweigh the single benefit of cheap bread?

This purpose cannot be served better than by referring here to the Report of what is called the "Gainsborough Commission."

It will be borne in mind that a "Commission" of working men was formed a year or more ago at Gainsborough, to study the conditions of labour prevailing in German workshops, and the social status of German workpeople.

Six men were elected by ballot from among their co-workers. Their names are: T. W. Mottershall, J. Mann, G. W. Brown, G. Proctor, H. Beilby and H. Calvert, and they were employed by Messrs Marshall, Sons and Co., Rose Bros., and Edlington and Co. (all of Gainsborough).

Some of them were recognised Free Traders. The object of the journey was *entirely unpolitical*, it being intended, mainly, that certain fallacies prevailing in England, concerning the rate of wages and mode of life of German workmen, should be rectified.

Rival
Labour
Conditions
in
Germany

The working men were conducted through Germany by Mr J. L. Bashford, the Editor of the book, *Life and Labour in Germany*, which contained an account of their investigations.

The necessary facilities for carrying out such a task were most readily given by the Secretary of State of the German Imperial Home Office; by the Prussian Minister of Trade and Commerce; by a number of manufacturers and others connected with industry, and by the organising authorities of the Social Democratic Party.

RESULTS OF FISCAL MALADMINISTRATION 65

The members of the Commission represented more than one phase of political thought, hence the reports deal with the various questions from several points of view.

Throughout the tour the men applied themselves assiduously to their arduous task, and were determined to carry out their inquiry in as thorough a manner as was possible in the short time at their disposal, viz., six weeks.

On their return to England each delegate handed to Mr Bashford a written statement of the impression made upon him in Germany—a faithful reproduction of his own views on all he saw and heard—extracts from which are appended.

Mr Proctor said:

“ We found that Germany raised tariffs against every other country, and that France, America, Russia, South America, Spain, Italy, Austria, and other countries in Europe, raised tariffs against her; but this did not stop the expansion of her trade with other countries.”

Mr Beilby wrote:

“ During the whole six weeks I was in Germany I only came across one case of drunkenness. This state of temperance must, I am convinced, be an important factor in the prosperity of the country.”

Mr Brown stated:

“ The German workman seems to be more sober and steady than our own workpeople, and he dresses well. When he gets employment, he seems to like to stop where he is, instead of always changing.”

Mr Mann wrote:

“ I went to Germany with an open mind with regard to tariff reform, but had not gone far before I found that something would have to be done to protect our industry at home. It is reasonable to suppose that when the people of England get thoroughly awakened to the losses naturally incurred by them in consequence of the high tariffs imposed by foreign countries, they will ultimately come to the conclusion that what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander, and will ask that foreigners shall pay for the use of the British market just as foreigners make British manufacturers, through their high tariffs, pay for the use of their markets.”

Mr Calvert said:

“ It cannot be asserted with any degree of truth that the social conditions of the German workman, taken generally, suffer by comparison with our own, nor can we say that at present there is a lack of employment.

“ In the elementary schools there is no raggedness, nor sign of starvation, as we were led to suppose we should see. This is not to be wondered at, when we remember that the Empire is at present subject to a wave of general prosperity.”

Mr Mottershall said:

“ A citizen of the German Empire is accepted by the State as a responsibility, and is taken in hand from childhood, with a view of obtaining from such citizen the best results possible for the benefit of the Empire as a whole.

“ It is reasonable to suppose that when the English

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people awake to the losses actually incurred by them in consequence of the high tariffs imposed by Germany and other foreign countries, that it is necessary for the protection of the English workmen, that the foreigners should pay for the use of the English market."

Some extracts from the general body of the Report bear with singular significance on the case we are considering.

Crefeld, the seat of the German velvet and silk industry, was the first great town visited by the Commission, and what the delegates found there may be taken as the keynote of the entire question respecting the COMPARATIVE POVERTY of Great Britain and Germany.

Comparative
Poverty of
England and
Germany

"There is no penury to be seen in the streets of Crefeld," said the delegates on visiting that place, and they saw no reason to change this note during their extended tour through industrial Germany.

"The general condition of the working classes in the industrial town of Crefeld impressed us. Wherever we came into contact with them we were struck by their genial character, general physical health, cheerfulness of demeanour and freshness about their work. No sign of extreme poverty meets the eye; the problem of the unemployed obviously does not weigh upon the municipal authorities at the present juncture."

In Rheinhausen and Essen, Bechum, Dortmund; in Selingen, Dusseldorf, Cologne, Frankfort-on-Maine; in Bavaria and Saxony; in Leipzig, Hamburg, Berlin, the same experiences are met with.

"Widespread, pinching poverty, in the worst sense of

the word does not exist under the present conditions of the labour market. There is a demand for labour, not a scarcity; the working classes here are receiving wages which, even if not quite up to our British standard, are not illiberal, and are certainly above the standard we were led to expect they were before we left England."

"The question of the unemployed does not exist here."

"The men in this neighbourhood earn good wages, so that it is not necessary for the women to go out to work."

"We could, however, see no trace of want. There is no lack of employment, and all the works here are fully occupied."

"It cannot be said that the municipality is troubled here with an 'Unemployed' question on a large scale."

These few extracts sufficiently emphasise the startling fact that poverty, as we know it in this country, is practically unknown in the German Empire.

Another phase of the question which this very practical and intensely interesting Report invests with remarkable significance—the prosperity of the German working classes, as evidenced by the State Savings Banks—is dealt with in an extract from the Report, showing what the German workpeople have been able to do towards making provision for the future:

"The statistics of the Prussian Savings Banks, just published, bear out all that we have been able to notice concerning the improvement in the condition of the

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 working classes. The amount of deposits almost doubled between 1894 and 1904. In 1894 they amounted to 4,000.67 millions of marks (£196,111,275), in 1905, to 7,761.93 millions (£380,485,300). The total amount in the whole of the German Empire of the deposits lying in the savings banks, is said to be about £598,000,000.

Similar statistics for the United Kingdom provide the following figures:

	1894	1904
Post Office Savings Banks	£89,266,006	£148,339,354
Trustee Savings Bank	£43,474,904	£ 52,280,861
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£132,740,910	£200,620,215

These figures show that for every head of population in Germany there is a sum of £10 12s. 2d. in the savings banks, while for the United Kingdom there is but £4 15s. 7d., or less than one-half.

While in Germany also the deposits of the working classes had about doubled in the *ten years ending 1904*, they had only increased in this country by *fifty-one per cent. in the same period.*

In this commercial world we generally measure a man's prosperity by his bank balance; and if we apply this practical standard to the working classes of Great Britain and Germany, we shall find that our own people suffer considerably by the contrast. It supplies a scathing condemnation of the economic and fiscal system, for it proves its utter unsuitability to the present needs of the country, while it serves no purpose but to spread wealth and prosperity among foreign nations at the expense of

our own countrymen. We do not grudge foreign peoples that measure of success and prosperity which the wiser fiscal laws of their country enable them to enjoy, but we bitterly resent the continuance of inept fiscal laws in our own country, which serve only to limit the success of the British people and deprive them of that prosperity in which it is their right to participate.

The consideration of this part of the question might be suitably closed by the following extract from the Report:

“ Whilst proceeding from town to town in this busy and prosperous district of the German Empire, we have been forced to face the fact that it has been during the period following upon the introduction of protection duties by Prince Bismarck, in 1879, that Germany has ceased to be poor and has become well-to-do; that her workpeople have received a large increase in wages; that the general social condition of the latter has improved; that Germany’s industry has developed; that she has succeeded in extending her foreign trade and in acquiring ready markets for her continuously developing industry.

“ We showed in our report about Essen, that in that district wages had increased by 61 per cent. since 1871, and by 267 per cent. as compared with what they were seventy years ago.”

CHAPTER IX

THE GERMAN PAUPER QUESTION—POORHOUSES AND
THEIR INMATES

IT will now be of interest to see what the "Gainsborough Commission" says about the German poorhouses and their inmates.

Here are a few references to the subject:

"As regards the workhouse, we have in vain looked for one; and in very deed the 'House' plays no great rôle in these parts."

"In this connexion it may be briefly noted that the workhouse in Germany is an institution of a penal nature under the supervision of the police, to be distinguished from the poorhouse or the shelter for the homeless."

"The poorhouse, too, is intended for old and infirm persons, rather than for those that are able-bodied."

"Further, there are no over-filled workhouses here, for there are not even any workhouses to fill with able-bodied men and women. The poorhouses and homes for the sick and aged poor in Germany, are for those that are disabled and unfit for work; the workhouse, or German *Arbeitshaus*, is for the vagrant and the outcast, who will not work, and is, therefore, condemned to a life of correction."

Speaking of the Berlin night refuges, which are distinct from our workhouses, the Commission says:

“ The inmates of these refuges are divided into two classes. One class consists of those who constantly make use of them; the other of those who are forced to do so by temporary circumstances. The former consists of individuals who never seem to care to look out for regular occupation.

“ If it is discovered that they have no inclination to work, they are handed over to the police and sent to a house of correction.”

These extracts, although brief, are really a summary of the impressions of the six members of the Commission in respect to the German “ Pauper ” question. There is admittedly a certain number of destitute people in Germany who have to be provided for by the various municipal bodies, and there are poor in every country in the world, but pauperism as we have it, legalised into a State institution, exacting from the pockets of the taxpayers the enormous sum of £34,000,000 annually in POOR RATES, is nothing but a monstrous growth on the civilisation of a great country and a standing reproach to our legislature.

Old Age
Pensions

The important question of “ OLD AGE PENSIONS ” which is very much in evidence at the present time, was also dealt with by the Gainsborough Commission.

The delegates were much impressed by the fact that there was a scheme in operation throughout Germany whereby the working classes were provided for in old age or infirmity.

Mr H. Beilby wrote :

“ With respect to provision for old age a German working-man is better provided for. I should greatly like to see the old age and infirmity pension scheme introduced into England.”

Mr H. Calvert says :

“ The old age and infirmity pension scheme impressed me as being perfect in organisation and administration; and it must be very gratifying to know that when the time comes to cease work, declining years will not be spent within the workhouse gate. Provision against accidents and sickness, which is also compulsory, is very beneficial, as it enables all workers to become independent of charity, which is always an uncertain quantity.”

The Report itself has many references to the subject. Here are a few of them :

“ The working classes are well clothed and well educated, and their interests are attended to by the State in a measure unknown in other countries. In sickness they can claim relief at the hands of the State; in old age, and when incapacitated for work, they have not got the workhouse or the poorhouse to look forward to, but a certain fixed allowance, in return for which they are certain to have a refuge for their declining years with their relatives and friends.

“ There is a pension fund inaugurated by the firm for the men over and above the State pension fund, and also a fund for giving support to the employees during sickness, or when in special want of aid. These are free

gifts from the firm. A committee of the men go into every application for aid and decide whether the case merits support. This is done in order to eliminate those who simulate sickness or distress, and do away with any risks of reckless benevolence.

“ Throughout the whole Empire the provisions of the Imperial social legislation are effective, and throughout that part of the Empire through which we have been passing the action of the employers is also effective. The German workmen are insured against accidents, against sickness and against infirmity and old age. They have no premium whatever to pay for the insurance against accidents, this being settled by the employers alone; the employers pay one-third and the employed two-thirds of the premium against sickness; and the premium against old age and premature infirmity is distributed equally between employers and employed.

“ The State further pays a contribution by undertaking all the expense of administration, free of charge, and by adding a money consideration to the old age and premature infirmity pensions.

“ By being thus insured the workpeople acquire a right, as citizens, to allowance in case of disability to work through accidents, sickness and premature infirmity or old age. These allowances are not of the nature of donations to paupers; but of allowances to which they have acquired a right as citizens. In order to acquire these rights as citizens the workpeople also contribute to the premiums, as well as the employer; and the State, as a body, pays the expenses of administration. These contributions of the employers, on the one

hand, are necessarily a large financial burden on production, which must not be overlooked; and on the other hand, the contributions of the State are made up by the whole mass of the tax-payers, not only by the working people themselves.

“ Owing to the social legislation that has been enacted within recent years, a workman receives compensation, paid by his employer, for accidents sustained in the course of work; he and his employer insure him against sickness, premature infirmity and old age; so that his future is provided for with the assistance of his employer and the State. Further, many employers, as we have already shown, confer benefits of various kinds, material and intellectual, on their employees.”

Here we have a far-reaching system of old age and infirmity pensions: Firstly, that inaugurated by the State and made compulsory; and secondly, a supplementary system inaugurated by private firms, which, in some cases, are “ free gifts from the firm.”

At any rate it is certain that twenty-five years ago Germany saw the necessity of provision for her toilers, and she gave the working classes the necessary measures of relief in the “ Infirmity and Old Age Insurance Act ” of 1889.

Mr J. L. Bashford, the leader of the Gainsborough Commission, in his Appendix to the Report, entitled, “ Infirmity and Old Age Pensions in Germany,” in referring to the nature of the Act said:

“ The Government resorted to COMPULSORY insurance, because it was impossible to devise any other

method for securing the broad masses of the working classes—those belonging to the lower grades—to contribute.”

Crux of
the Position

Here is the crux of the position. The German Government knew, when they framed their Bill years ago, that the only way to secure the contribution of a certain section of the working classes was to make the Act *compulsory*. That they were justified in taking this step the following extract from Mr Bashford's Appendix will show:

“ Since the introduction of the system of compulsory insurance for the German workmen the German Empire has advanced on the road to progress and wealth by leaps and bounds. The material and hygienic conditions of the whole nation have improved; and everything goes to show that the working classes must, in a great measure, attribute their increased health and vigour to the beneficent effects of the legislation initiated twenty-six years ago.”

The question that may well be asked here is: What will *our* Government do? Will they go into this matter as thoroughly as it deserves when they bring up their “ Old Age Pensions ” scheme, or will they introduce some milk-and-water measure which will do harm rather than good?

Will they insult the working classes by clothing their Bill in the garb of CHARITY, or will it be of the same invigorating, virile and co-operative nature as that of its German prototype?

“ This insurance scheme affects WORKPEOPLE

not VAGRANTS, tramps or those who will not work. Nor are the WORKMEN'S INSURANCE LAWS a charitable scheme. They are unlike mere Poor Law relief measures, in that they confer on every insured person a LEGAL RIGHT to a fixed modicum of assistance in case of sickness, accident, infirmity or old age, in return for which they have themselves contributed an obolus to the fund from which they receive such assistance."

The German " Infirmity Insurance Act " is of a type that, while compelling thrift, builds up, at the same time, out of self-help, a feeling of independence, reliance and freedom, which is so dear to every honest, right-minded man and woman.

Our workpeople, as citizens of the Empire, want a reasonable, practical recognition of their claims to consideration, and not charity. The Government have an excellent opportunity of showing them such consideration by the introduction of some scheme of old age and infirmity pensions, which, while insuring the obligatory insurance of all persons working for wages or salary whose income does not exceed, say, £100 per annum, will improve the position of the people by encouraging co-operation, thrift and economy; some sensible scheme in short, that will help the people, and not humiliate them; that will uplift and not cast down, and that will provide for, and not pauperise, them.

It will be borne in mind in connexion with the German scheme that although it is a *co-operative* arrangement between State, employer and employed, the employers and employed contribute two-thirds in equal

parts, while the *State subvention* amounts to about *one-third* of the whole.

It is just here that an emphatic protest against the contemplated action of the present Government in this country is necessary, otherwise a gross injustice will be done to the entire body of British tax-payers.

Sound and
Just Scheme
Required

If it be true that the Government " Old Age Pension " scheme is to *fall entirely on the tax-payers of this country*, a more wanton, cruel and mischievous piece of legislation could not possibly be devised.

Nobody wants measures of injustice, except a few advanced Socialists, who would welcome even the worst forms of Anarchism in their mad desire to pull down the existing order of things; and if this Government, or any succeeding Government, betrays the tax-payers of Great Britain merely to catch the ephemeral vote of a few social iconoclasts, they deserve extinction as a political party.

The British working-man would, of course, not be fool enough to reject a scheme of " Old Age Pensions " which came entirely out of the pockets of the British tax-payers, not he! If you are fools enough to shell out so liberally I am not fool enough to refuse what you offer—he would say—and quite right, too; but he doesn't expect this ridiculously quixotic method of dealing with the matter. Put before him a sound, sensible, practical scheme, whereunder he would be expected to co-operate with his employer and the State, in building up for himself a certainty in the future in respect to a suitable provision for old age or premature infirmity, for sickness and suchlike misadventures of

life, and you will give him just what he expects, what he is hoping for, and what he is perfectly willing to subscribe to. But the scheme must be sound and efficient all along the line, or he will have nothing to do with it.

Now apart from the gross injustice to tax-payers, a scheme of the kind contemplated by the present Government would be nothing more or less than another *Legalised State Charity*.

It has been shown in these pages how disastrously the great State *Pauper* charity has affected the people, and is there a statesman, politician, tradesman, or working man in the country who honestly believes that the colossal *Charity* now being hatched by a weak-kneed Government would result in universal good?

Is there an honest Britisher in this realm who believes in his heart that a pusillanimous measure of this nature can do aught but harm to those it professes to serve?

Does he really believe that our pauper laws, which, after all, are of a kindred nature to this "Old Age Pension" scheme of the Government now in office, will do anything more than emasculate the manhood of the nation and deprive a man of those characteristics which are the pride and glory of his sex—the right and privilege of providing for and protecting his wife and little ones with his own strong right arm and—in *his own way*?

The British working-man is individually and collectively a power in the State, and a power to be reckoned with. He is an honest man and a stalwart champion for his own rights and privileges, and that he can well look after his own interests is proved by his trade unions,

and other evidences of combination. If he wants anything, he is quite capable of asking for it in an organised manner, which often carries conviction with it. If, for example, he wanted an " Old Age Pension " scheme of the kind now under consideration, he would ask for it in a plain, practical manner; it doesn't follow he would get it, nevertheless he would try.

In this particular instance the British working men have not asked for any scheme of " Old Age Pensions " which would fall entirely upon the British tax-payers.

Will Crookes has asked for such a scheme, but then Will Crookes no more voices the real wants or wishes of the great array of British workers than we voice the needs of the wild men of the Andaman Islands.

To say that he, and a few other advanced Socialists in Parliament who clamour for extreme measures, really voice the wishes and desires of the vast army of British workers is to say that which is obviously untrue.

Old Age
Pensions but
not Charity

The British workman wants an " Old Age Pension " scheme true enough, but he does not want charity, and those who say he does simply pervert the truth. Give him a scheme whereby he will himself be expected to co-operate in making provision for old age, and whereunder generous, co-operative aid will be given both by employer and State, and you will find he will respond readily enough.

An " Old Age Pension " scheme of this nature is the working man's right, and the tax-payers would support such a scheme, but the other scheme would be a rank injustice and a cruel wrong, and they would bitterly resent it.

The British tax-payers should be alert over this question and carefully watch the contemplated Bill, otherwise a heavy incidence of further taxation will surely fall upon shoulders that are already too heavily burdened. Even if a sensible, equitable scheme be brought into operation, a certain amount of fresh taxation would inevitably result, but we need have no fear of this, as money spent in this direction means nothing more than an insurance against pauperism and a reduction of poor-rates.

CHAPTER X

TARIFFS AND THE PRICE OF BREAD—GERMAN METHODS
AND EFFECTS

ANOTHER important question dealt with in the interesting Report of the Gainsborough Commission, might be referred to with advantage, and that is GERMAN TARIFFS and THE PRICE OF BREAD.

We are considering the vital question of the POVERTY of our people, and whatever impinges on that condition is of more than passing interest to us. Moreover, we are looking at this matter from *our own* point of view this time, and as our own personal interests are involved, we are going to come to our decision quite irrespective of what politicians, publicists or political economists may say. For the moment we cut ourselves adrift from party policy and preachers of all kinds: *Self-interest* is at stake, and we are not going to allow our judgment to be biased by political considerations, or our reason befogged by fervid faddists.

The Gainsborough Commission have a MESSAGE to deliver to the British people, and we should listen to what they say without bias. If there is anything in what they tell us about German tariffs that we can turn to our own good, we should certainly not throw our chances away.

Here are some references to the subject, which we recapitulate:

“ We found that Germany raised tariffs against every other country, and that France, America, Russia, South America, Spain, Italy, Austria, and other countries in Europe raised tariffs against her; but this did not stop the expansion of her trade with other countries.

“ I went to Germany with an open mind with regard to tariff reform, but had not gone far before I found that something would have to be done to protect our industry at home.

“ It is reasonable to suppose that when the English people awake to the losses actually incurred by them in consequence of the high tariffs imposed by Germany and other foreign countries, they will come to the only possible conclusions, that it is necessary, for the protection of the English workman, that the foreigners should pay for the use of the English market.”

Referring more especially to the price of bread, the Commission says:

“ A loaf of rye bread at Crefeld, weighing four English pounds, should cost $3\frac{5}{9}$ d., or roughly, $3\frac{1}{2}$ d.

“ The 4lb. wheaten loaf, eaten at Gainsborough, costs $4\frac{1}{2}$ d.

“ All these details spell prosperity; and even though we do not go so far as to say they must be the direct result of the Imperial policy of protection, we are justified in drawing attention to the fact that this auspicious condition of things has been developing parallel to protective tariffs.

“ It was pointed out by us in our last report that the prosperity of the last twenty years of German industry

has been running parallel with protective duties. Wages have also risen; and the tendency of the day is that they will rise still higher.

“ At Höchst, near Frankfort, as we pointed out in a previous report, people eat wheaten bread as well as bread made of wheat and rye flour mixed. A loaf of white bread made at Höchst, weighing four English pounds, should cost $4\frac{2}{3}$ d. The Gainsborough quartern loaf costs $4\frac{1}{2}$ d., so that the difference in price is hardly perceptible. Where then does the extreme pressure on the German consumer come in, in regard to the price of bread, as compared with the English consumer? We must note that Germany feeds nine-tenths of her population from her own grain.

“ As regards wages and the conditions of labour in Germany, people in England cannot dispel from their minds pictures that have been shown them of times gone by. It is difficult to make them understand that Germany has not been standing still, but had been developing in methods and in wealth by leaps and bounds since 1870. The British voters will have to learn, sooner or later, that German labour competes with British labour, and that the condition of German workmen has developed for the good since 1879, when Bismarck made the fiscal policy of the Empire a protectionist one again.

“ They came to the conclusion that their export industry flourished more under the tariff that existed from 1850-1860, than under Liberalism and free tariffs from 1860 to 1870. Germans admit that they have made enormous progress during the last thirty years, and this

progress has been contemporaneous with protectionism. Wages had very materially increased in Germany within the last twenty years, and are bound to increase still more."

Summing up the position the Commission said:

"We were selected by the Gainsborough working men themselves, in order to find out whether the social condition of German working men was as miserable as it was portrayed in Gainsborough by certain politicians.

"Meanwhile we submit that our reports give a fair and reasonable picture of the conditions under which German workmen labour. These conditions differ in many respects from ours; and this would be the case also were we to compare our lot with that of the workmen in any other country. Whatever the diversity of conditions, however, it is quite clear that the German industrial workman is immeasurably better paid now than he was twenty-five years ago, and that he is similarly better clothed, better fed and better lodged than he was then. He has, moreover, ample facilities for healthy recreation for himself and family. In regard to the provision made for him by the State in the event of sickness, in the event of his meeting with accidents during the exercise of his vocation, as well as in the event of his becoming unable to earn his living through physical debility or old age, he is in a decidedly better position than the workmen in our country. He pays no more in a protectionist country for his bread, his coffee, his sugar, his clothing or his boots, than we do in England. It

would be of no use to offer him wheaten bread and jam, which we consider in England to be necessaries. He prefers his brown rye bread and other delicacies, at which our people would turn up their noses. His meat is just now dearer than it is with us, but in normal times we do not consider that he is worse off relatively in this respect than we are, when we make due allowance for national differences of taste.

“ We are bound to state, as we have repeatedly stated in our reports, that under the policy of protection followed by Imperial Germany since 1878, she has made progress by leaps and bounds in industrial prosperity, has developed into becoming Britain’s greatest commercial rival in Europe, and that her working classes are in the enjoyment of a vastly larger share in the comforts of life than their parents would have dreamt of hoping for in their own generation.”

Here then we have before us a Report on a matter touching the most momentous question of the day: the *poverty* and *unemployment* of the British people.

Why is there
Poverty and
Unemploy-
ment?

It is a Report, the like of which we have never seen; a Report of British workmen, appointed by British workmen, to inquire into the social and economic conditions of their confrères in Germany—our greatest European industrial competitor.

This Report is of especial value, because of its extreme moderation and lack of bias of any kind, political or otherwise. It is a Report of a body of honest, straightforward British working men who, the moment they got free of the shackles of bigotry and foolish prejudices, which their insular position and the false teaching of

politicians cast about them, at once saw that England is not the *only* commercial and industrial country in the world; that trade opens the eyes and develops the understanding, and that, despite our commercial pride and industrial arrogance, we can learn many a useful lesson from our trade rivals across the water.

We regard the Report of such importance, that if we were rich enough we would have millions of copies printed, so that every worker in the Kingdom might have a copy gratis. It is a pity its sale price is 2s., and not 2d.

The question we now have to answer is this:

What are we to do with the Report of the Gainsborough Commission?

Are we to put it aside as of no moment, or are we to give it a prominent place in our consideration and use it to our profit and advantage?

Here we have a number of British workmen who, before they went to Germany, were as full of insular prejudice in respect to the socio-economic conditions under which they live in this country, as are the general body of their confrères from whom they were elected, telling us of marvellous facts and supplying us with a number of eye-openers:

“ . . . We have been forced to face the fact that it has been during the period following upon the introduction of protection duties by Prince Bismarck in 1879, that Germany has ceased to be poor and has become well-to-do; that her workpeople have received a large increase in wages, that the general social condition of the latter has improved, that Germany's industry has developed, that she has suc-

ceded in extending her foreign trade and in acquiring ready markets for her continuously developing industry."

When we consider that this pregnant utterance was *forced* from a number of our own working men after a few weeks' tour in industrial Germany, most of them being out-and-out free traders, or what we wrongly *call* free traders, and as full of blind infatuation for what they considered to be the CAUSE, as numbers of their colleagues have been for years, it clearly follows that if the *whole* of our working classes could have the same opportunities of studying the fiscal conditions of other countries as were given to the Gainsborough Commission, they could only come to the conclusion that there is something fundamentally wrong with the way in which we conduct our own fiscal affairs.

Keep your politicians, the many publicists who write so glibly about the *theories* of economics, your working classes and the general body of the people within the shores of their own country, and their ideas on many subjects remain narrow, warped and stunted, like a plant that is pot-bound, but once you relieve them of their cramped condition and send them abroad, where their ideas have room to expand, they assume a rapid growth that is most astonishing.

The famous "Silver Streak" has bestowed many a benefit on our land; a hundred years ago it saved the country from foreign invasion and emancipated Europe from military despotism; it isolates us from the rest of Europe, and in isolation there is safety from sudden attack. These are immense advantages, and no Britisher

Disadvan-
tages of the
Silver
Streak

would care to sacrifice or alter them; but on the other hand, there are certain *disadvantages*, and we are feeling their effect to-day.

Had we possessed the same facilities for free inter-communication with neighbouring States, as our friends across the water possess, of keeping touch with, and studying each others' methods of government, our fiscal arrangements would not, or *could* not, have been in the inept state they are to-day, for we should have benefited by the experience of others and adapted our laws to the requirements of the times.

The " Silver Streak " cuts off free facilities for travel, and perhaps *four-fifths* or more of the British people *never leave their native land*.

Now this is just one of those matters that we are liable to pass by as of no particular consequence one way or the other, but let us think for a moment, and we shall find that it has more in it than would appear at first sight.

If the vast majority of our people never leave their own country, they have no opportunity of studying the conditions of life in other countries, and are, therefore, at the mercy of any penny-a-liner who may chance to come along. Many of these gentlemen who talk glibly and write with so facile a pen on any and all subjects, are like the people, inasmuch as *they* have never been in foreign countries, save to Boulogne, or such places, on their short annual holiday. If asked to write or speak on any matter, there is always a well-filled library, with books of reference on every subject under the sun, to fall back upon, and to men of such facile parts it is the

easiest thing in the world to " get up " any subject at a few hours' notice.

It is from such men that the vast majority of people in this country get their information, either through the medium of the public prints or from platform orations, and they have now to ask themselves: " Have we benefited by this system of second-hand teaching? and if we have not benefited, our teachers must be at fault and their teaching of a spurious order."

This question can best be answered by comparing certain social and economic conditions of this country with any one, or all, of the neighbouring European States.

LABOUR CONDITIONS, SCARCITY OF EMPLOYMENT, DISTRESS, LEGALISED PAUPERISM, NECESSITY for UNIVERSAL PRIVATE CHARITY, ENORMOUS POOR-RATES, are all capable of being compared with similar conditions in other countries; and if they be studied with care, and without prejudice, it will at once be seen that the workmen forming the " Gainsborough Commission " had enough justification for their conclusions in the following significant utterance.

" We have been just three weeks in Germany, and have seen the German workmen at work and at play. In the busy districts of Rhineland and Westphalia we came into contact with thousands of our German comrades engaged in the heavy industry, and looked in vain for the signs of poverty which certain persons in Gainsborough and elsewhere told us would confront us on all sides. Despite the prevailing dearness of meat, which is

seriously affecting all classes in the German Fatherland, and consequently all those whose incomes are limited, including the incomes of the working people, whose budget for household expenses is necessarily quite specially affected at this time of year, nothing indicative in the remotest degree of widespread distress has come within the limit of our vision; on the contrary, there is every sign of increasing prosperity. Occupation is to be had everywhere for the asking of it, in all factories and at all works in the towns we have passed through; the building trade is everywhere in a fair condition, and even in the ranks of the unskilled, who must always be subject to fluctuations as regards employment, there is no general cause for complaint. Instead of there being a superabundance of workers and consequently a crowd of 'unemployed,' employers are clamouring on all sides for skilled labour."

Let us pause here so that we may firmly establish in our minds the exact meaning of these passages, and carefully estimate their value to us as a people. Do not let us make the fatal mistake of putting this MESSAGE aside as of no moment, because it is fraught with either weal or woe, just as we regard it. Ignore it, and the present deplorable conditions which environ the whole question of labour *must* become worse. Accept it, and general conditions will improve, a better standard of comfort will soon be set up, and lasting prosperity will surely result.

Here we have a pregnant MESSAGE from our own workers, a message full of serious import and deep

significance, and we shall do well if we give it our immediate attention and full support.

But although this is an honest attempt of the working classes themselves to stir up their co-workers to a sense of the many disadvantages of the economic conditions of this country, compared with those prevailing in Germany, it may meet with as much hostility from certain publicists favouring the maintenance of the present fiscal conditions as though it were a political move of their adversaries.

We may be told that this Gainsborough Commission is a faked-up job of the protectionists; that the five free traders on it were but tools of fiscal reformers, and that the whole thing is but a political dodge of the enemy.

We are so *party* ridden in this country that everything has to yield to party influence and become subordinate to party interests, while any or every incident of public life may be made use of to serve party purposes. Party interests are built up of individual interests, and in thus reducing it to its true denomination we find much self-interest barring the way to reform, and many difficulties standing in the way of progress.

In coming to a determination on this momentous question let us be sure that we have cast out of our minds every vestige of political influence, and let us beware of the false doctrine of those who, because they have their own interests to serve, continue to uphold a system which has, among other things, reduced the people of this country to a state of poverty, misery and degradation, the like of which is not to be found in any

civilised country in the world. They may, and perhaps will, still claim for our present fiscal system those same potentialities for good which Cobden and his followers claimed for it half a century ago, but as facts are surer than fancies, we prefer to believe the evidence of our own eyes rather than trust further to the phantasmagoria raised by the magic of false teachers.

In other words, we find that as we have been led astray by the political teaching of those who passed as our friends, we had better take this question of politics into our own hands and carefully examine it in our own way before we allow it to lead us again a hair's breadth away from our own best interests.

CHAPTER XI

PAUPERISM AS A RESULT OF FREE TRADE—£35,000,000
REQUIRED ANNUALLY IN POOR-RATES

Gross
Injustice
to
Tax-payers

WE have then, in the foregoing pages, presented to us a number of trenchant facts in respect to the most momentous question of the day, touching the welfare of the British people. We know that abnormal poverty dogs the footsteps of our unfortunate countrymen with the tenacity of a bloodhound, and, turn whichever way they will, this fell presence is always on their track.

We have realised for many years that every trade, profession and industry in this country has been so overcrowded, that EMPLOYMENT has been hard to get and difficult to retain, even by skilled men, in what are regarded as safe positions—witness the recent discharges from Woolwich Arsenal and the necessity for immediate exodus to Germany and other countries which followed, because other firms in the same line of business could offer the men no employment.

A
Monstrous
Incubus

We know that every Government for the last fifty years or more have been at their wits' end to decide what to do with the ever-increasing burden of pauperism, which has settled upon the shoulders of British tax-payers with crushing effect, and yet the burden grows, and its weight becomes heavier.

We have seen that, owing to its constant presence in

their midst, the people have actually come to regard this foul thing as something that *must* be, even, indeed, to accept it as a *necessity*, and beyond grumbling at the financial strain which their acquiescence in the matter involves, they do nothing to relieve themselves of this monstrous incubus.

The Government of the day, seeing this unfortunate attitude on the part of the people, naturally shape their course accordingly, by imposing upon the tax-payers those heavy burdens called POOR-RATES, which now amount to the stupendous sum of £34,926,280, nearly *thirty-five millions sterling* annually.

The people have assumed this strangely anomalous attitude in regard to PAUPERISM, because every Government that has been in power since the passing of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, has led the people to believe that pauperism is there by *constitutional right*, and cannot be done away with.

The Government of that day thought they had improved the Pauper Laws by their new Act, and perhaps they had, but they had never dreamed that future Governments would take out of the pockets of the people the colossal sum of thirty-five millions sterling annually for pauper relief, nor did the people for a moment realise that in LEGALISING POVERTY, PAUPERISM would, in the next generation, grow into one of the biggest NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, demanding for its maintenance several millions more than are spent on the Army, and even more than is spent on our Navy—the most powerful in the World.

Here is a monstrous anomaly, and yet the thing goes

on because of the apathy of Governments and the ignorance of the people.

It has been truly said that:

“ It is the people who really make the laws of the land; so it is the people who have first to be influenced, and then the necessary laws will come into being.”

Convince the people that pauperism, as we know it, is nothing but a foul growth on the body politic; that *poverty* even is preventable, and the country will soon witness a wonderful change, not only in our Poor Laws, but in the attitude of the people themselves towards the entire question.

Poverty not
a Necessity

Poverty, in an acute form, is no more a necessity than drunkenness is a necessity, and it is time we recognised this fact.

We can prevent poverty and kill pauperism with the greatest possible ease, but we must first of all discover the source from which poverty and its attendant horrors spring, before we may hope to cut off the evil. We have looked for, and are still looking for, the source of these curses to our country in the wrong directions, and we have failed to find it.

Statesmen, writers on political economy, publicists, Members of Parliament and Ministers of Government are all seeking for the solution of the problem in unlikely spots, trying to unlock the door with a key that will not fit, and they might just as well abandon the task.

Mr Balfour, in speaking against the second reading of the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill, April 30, 1907, is reported to have said:

“ They [the Government] increased the difficulty by bringing people, in the ordinary phrase, ‘back to the land,’ because when agriculture went through a period of depression it was inevitable that the people would have to seek other occupations in other places. It was a result of simple and well-known economic causes, which, although of the greatest possible importance in the consideration of this subject, was constantly left out of account.”

On the introduction of the Bill into Parliament on March 20, 1907, Mr Balfour said:

“ I am one of those who always said the abolition of the Corn Laws would inevitably cause a great beneficial change in our system. But every one must be conscious that it exposes us to all the difficulties of foreign competition. It was intended by its authors to stimulate the growth of a manufacturing population, which I view without regret, because it is the only way in which the population of this country can develop.”

It is very clear from these two quotations from Mr Balfour’s recent speeches that that eminent statesman does not regard the deplorable state of labour and the whole question affecting employment and poverty as anomalous, or due to anything else than:

“ A result of simple and well-known causes.”

while the remedy, he contends, will be found in,

“ The great growth of the manufacturing population—because I recognize it is the only possible mode in which the population of this country can largely increase, or its wealth augment.”

Mr John Burns, who took part in one of the meetings of the Imperial Conference at the Colonial Office on April 25, proposed:

“ That it is desirable to encourage British emigrants to proceed to British Colonies rather than Foreign countries; and that the Imperial Government be requested to co-operate with any Colonies desiring immigrants in assisting suitable persons to emigrate.”

And the Conference passed the resolution unanimously.

Here, then, we have two notable examples of how statesmen regard this matter.

Firstly, we have the Leader of the Opposition encouraging belief in the selfsame remedial measures that have persistently failed the country for more than half a century; and then we find a Cabinet Minister suggesting the only remedy he can think of—the suicidal course of emigration—as a solution of the problem.

Let us consider Mr Balfour’s extraordinary statement that:

“ They [the Government] increased the difficulty by bringing people, in the ordinary phrase, back to the land,” etc.

“Back to
the Land”

Now, of all charges that may be brought against the Government of the day by the party out of power, this surely is the most remarkable for its utter feebleness. How on earth are we to have agriculture unless we begin by putting people on the land?

How are we to increase and develop it unless we supply it with workers?

How are we to have our manufacturing industries unless we build our factories and put "hands" into them? And how are we to increase our existing industries and trades unless we send to them the necessary complement of labour?

To predict difficulties in agriculture because we supply that industry with one of the essentials to success—labour—is, *ceteris paribus*, to prophesy evil to our manufacturing industries, because we supply them with the necessary workers. Mr Balfour cannot blow hot and cold with the same breath, and what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. Agriculture, like every other industry in this world, must take its chance, and bear its ups and downs like everything else in life. What we have to do is to start it on its way, give it every chance of success, and then let it run alone. Mr Balfour and his Party need have no misgivings on this point, because it is clearly shown elsewhere in these pages that agriculture is not only capable of drawing off all those who are unemployed to-day, but millions of the population of this country besides.

There is, however, a note in Mr Balfour's utterance that is far more alarming than his ill-grounded predictions about difficulties arising through sending the people "back to the land," and that is the baneful effect of his own policy when he and his Party are again in power.

If Mr Balfour, in opposition, sees danger in developing agriculture, what course is Mr Balfour, as Prime Minister, likely to take? If Mr Balfour, as Leader of the Opposition, denounces "back to the land" as a harmful

measure, Mr Balfour's Government is hardly likely to take those steps to put the great land industry of the country in that position which it must attain before the people can find relief from the sore troubles that beset them.

If Mr Balfour is really sincere in believing what he stated, or was reported to have stated, and has, moreover, the courage of his convictions, then it is as clear as daylight that if that gentleman is returned to power, and provided his Party share his beliefs, a black day will dawn for England. The only hope for the people is through the land, and, if the way be barred—God help them.

Agriculture
ignored

When we come to the newspapers for help, we are no better off, for in seeking a solution of the difficulties which beset labour they, more or less, seem to ignore agriculture as a factor in the situation.

Here is an example from one of the London dailies—*Daily Express*.

In connexion with the Woolwich Arsenal troubles it published the following article, which is given *in extenso*, to show how severely the land is left alone as having no part in the labour question:

FREE TRADE

WHAT IT HAS DONE FOR THE MEN OF WOOLWICH

A CONTRAST

NO WORK TO BE HAD IN ENGLAND

PROTECTED AMERICA WANTS MEN

STRIKING LESSON

“ Remarkable developments have arisen in connexion with the unemployment at Woolwich.

“*The Express* dispatched yesterday a number of telegrams to private engineers on the Government list, in the hope of finding work for the discharged mechanics and labourers.

“The firms communicated with were among those in the engineering branches mentioned by the Prime Minister on Monday as enjoying especially good trade.

“The replies were of a very significant character, and form a strikingly unfavourable commentary on the Prime Minister’s statement. There is no work for additional men; in fact, in most cases, men are being dismissed.

“We print by way of contrast with the telegrams, a striking dispatch from our New York correspondent, on conditions in the American engineering trade. It is stated that the unemployed British skilled workmen could find plenty of work in the United States.”

NO WORK

The message telegraphed to the firms in question was in the following terms:

“Could you find employment for one hundred skilled workmen from Woolwich?”

Sir W. G. Armstrong, Whitworth and Co., the celebrated engineering firm, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, wired back the following reply:

“We regret the suggestion is at present impossible, as we are obliged to pay off hands every week.”

Messrs Kynoch, of Birmingham, replied:

“In reply to your telegram, we have to say that, in consequence of Government action, there is more scarcity of employment, and consequently more suffer-

ing among our own people than is the case at Woolwich."

"Can you provide employment for 500 of our skilled workpeople?"

Messrs Vickers, Sons and Maxim reply from their works at Erith:

"No. We are discharging men, owing to slackness of work."

The same firm's headquarters at Barrow state:

"We cannot find work for men from Woolwich, because, if Government demands continue as at present, we fear we cannot help the men we already have employed."

The Woolwich labour troubles offered a splendid thesis for an academical work on the subject, but the Press failed to grasp the opportunity.

Whichever way we turn, we are met by the same trend of thought in respect to labour—the manufactures and trades are regarded as the *only* means of employment in spite of the fact that they persistently fail us, and so—we go on missing the way.

Let us now turn to other countries in order to see what they do there.

This is what one of the London dailies had to say on the subject in May of last year:

UNPARALLELED PROSPERITY
THE RISING TIDE OF GERMAN TRADE
AMAZING REPORT
EXPORTS DOUBLED IN TWELVE YEARS

"Some extraordinary particulars of the present prosperity of German industry were issued last night

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by the Foreign Office in a report by Mr Consul H. Harriss-Gastrell on the trade of Württemberg.

“ Practically every industry is reported to be in a highly flourishing condition. Orders are pouring in, capital is doubling with unparalleled rapidity, wages are rising, and there is an extraordinary demand for labour. The British Consul says :

“ ‘The general economic improvement in Germany . . . has continued steadily, and in the latter of the two years under review (1905-1906) attained a hitherto unprecedented height.

“ ‘There are no signs as yet of highwater mark having been reached, most manufacturers having orders for months in advance.

“ ‘The home labour supply has resulted in a very general increase of wages, which in many industries amounts to more than a 10 per cent. rise, and also in many cases to a shortening of the working day.’ ”

From such references as these, which appear constantly in the public prints, it is manifest that the country is now aroused to a sense of its own danger, and that the entire question of *labour* is attracting intense and widespread interest. This, therefore, is the time for us to study the matter and to trace the evil which besets it to its source.

Much is made by publicists of the marvellous industrial prosperity of Germany, the United States and other civilised countries, and with very good reason. Phenomenal progress has been made in these countries, but *we* can also point to enormous commercial and in-

dustrial expansion. Considerable expansion has, in fact, been experienced during the last few years in practically all the great trading states of the world, and, *per se*, this is neither remarkable nor significant.

There are, however, certain factors in the position which *are* of remarkable significance, and we must not ignore them, if we are determined to sift this matter to the bottom.

Foreign
Industrial
Expansion

Industrial expansion in Germany and the United States is not attended by congested labour markets and consequent scarcity of employment, *because such a condition would be impossible in those countries.*

In both Germany and the United States industries are *united* to agriculture, and each assists the other. In Germany, for example, we find from *The Statesman's Year Book*, 1906, that her farms supported 18,066,663 persons, of whom 8,156,045 were actually working upon them.

The land industry provides for *eighteen millions* of the population, and the rest is simple enough. Agriculture, in short, draws away so many workers that *all other industries find it difficult to obtain the necessary supply of labour.*

In these countries, as in all other countries of the world, agriculture is the *chief* industry, and all others are subsidiary to it.

In our country agriculture and manufactures are not allied, but *divorced*. They are not sister industries, helping each other by natural affinities, but living apart and working independently of each other. There is no bond of sympathy and strength between them, and because there is no unity the nation suffers.

We are the only people in the world who have attempted to make manufactures rank first in the national industries and place agriculture as of secondary importance in the economy of life. Ours is the only country in the world that has attempted to alter the course of a natural LAW by making the great LAND INDUSTRY subservient to minor industries.

That we have signally failed, as we deserved to fail, needs no further proof than is afforded by the many signs of the times, which are manifest enough even to the most casual observer.

Ours is a nation that stands apart from all others, in that we have been infatuated enough to believe that we should find *universal* riches and prosperity in Cobden's singularly bold idea that we should become the lords of manufacture; and that we could live and become great on these alone.

Richard Cobden's was truly a lofty ideal, but only an ideal. He left out of calculation the simple fact that before we could become lords of manufacture we must first of all become lords of the earth—and that we are a long way off that consummation needs no emphasising—and because we are not lords of the earth we must obviously fail in compelling the nations to come our way, to do as we do, to do in fact as we should like them to do.

That we have failed all along the line; that our splendid schemes and soaring aspirations after a unique position in the history of the world have burst like airy bubbles is, alas, too visible to even the meanest intelligence.

Instead of universal riches and prosperity we have reaped widespread poverty and distress. Instead of becoming lords of manufacture, our country is the common "dumping ground" for the manufactured wares of our foreign rivals. Instead of good wages and general employment there is "sweating" and *unemployment*. Instead of home industries supporting our own people, they are obliged to seek work in Germany and elsewhere; and, worst of all, instead of the Mother Country holding out a helping hand to the best and readiest, the strongest and fittest of her sons and daughters, they are obliged to leave the land they love and seek their bread in lands that are free from these old worn-out ideas, which have wrought such incalculable harm to the British people.

The
Central
Fact

This is the central fact that runs right through the position like the warp of a piece of cloth, and crosses and re-crosses it like the weft, and unless we pick up these threads and weave them together in a practical manner, we shall never succeed in making a good job of our work.

Governments, statesmen and publicists have all missed the way, because they have never gathered up the right threads into their hands; and this much remains certain, that until they do so and then dexterously manipulate the shuttle, *they will continue to fail*.

As for your ordinary politician he is of no account as a factor in the question, because he is a man of no independence, and, therefore, of no use save to vote with his party.

What is wanted here is a broad, lofty conception of PATRIOTISM; that noble feeling that will make a man get up in his place in Parliament and declare boldly what is in his heart, and not a narrow slavish adherence to party.

CHAPTER XII

THE INCUBUS OF TAXATION—FISCAL AND POOR
LAW REFORMS

THERE are speakers and writers in abundance on all social and economic questions in Parliament and out of it; there are those who declare that free trade is the panacea for the troubles which have overtaken us, and those who affirm that in fiscal reform will be found the solution of the problem. Political parties have made free trade and fiscal reform their war cries, and one of them has raised the CHEAP LOAF as their battle standard.

Part of the Press supports one of these factions and part of it the other; bitter controversy often rages round the question, and public feeling is influenced sometimes this way and sometimes that by these warriors of a wordy warfare.

More fierce controversialists throw themselves boldly into the arena of this bloodless conflict year by year and so the game goes merrily on, to the huge amusement of all foreign nations and to the undoing of our own people.

Now we may lay down this one broad cardinal fact as a sure basis to work upon:—Not by such means will the problem be solved; the battle won.

It is obvious, from the bitter experience of the past, that what has been misnamed FREE TRADE has ignomini-

ously failed to do anything but positive harm to the cause, and we can trust to it no more. If we had real free trade, that is, a free and unrestricted interchange of commodities between the nations of the earth, on broad, generous, well-defined lines; that splendid UTOPIAN free trade that was dreamed of by the idealists of more than half a century ago, it might serve our turn, but the poor, weak, narrow, one-sided thing it pleases us to call "Free Trade," is nothing but a laughable farce, a humbug and a sham, which will as surely fail us in the present and future as it has in the past.

Fiscal reform may help us, but not if we trust to it alone.

The prevailing idea is that if we hold out a helping hand to our industries, assisting one of them in this direction and another in that, and generally put them in a position to fight on more equal terms with their foreign rivals by setting them free of those shackles with which they are so sorely hampered to-day, we shall overcome all difficulties, but in this we are mistaken.

By altering our laws so as to give the country a wise, well-considered fiscal system, we shall, without doubt, do some good, but beyond that—nothing. Our industries may absorb a few thousand more "hands," wages may even slightly rise; in certain industrial sections there may be less uncertainty of employment and less distress, but the main question—the poverty of the general body of the people—will remain untouched.

It is not so much the thousands that we want to assist as the *millions*.

The surplus thousands may be absorbed by manufactures, but the surplus millions only by the LAND.

Keystone
of the
Situation

This is the great central fact around which the entire question rotates; it is the keystone of the arch; the pivot on which the fulcrum works; and yet, strangely enough, it is persistently left out as a factor of no importance at all, by all the Governments of the past, by publicists, speakers, and by most of the Press. Study *The National Statute Book* for years past, and see how barren it is of effort to relieve the situation by means of the land, save in one or two attempts to afford partial relief. Listen to the rhetoric of platform orators, and mark how carefully they avoid all reference to the land as a factor in the most burning social question of the day.

Read your newspapers and notice that, while waging a fierce, wordy war against political adversaries, and clamouring for preference for the party they serve, they studiously refrain from all mention of the LAND as of the least importance on their political horizon.

Party and policy rule the situation. Every man, before he enters Parliament, must first learn some political creed, and that creed binds him, body and soul, to his Party. Independence is lost; initiative is dead; he may have ideas, but he never voices them, albeit in this he is of use to his Party; he falls into what somebody has called—"the general mush of concession," and his usefulness to his country is lost.

This is the common fate of most of our legislators whom we elect and send to Westminster to represent us—the people. That our interests are not served as they

should be is amply manifested in the many evidences around us of the unsatisfactory condition of the country. Moreover, it is certain that this senseless political antagonism, which is ceaselessly going on in the National Parliament, renders useful work impossible, and we, as a people, are sick and tired of it all. We want patriotism, not policy, and we don't care one straw what Government is in power, Radical or Conservative, so long as we get it.

Patriotism
not
Policy

Fundamentally, the party principle is right enough, but in practice it has proved itself lacking in those essentials to national prosperity which are indispensable in that general body conducting the business affairs of the Nation.

It is a bar to public business, a slayer of individual independence, a standing menace to the Empire and a veritable curse to the people. Let the people see to it.

A recent exemplification of this fact will be found in the debate which took place on the second reading of the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill.

This Bill, which is but one of those attempts, already referred to, for the purpose of partially relieving the deplorable condition of the people, was as fiercely attacked as though it were a measure introduced into Parliament for the avowed purpose of bringing about the destruction of the commonwealth.

Here is a specimen of the invective indulged in; and if twaddle of this kind is all the Opposition have to urge against the Government, they had, in their own interests, best remain silent.

Said one of the Party out of power (Mr Cochrane) :

“ Was this Bill to be the means of giving doles to deserving Radical agents and other politicians, who had waded through Chinese slavery and other terminological inexactitudes, and who had failed to obtain from the Lord Chancellor the dignity of Justice of the Peace? Were these persons to be presented at the cost of a country with a small holding, with the buildings upon it?”

Now, personally, we don't care a brass farthing for Radical agents or the Radical party; nor do we, for that matter, care a fig for *any* party. We only ask for good government, and if we get it, we don't care which party is in and which is out.

In this case the Government of the day made an honest attempt to emancipate the people from some of the evils which beset them, and they were howled at for their pains.

The Bill is good in its way, but it does not go far enough; it lacks those easy facilities for creating peasant proprietorships which the Small Holdings Bill of 1892, for example, provides for. But then that Bill was by no means perfect, partly for the reason that its sphere of application was too limited, and partly because, in placing its operation in the hands of County Councils, the Government rang its death knell. Go and ask the County Councils what they have done with the country's mandate to create a number of peasant proprietors up to the limit of the Act, and they will tell you that their combined efforts have resulted in the creation of small proprietary farms, aggregating a few hundred acres.

Here is really a useful measure, intended by Govern-

ment for the relief of a strained, intolerable position, rendered completely abortive by the stupidity of bucolic councils, but we have something more to say on this matter later on.

The present Government should go back; pick up the threads of the 1892 Bill, take them into their own hands, work the Act for all it is worth, and then extend it in a thoroughly workmanlike manner *to the whole of the many millions of acres now lying practically unproductive in Great Britain.*

It is very necessary at this juncture that we should thoroughly understand what these SMALL HOLDINGS mean to the people. Small Holdings

It is patent enough to the poorest intelligence that there is something fundamentally wrong with the system upon which our social and economic arrangements work.

We have seen that, in spite of all effort on the part of Government, of all social and industrial effort, of the enormous contributions from the public purse, and of the still greater aid from private sources, poverty of an alarming type still falls upon the people as a curse; that work is difficult to get and hard to retain, and that the entire social and economic condition of the people is deplorable.

We have seen that in Germany and other European States there is very little poverty, that work is abundant, wages good and the general condition of the people in these respects at least far better than with us.

We have seen that this difference is due to the fact, and to one fact only, that in all these countries the

LAND is the staple industry and all others subordinate to it.

We have seen that because we alone, of all countries in the whole world, have attempted to make agriculture subservient to trade and manufactures, we have failed as we deserved to fail. The land is the source of being, the source of wealth; from it we are taken, to it we must return; without it we cannot live. Man, in making the most of the land, in working it for all it will produce, is but following a natural LAW, and he who contends against the operation of natural LAWS, pits his puny strength against a FORCE that is simply irresistible.

We must cultivate highly every acre that is capable of being cultivated in the kingdom, or we shall fail as signally in the future as in the past.

There is no escape from this fact! No possibility of evading this LAW with impunity.

WILL NOTHING ever arouse the people of this country to a true sense of their position?

Is there anything under heaven that will awaken them from that fatal sleep which the destruction of their land-industry plunged them into fifty odd years ago?

Is there any power on earth that will make them understand the simple fact that if they have an industry capable of giving employment and support to twelve or fourteen millions of people, and they muddle it so that it can only employ and support 3,900,000, they have made a shocking mess of their own affairs?

Will they *never* understand that unless they work their great NATIONAL industry on sound, economic and commercial principles, work it for all it is worth,

work it in a manner to produce the maximum of NATIONAL wealth and afford employment to the maximum head of population, immense loss of NATIONAL strength, power, vigour, energy, vitality, and wealth *must* result. Will they *never* realise that want of work, poverty, and a complete derangement of social and economic conditions are but the natural sequel of NATIONAL waste?

Cannot they see for themselves that because of their blindness, infatuation, madness; because they have allowed false teachers to lead them astray, to lead them away from the real source of their strength and vitality, from these springs of NATIONAL productiveness, which are as essential to the well-being of the people as the sun's warmth is to the ripening corn; poverty has fallen upon them as a scourge, and that poverty and its attendant horrors will continue to haunt them so long as they cling to false creeds and worn-out beliefs?

Are the British tax-payers so blind as not to perceive that all official effort to relieve the situation is in vain; that the poor-rates and parochial cesses of whatsoever nature are unavailing, and that their enormous contribution of THIRTY-FIVE MILLIONS annually is as easily swallowed up by the great ocean of pauperism as children's sand castles on the beach are swept away by each incoming wave?

Will they never realise that this Frankenstein monster, which has been created out of the ignorance of a people and the indifference of Governments, has a maw wide and voracious enough to swallow up their £35,000,000, and as much more as they may provide, if,

False
Creeds and
Worn-out
Beliefs

in their egregious folly, they are weak enough to continue their supplies? Year by year does the demand for more and more millions increase, and can a living man point to the slightest modicum of good done to the body politic? Can it be said by even one political economist, politician, statesman or statist, that these many millions that are so uncomplainedly surrendered every year by the complaisant tax-payers of this country, have done even the faintest trace of good in reducing the widespread poverty of the people, in providing work for the army of unemployed that is marching up and down the country seeking work and finding none, or in relieving the unparalleled conditions which surround the entire position affecting this great social question?

Can the Government of to-day, or any administration that has been in office during the last fifty years, point to any real good that has been done in the past with the tax-payers' millions, or predict a time when this senseless drain on the public will cease?

Can any Government, past or present, affirm, without fear of contradiction, that their predecessors of 1834, in passing their Poor Law Amendment Act, have done aught else than encourage poverty by making a *legal* charge on the public revenues?

Can they show, indeed, that the Act has resulted in the slightest amelioration in the poverty-stricken condition of the people?

No! emphatically and unequivocally no!

In order that the position may be clearly understood by the people of this country, some statistics bearing on the question are appended for easy reference:

Year.	Population.	Amount raised in Poor-rates.	Incidence per head of Population.
1834	24,028,584	£7,000,000	5s. 9d.
1895-96	39,221,109	26,331,700	13s. 5d.
1900-01	41,154,646	30,126,236	14s. 8½d.
1904-05	42,793,272	34,926,280	16s. 2¾d.

These figures will show that even in the dark days of 1834, that dreary time when poverty was considered so excessive as to demand a change in our Corn Laws, only about seven millions were raised in poor-rates, while the incidence per head of population was only 5s. 9d.

In 1895-96 the amount raised was over twenty-six millions, and the incidence per head rose to 13s. 5d.; in 1901 it was found necessary to raise as much as thirty millions with an incidence of 14s. 8d.; while in 1904-5 nearly thirty-five millions were required, with a still higher charge per head of population of 16s. 2d.

The Government's own figures, therefore, show how poverty and pauperism have flourished under State protection, and how, in spite of enormous trade expansion and industrial progress and of the vast accumulation of individual wealth, it has grown into an insatiable monster which administrative effort cannot appease nor national sacrifice satisfy. Governments have done their best under an unhealthy system which engenders its own agents of destruction, while tax-payers have flung their millions into these fathomless quicksands of pauperism without avail and without hope.

Seven hundred and twenty millions sterling in poor-rates have been raised since the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 came into operation, and who shall say that

the country is better for these squandered millions, or that the position of the people has improved?

Will Government give tax-payers a substantial guarantee that the three to four hundred millions that they will exact from them during the *next* ten years will do more good than the two hundred and ninety-six millions which they have paid into the State coffers during the *last* ten years?

Can Government give the country any assurance, worth the paper it is written on, that even their Scottish Small Holdings Bill, or their Small Holdings Bill for England, will really and permanently relieve the poverty of the people, generally improve the position, and reduce, even by a trifle, the heavy burden of poor-rates?

Is there a single statesman in Parliament or out of it, who, calmly and dispassionately viewing the position and nicely balancing in his far-seeing mind the many impossibilities of the case, can conscientiously assure us that under the existing conditions of our economic administration and the peculiarly enervating effect on the people of our Poor Laws, there is the very faintest chance of permanently improving the position so as to find work for all and do away with the necessity for poverty?

After the bitter experience of the last seventy years and the many sad manifestations of condign failure which are, alas, too abundantly spread around us to-day, is there a man in the Kingdom who, apart from party bias and political influence, can honestly say that, if the poor-rates be increased from £35,000,000 annually to £45,000,000, these added ten millions will do aught

else than temporarily relieve an ever-present and an *ever-growing* demand on the tax-payers' pockets?

If we maintain our present attitude towards this terrible social question; this sickly, mawkish attitude of taking the backbone out of our manhood by encouraging poverty and offering a premium to pauperism; if we continue to give every able-bodied man and woman in the country the legal right to thrust their hands deep down into the pockets of the British tax-payer and live at his expense the year round; is there a man among us bold enough to assert that we are doing that which is best for the people, or that which is just to the tax-payer?

Terrible
Social
Problems

Can we, as a justice-loving people, a people who are really desirous of doing that which is best for our own countrymen, honestly and truthfully affirm that our Poor Laws, which were conceived in mercy and administered in compassion, are the best and most helpful, uplifting and practical that we are capable of framing?

Is it not incontestably true that our Poor Laws, which were altered in 1834, and amended now and again to meet what were considered certain requirements of the times, have had the effect of demoralising the people, inducing appalling and unprecedented poverty, imperilling the commonwealth, and doing a gross injustice to the general body of tax-payers?

In reply to this group of startling questions there will be found many apologists who, with the ready skill of practised controversialists having specious arguments ready to hand, will endeavour to prove that the reverse of all this is in reality the case; but as an ounce of fact is

worth more than a ton of theory, so are the material manifestations of our Poor Laws, *per se*, of far more value than the academical declamations of learned jurists or the speculative theories of newspaper correspondents.

Here we have in our midst unparalleled poverty, a mass of foul, festering pauperism that is not even relieved by the thirty-five millions raised annually by the State, or by the incomparably larger sums subscribed out of the universal philanthropy of millions of our country men and women; and now that we are looking at this question for the first time in what we conceive to be an eminently practical manner, we naturally want to know the *why* and the *wherefore* of the matter.

The Why
and the
Wherefore

We know full well that our people have not been driven into poverty by the harshness of our laws and the blighting restrictions of our social life; but, on the contrary, that the mild benevolence of our Poor Laws and the easy facilities presented by our own social conditions, offer a distinct premium to that large section to be found in every population which, given an opportunity, is only too ready to shirk those responsibilities which attach to the individual obligations of life.

With so mild a code of national laws and so benevolent an attitude on the part of the public, it is no wonder that we have succeeded in degrading that section of our countrymen which is for ever standing on the verge of poverty.

It is no wonder, indeed, that if these people are offered on easy terms State aid and private charity in the place of a precarious livelihood and semi-starvation,

they accept it. Small blame to them; in fact we should probably do precisely the same thing if we were in their position. "Any port in a storm" is good enough for them.

But this is not doing the *best* for the people; this is not uplifting them, but casting them down; this is not encouraging self-help and individual independence, but creating a weak, limp, nerveless condition, which has to be bolstered up by outside support. We are really doing our best to bring about the complete demoralisation of the poorer classes, and it is no wonder that our pauper ranks continue to be well recruited.

That this state of affairs constitutes a grave danger to the commonweal by sapping the manhood of the nation there is no shadow of a doubt, and it behoves us to go back on our tracks, pick up the loose threads of feeble legislative measures, knit them together in a firm, tight skein, and then weave them into one solid, sensible, practical law that will make the people self-respecting and self-supporting; a law that will help and not hinder the people from becoming free and independent citizens, and that will relieve the unfortunate tax-payer of an iniquitous burden which is as unjust as it is unnecessary.

We may be sure that a great amount of nonsense and twaddle will be talked the moment a proposal is made to alter these hopelessly impossible Poor Laws.

So-called philanthropists will rise up in indignant wrath at the very name of reform, and every attempt will be made to show that any alteration in existing laws would be cruel and barbarous, and an outrage to the deserving poor. Then again bumbledom will rise up as

**New
Practical
Legislation
Required**

one man and declaim against any innovations that are likely to interfere with their cherished and exclusive prerogatives as "Guardians of the Poor."

In regard to these Poor Law guardians, we need have no scruples, as the recent scandals in connexion with the shameful squandering of the tax-payers' money conclusively prove how some of these gentlemen discharge their public trust, while in respect to the philanthropists it may be said that true philanthropy consists in helping a man to help himself rather than in forcing him to become dependent on others.

"Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have I give unto thee," were the words of the Apostle to the cripple, and then—he healed him!

Was not this better, wiser, more really philanthropic than giving him a little temporary aid and then leaving him in the same dependent position for the next day? Peter did the man a real service by *making him whole*, or, in other words, by putting the man in a position wherein—*he could help himself*.

Peter was far wiser, more practical, and a truer philanthropist than your fussy faddist who, by upholding unsuitable laws, would keep a man dependent on the charity of others rather than help him to become free and independent.

Said a well-known writer on the subject of self-help:

"The greatest service we can do for another is to help him to help himself. To help him directly might be weakening. . . . But to help him to help himself is never

weakening, but always encouraging and strengthening, because it leads him to a larger and stronger life."

The man then who helps to put his brother in a position to help himself is a truer philanthropist than he who bolsters him up with adventitious aid, and it is this aspect of the question that deserves our closest attention, because in it we shall find the key to the whole position.

CHAPTER XIII

PREVENTION OF NATIONAL WASTE—THE MEANS
TO THE END

BEFORE we can amend the Poor Laws, we must amend other things. The Poor Laws exist because of excessive poverty. Poverty exists because of lack of employment, and lack of employment is but a result of fatuitous administration.

We have done nothing in the past but to pull down, at least in respect to the question we are considering; now let us alter our methods and adopt a *con*-structive policy instead of a *de*-structive one.

Let us tell those whom we send to Parliament to administer our affairs that we can no longer bear with official pedantry in regard to national economics, and that we are not disposed to submit longer to the delusion of an antiquated and worn-out system of fiscal administration.

Must
not be
a Party
Question

But in telling them this we should make it clear, at the same time, that this vital question, upon which hangs the welfare of a people, must not be made a party question. It is a question similar to that of the Irish Land Bill of 1903, which, because of its national importance, or for other reasons, passed through Parliament practically without debate. We claim that this measure, being of even more importance, *must not* be made the subject of unseemly party wrangling, and

that political capital must not be made out of it. This question directly touches the individual and collective interests of every working man and every tax-payer in the kingdom, and it must go through Parliament as a national measure bearing the sign-manual of a people.

We must help our people by finding work for them; we must be in a position to say to every able-bodied man and woman in the country—there is no need for you to go to the workhouse because we can provide you with honest work whereby you will be able to support yourself.

We must be in a position to provide work for all our great mass of unemployed, for every honest man and woman in the land, and then we shall be able to say—the poor-rates are not for you, but only for those *who are unable to work*: the aged and infirm, the blind and halt, the cripples, the insane, and those whose bodily or mental condition renders ordinary manual labour impossible.

We can employ literally millions of our people in making our own butter and cheese, in growing our own fruit and vegetables, in producing our own milk, poultry and bacon, in growing our own corn and making our own flour.

We can, in short, grow practically all our own food, and usefully and honourably employ all our own people. We can so well employ our own people in our own country that the wasteful drain of emigration will cease for a considerable time, and we shall keep the sturdy and the strong; those pushing, vigorous, brave sons of the

nation with us, instead of forcing them to seek their bread in a strange land.

How to
substitute
Plenty
for Poverty

We can repopulate our country districts and give back to England that backbone of rural strength and vigour of which the enervating, exhausting policy of the last half-century has robbed her. We can sprinkle over our fair island from Cornwall to the Pentlands, from the Wash to St David's Head, such a multitude of happy, thriving homesteads that our land will fairly hum with the joyous, invigorating sound of busy industries. We can send the people to honest work instead of to the workhouses, and we can give them plenty in the place of poverty.

But—and there is a But here as there is in many another of life's by-ways—we must go back on our tracks and pick up the right path, and, above all things, we must be prepared to make some sacrifices.

If we are determined to provide work for that vast array of unemployed, for that greater multitude, the "submerged tenth"; if we are really determined to banish poverty and slay pauperism outright; to make our people prosperous, contented and happy, we must give up that which, by a monstrous falsehood, is called FREE TRADE, and substitute for it a new code of sensible, practical fiscal laws, whereunder our people may have the same fair chance of carrying on their trades, professions and industries, to their own profit and advantage, as is enjoyed by the peoples of every civilised country in the world, save our own.

This we must be prepared to do thoroughly. No halting, flabby, half-hearted measures will help us here,

but a vigorous, whole-hearted policy, that, while helping our own people and safeguarding our own interests, will not prove necessarily hostile to our neighbours. Reciprocity is what we want, not hostility. There is not a vestige of reciprocity in our international trade to-day, not even the shadow of fair FREE TRADE, not a trace of just dealing. We are met at every turn, in every foreign port, in every civilised country in the whole world with a veritable host of hostile tariffs, and free trade is dead—slain by our own egregious folly in clinging so fatuously to the threadbare delusion of worn-out beliefs.

Here are some of the food imports into the United Kingdom for the year 1906, as given in *The Statesman's Year Book* for 1907:

Imports.	Value.
Wheat, Grain and Flour	£67,879,948
Butter and Margarine	26,200,007
Cheese	7,607,641
Eggs	7,098,137
Meat, Bacon, Poultry, etc.	41,169,522
Animals for food	9,889,127
Fruits and Hops	11,225,968

Here we have a group of figures, compiled from returns furnished by Government, of so formidable a nature as to be absolutely startling; and yet, save a few students of the subject, there is not one Englishman in ten thousand who is aware of the state of affairs herein disclosed, nor is he aware that in them is involved the existence of England as a great world power.

Practically the whole of this enormous mass of food-stuffs, which costs the colossal sum of £171,000,000

annually, and which we ask foreign nations to grow for us, can be produced in our own country.

Broadly speaking, it suffices to say that when a nation takes the insane, suicidal policy of killing her own industries, throwing her own people out of employment, and forcing the best of them to emigrate to save them from starvation, she does that which, in the process of time, will ensure her own destruction as surely as the seasons come round.

Constructiveness
and Conservatism

Strength lies in constructiveness and in conservation, and the country which adopts a *destructive* and *wasteful* policy of economics is bound to lose its national vigour.

England is in this position to-day; her great land industries have decayed to an extent that she has actually become dependent upon any and every country which will come to her assistance with the bare necessities of life; she is obliged to send her own sons and daughters away from her shores every year in ever-increasing numbers because she can no longer support them, and she has literally and truly *become dependent upon the good will of foreign countries for her daily bread.*

Now this particular phase of the case alone opens up so vast a field of discussion that we have only room to refer to one or two of its aspects.

It is said that as long as we hold the seas all fear of our food supplies being cut off may be dismissed. This may be true; and the absence of a really formidable European naval power during the last half-century has been the justification for such a belief. But the past is past; the present exhibits new and alarming aspects of

this phase of the question; and the future no man may read.

Germany has declared that she is determined to have a sea-power that will *at least rival our own*: and what Germany says, that will she do. She is wealthy, powerful and ambitious, and certainly capable of performing what she promises.

The remarkable and rapid growth of her vast mercantile marine has startled the world, and what she has done with her trading vessels she can and will do with her warships. Germany is the power to be reckoned with here, and to pooh-pooh the idea of that country being the chief factor in the situation would be weak and foolish.

The incident of the *Bundesrath* and the *General* (German steamers) during the South African War, furnished Germany with the exact opportunity for which she was seeking to increase her sea-power. She has long seen the necessity for increased naval armaments to protect her rapidly growing over-seas trade, and this boarding incident was the spark to the powder; the inspired Press made the most of the matter, and this comparatively insignificant affair has been so cleverly "engineered" as to have become a great national movement, having for its *real object the supremacy of the Fatherland*.

Germany has already got together a powerful fleet of warships which stands as a menace to our own shores; and as she has done this in the remarkably short space of *six years*, we may well be anxious about the immediate future.

If, under the vastly altered conditions in the status of European sea-powers brought about by Germany's atti-

German
Attitude
and Policy

tude, we still persist in pooh-pooing the matter, we shall deserve the disaster that will surely overtake us as a people.

There is, however, another aspect of the case which may, perhaps, cause us as much pecuniary loss, trouble and distress, as having our supplies cut off by a hostile power, and that is the general helplessness of our position.

As an island in the western seas our position is sufficiently isolated, but by the voluntary sacrifice of our agriculture we render ourselves doubly dependent on outside support and at the mercy of every group of "Cornerers" who, by the power of their millions, may chance to make our country the subject of their financial operations.

Even last year there is evidence of our utter helplessness. The recent rise in the price of corn was the result of a *probable* shortage in the American wheat crop, and it was sufficient to send prices up *eight* shillings a quarter. All that is wanted now is a "corner" in wheat, and we shall have famine, or war prices, and consequent distress and misery among millions of our people.

Home-
Grown
Corn

If we grow our own corn, and we can do it easily enough, the balance of demand and supply would be more equably poised, and the host of rascally speculators who deliberately and cruelly make money out of a people's despair would think twice before commencing their nefarious and villainous transactions.

Here again we are more or less led astray by statist and political economists.

We are told that the price of a commodity does not

depend upon the demand and supply of that particular commodity in a *single* country, but upon the *world's* demand and supply of that commodity, and this is true in the main, or, it might be said, it is truer in theory than in practice.

Broadly speaking, we may say that the country which produces all that it requires of a certain commodity, pays less for that commodity, and is in a safer position in respect thereto, than another country which produces none of it.

Can it be proved by any living man that, apart from such abnormalities in prices as may be caused by speculative dealers or market-riggers, Lancashire, for example, pays precisely the same price for cotton as the New Orleans mills, which buy the commodity at their doors? Can it be proved that the London millers pay the same price for their wheat as it can be purchased at in the markets of the Canadian plains? Other things being equal, the thing is an impossibility, because of the incidental expenses attending the transport and sale of commodities from one place to another, middlemen's profits, and so on.

Let England produce all the corn she requires for her own consumption, and several results are sure to follow that are bound to be to her profit and advantage.

1. She will be less at the mercy of "Cornerers" and millionaire speculators.

2. The price of corn will be less liable to sudden and violent fluctuations which are generally "engineered" by unscrupulous speculators.

3. She will become practically independent of outside

**Beneficial
Results of
a Change
of Policy**

supplies and, despite the theory of economics, it will be found in practice that she will be able to control the market prices of her own bread-stuffs instead of them being governed—as they are to-day—entirely by those foreign markets upon which we are so hopelessly dependent.

4. Permanent and profitable employment will be found literally for millions of our people who are now so miserably poor as to be on the verge of starvation.

5. The necessity for taking thirty-five millions annually out of the pockets of the tax-payers for poor-rates will become less and less as agricultural industries develop, until this tax shrinks to the same irreducible minimum at which this monstrously unjust and altogether *unnecessary* imposition stands in other civilised countries.

6. Large increase in manufacturing industries and trades consequent on improved condition of *millions* of people whose purchasing power naturally becomes greater in proportion to increased prosperity.

These instances will suffice, although we might fill many pages with the subject.

A Sham
and a
Fraud

Now if we cannot carry this precious *free trade* arrangement right through to that practical, logical conclusion hoped for by its inventors; if we cannot say that it has resulted in general prosperity to the country, and bestowed those especial benefits on us as a people which we were led to believe it would bestow, it may fairly be asked, in the name of that common sense upon which we pride ourselves so much, why on earth do we go on clinging to a palpable sham and a monstrous fraud?

The thing is either a success or a failure.

If we judge of it by the only infallible standard by which all mortal affairs are measured—results—the thing is, as we have seen, an unmitigated failure.

Nevertheless, there are not wanting apologists who will loudly asseverate that this so-called *free trade* fraud must be a success, because of the enormous trade expansion of the last few years and of the tremendous wealth of the nation.

But this profoundly important and far-reaching question cannot be measured by such shallow plummets as these, nor must we allow our better judgment to be obfuscated by such specious arguments.

The accumulated wealth of the nation is individual, and great accumulation of individual wealth only serves to show that the few have benefited—not the whole.

This is a fitting reply to those who still uphold the theories of free trade.

In respect to trade expansion if it could be shown that over any group of years during the last decade or two our import and export trade had expanded in a much greater proportion than that of other countries or states which protect themselves by tariffs hostile to us, then something might be said in favour of what is called FREE TRADE, but it cannot be proved.

This much, however, is certain, that those who still profess belief in FREE TRADE uphold it because it forms part of their political pledge to their constituencies; and they know full well that if FREE TRADE falls, they must fall with it. Not for a real, heartfelt, honest belief in its efficiency as the best fiscal system for the country

**The System
that Failed**

do men support FREE TRADE. Not because it brings general prosperity to the Nation and employment for our poverty-stricken millions do these free traders support a system which has proved a veritable scourge to the body politic. Not because it broadly and truly serves the interests of the people in a wide, liberal generous sense do they uphold it, but because it serves *their* interests.

The individual interests of the time-serving politician are served through his party and by his being returned to Parliament.

It suits certain merchants because FREE TRADE serves *their* particular line of business; and it suits the coal-owners because it enables them, with huge profits to themselves, to supply our already keen commercial rivals—who may, in the near future, possibly become our mortal foes—with those sources of energy and strength which we find it more difficult to resist year by year.

Whichever way we look at this matter, we are confronted with the same forbidding array of unpalatable facts that *selfishness* is the keystone and corner stone of FREE TRADE, and that it can only be defended on the narrow, sordid, unpatriotic principles of *self-interest*.

A few individual interests then are served, a few vast individual fortunes are built up, and the great interests of the people and the widespread national wealth which is theirs by right—the real wealth of the country—is dissipated and utterly sacrificed to a cruel creed which puts individual gain before national needs.

CHAPTER XIV

AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS—PRODUCTION AND
INDUSTRY

IN the preceding chapter we have presented to us a position so anomalous as to amount to a veritable paradox. On the one hand we have a fiscal policy which robs the people of employment, the country of its natural wealth, and the Empire of its virile strength; and on the other a vast army of tax-payers and voters who actually support those who uphold and administer this destructive policy while utterly condemning its results and denouncing its general ineptness.

We have among us hundreds of thousands, nay, millions of citizens, who are honestly desirous of doing that which is best for their country, and yet assume a doing-nothing, apathetic attitude towards this vital question, the right solution of which means simply the salvation of the people of this land.

We know that our trade, although increasing in volume, is only doing so in response to that general world-trade expansion which is being experienced in every civilised country; and we, moreover, know that instead of getting our fair share of this increased trade, or rather the lion's share of it, which our position as the first trading and manufacturing nation in the world entitles us to, *our percentage of increase has actually fallen below that of any of our great foreign rivals.*

Startling
Facts

These facts are so startling, so full of import to us as a people, so pregnant with significance, that it is a marvel anyone should find it necessary to refer to them: a marvel that we, a practical, level-headed nation, as we really are at bottom, should not have become familiar with them years ago and taken those steps which were necessary to put right that which was wrong. A writer here and there, or a platform orator now and again has taken the trouble to point out how and where we were going wrong, and a few listened and were convinced; but as a nation our attention has been drawn away from this question of supreme importance by the meretriciousness of party politics, and vital national interests have been sacrificed to the hollow verbosity of Parliamentary wranglers.

The time has come to assert ourselves as a sensible hard-working people, who, knowing that in our magnificent soil and temperate climate we possess all the potentialities to agricultural success, are determined to convert that potential energy into an actual living power.

We know that in our total area of land and water of 77,684,000 acres, there are upwards of 63,500,000 of land, most of which is eminently suitable for agriculture. Among this enormous acreage we know that we possess vast areas of the very finest corn-producing land to be found in the world, and—alas, that it should be so—we also know that most of this splendid land, this potential source of national wealth and collective prosperity, is shamefully wasted in growing green crops for sheep feeds and grass for sheep pasturage. It is a monstrous anomaly, yet nevertheless true, that in 1906, while we

**Monstrous
Anomaly**

had as much as 38,194,210 acres in green crops (turnips, etc., for sheep food), clover and pasturage, we had only 1,799,484 in wheat. In other words, of the total area under cultivation to-day in the United Kingdom 80 per cent. is under *sheep feed* and less than 4 per cent. under *man feed*.

We also know that even a worse thing has befallen us in that, owing to an inept fiscal system, vast areas have been withdrawn altogether from cultivation and laid down in large deer forests and sporting estates; vast tracts of splendid land that, under other conditions, would be available as a source of wealth and employment; a national asset of considerable value.

We have seen in the preceding chapters that we import annually from foreign countries £171,000,000 worth of food-stuffs, and we will now show how practically the whole of this could be produced in our own country.

Let us first take the most important item—wheat.

It is computed that we require about 285,000,000 bushels of wheat for our own consumption. Can we produce this quantity? The Government returns show that, on an average, our wheat lands produce thirty-two bushels per acre. We then require roughly 8,590,000 acres to produce the 285,000,000 bushels.

We have over 63,000,000 acres of land in the United Kingdom, most of which is capable of tillage. 48,000,000 acres of this large area are already under cultivation (chiefly grass and sheep feed crops), but bring every acre of this vast tract that is capable of being tilled under the plough; create *millions* of agricultural holdings where

there are now but thousands; give the country a sensible, practical fiscal system; a system that will *lend itself* to agricultural needs, among other things, and who shall say that, apart from all party bias and political bunkum, 8,500,000 acres cannot be devoted each year to the growing of wheat?

Occupying
Ownerships

Many well-known authorities on matters agricultural consider that nothing like this area would be required if the land were properly tilled under a system of "Occupying Ownerships," that is to say, under a system best calculated to produce the maximum instead of the minimum results from the soil. Good husbandry, such as would inevitably result if the man owned the land he tilled, would produce a *minimum* yield of five quarters per acre; and instead of 8,500,000 of acres being necessary to produce all the wheat we require for our consumption, 7,000,000 would suffice.

Then we import over 6,000,000 cwts. of bacon. Can any man in his senses affirm that if we grow from 7,000,000 to 8,500,000 acres of wheat, with thousands of farmsteads scattered throughout the country, we should lack any one of the required facilities for producing every pound of bacon that we now import in such vast quantities?

Next we come to cheese, butter, poultry and eggs. Who or what is to stop us producing all these when once the great land industry is permanently established in our midst?

Once we give back to the people their best heritage—agriculture—put the plough back into the furrow, convert our sheep walks into cornfields, our deer forests

and sporting estates into market gardens; pasture our sheep on the rough hill sides (their natural demesnes) instead of on our best arable land, and our cows in our low-lying water meadows, and then supplement this by stall feeding as they do in other countries where they raise a larger head of cattle per acre than we do; rigorously stop the wasteful system of allowing these animals to fatten on the cream of the land which should rightly be regarded as the property and substance of the people, who shall say that these things shall not be?

They are impossible to-day because the blundering of Governments, the insincerity of politicians, and the ignorance of the people have made them impossible, but go and ask any other civilised country in the world if *they* have found it impossible to accomplish these things, and they will laugh in your face.

Take one concrete example: Belgium, for instance, sends us of the surplus of her farm produce. We get £1,229,000 worth of eggs and poultry annually from that country. Do we suppose that she sends us her own farm produce and then buys foreign eggs for her own consumption? Belgium is far more densely populated than our own country, with 630 head of population to the square mile against our 360, or, in other words, about twice as densely populated as the United Kingdom; and yet, in spite of this, she contrives to produce as much butter as she requires for herself and something over for export.

Then Belgium has another surprise for us. She has but a tiny cultivable area, only 4,350,000 acres, and yet she manages to raise 1,154,721 pigs, while we, with our

Compara-
son with
Belgium

enormous area under cultivation of 48,000,000 acres, raise but 3,680,740 of these animals. This works out at 26 pigs for every 100 acres under cultivation in Belgium, and only 7 per every 100 acres in the United Kingdom.

We find also that Belgium has 1,782,000 head of horned beasts, while we have 7,000,000. This works out at 43 head for every 100 acres under cultivation in Belgium, and only 14 per 100 acres in the United Kingdom.

Home and
Foreign
Production
and
Industry

Again, if we similarly compare the production and industry of every civilised country in the world with that of our own country we shall find much to deplore all along the line. Everywhere else the land is regarded as the chief source of wealth, the chief means of employing and supporting the people, the backbone of the Nation, and its refuge in the time of trouble. Roughly speaking, they rely upon their land as a means of employing and supporting about *one-third* or more of the entire population; of producing practically the whole of their food-stuffs; of preventing an exhaustive outflow of emigration, and last, but not least, of stimulating the demand for locally manufactured goods by maintaining in a general state of prosperity a large agricultural population, the spending power of which must be enormous.

With us the reverse of all this is the case; our land industry is neglected, and it supports the *minimum* head of population in the whole of Europe and produces the minimum head of live stock; it is a source of weakness to the Nation, inasmuch as we are forced to rely on outside aid for the very bread we eat, and a large proportion of most other foods; it compels exhaustive emigration

because there is no employment to be found on the land; it induces poverty and creates, therefore, a mass of pestilential pauperism, and it kills that demand for manufactured goods which, under other conditions, would undoubtedly come from a prosperous agricultural population which might be numbered in millions.

God help the people who in their blind folly offer up in sacrifice their national heritage to the dead fetish of this so-called *free trade*, and God forgive those who, for political purposes, for individual gain, or other reasons, have led the people to believe in the "cheap loaf" cry as the Ultima Thule of national good and the last word in the poor man's domestic economy.

In the history of the British Constitution a cleverer war cry was never raised by any political party, and never was a crueller wrong wrought on a people. Never was a more monstrous delusion born in the semblance of truth than this free trade phantasm; and never was a political password uttered with less veracity and with less real sincerity than that of the *cheap loaf*. Nevertheless, there is just that *semblance* of truth in it which invests it with its form of reality; that spurious, tinselly glitter which makes it appear so genuinely attractive to the hard-working artisan and all those among us whose everyday toil leaves little time for the study of questions of this kind which are necessarily extremely complicated. Full well did those who raised this clever party cry know that the poor harried voters of this country would never unearth the foundations of the political structure upon which it was raised to ascertain if it was built on the solid basis of economic truth.

The "Cheap
Loaf" Cry

Never before has any single Parliamentary measure caused such widespread havoc to national interests, and never before has party interest been so well served by a political move that is as subtle as the serpent and as poisonous and deadly as the puff-adder.

Were it not for this false *cheap loaf* cry, the sham called *free trade* would have been dead and buried by this time: slain by the inward force of its own destructiveness.

“ A lie that is all a lie may be met with and fought outright.

But a lie that is half a truth is a harder matter to fight.”

Now let us put the cheap loaf theory to the trying test of truth's searchlight.

CHAPTER XV

BRITISH AND FOREIGN WHEAT PRODUCTION—THE
CHEAP LOAF CRY

WE are told by those who bolster up the FREE TRADE idea that if we want cheap bread we must give up growing our own wheat, let others grow it for us, and then let it come into our ports duty free. By such means we are told we shall have a cheap loaf, much cheaper than in those countries which grow their own food-stuffs and put a duty on imports.

If this be true, it follows that our bread should cost us a good deal *less than is paid for it in other countries*.

If it be *not* true, then it is clear that we have been deceived.

So far as Germany is concerned, a country bristling with tariffs of all sorts, we find, from the "Gainsborough Report" that the 4lb. loaf cost, when the Commission visited that country a year or more ago, about the same as it did in England.

"At Höchst, near Frankfort, as we pointed out in a previous report, people eat white wheaten bread as well as bread made of wheat and rye flour mixed. A loaf of white bread made at Höchst weighing four English pounds should cost $4\frac{2}{3}$ d. The Gainsborough quartern loaf costs $4\frac{1}{2}$ d., so that the difference is hardly perceptible."

In order that this matter may be thoroughly understood by the British people, we give here a table showing the price of bread ruling in eight European countries, including our own, on July 3, 1907, together with the prices of wheat and flour. This information is supplied by an eminent member of the London Corn Exchange.

Prices are many shillings per quarter higher now than they were when the "Gainsborough Commission" visited Germany. There is a further rise of 5s. per quarter since these pages were written.

July 3, 1907.	Price of Wheat. 480 lb.	Price of Flour. 280 lb.	Price of Bread. 4 lb. loaf.	Duty on Wheat. 480 lb.	Duty on Flour. 280 lb.
United Kingdom	33/6 to 36/-	26/- to 26/6	5d. to 5½d.	—	—
Belgium	33/- to 35/-	25/- to 27/-	5½d.	Free	2/-
Holland	33/- to 35/-	25/- to 28/-	5½d.	Free	Free
Austria	38/6 to 39/6	21/6 to 33/-	4d.* to 5½d.	11/5	15/10
France	46/- to 47/-	35/- to 35/6	6d. to 6½d.†	12/2	11/2 to 16/3d.‡
Germany	45/6 to 48/-	32/- to 40/-	5d.‡ to 6½d.	12/-	12/11
Hungary	39/- to 40/-	21/6 to 33/-	4d.§ to 5½d.	11/5	15/10
Italy	43/- to 47/-	32/- to 32/6	5½d.	11/5	15/10

Strange
Anomalies
and Facts

Here is a strange anomaly. We find that, other things being equal—i.e., the difference of grading as regards flour, and the difference of quality as regards bread—the prices for the 4lb. wheaten loaf are practically the same in all countries in spite of the startling fact that in five out of the seven foreign countries quoted there is a duty

* The low price is for brown bread (wheaten).

† These prices are for the high class French bread. Prices of bread eaten by the people not available on this date.

‡ The low price for brown bread; the high price is for bread not eaten by the people.

§ The low price for brown bread.

|| According to extraction.

of 11s. 5d. to 12s. 2d. per quarter on wheat, and 2s. to 16s. 3d. on flour.

Another startling fact is that in no country do we find the 4lb. loaf—allowing always for difference of quality—dearer than it is with us. Another “ eye-opener ” will be found in the fact that in spite of a heavy duty of 11s. to 12s. per quarter on wheat the people manage to buy their 4lb. wheaten loaf as cheaply in the countries where these tariffs prevail as they do in *free trade* England. Truly marvellous! yet it is so.

This point, too, is worthy of consideration. England imports nearly 30,000,000 quarters of wheat for her home consumption. A duty of 11s. per quarter on which would mean £16,500,000 annually.

Now the question naturally arises, if foreign countries can put a duty of 11s. a quarter on imported wheat and still sell their bread at the same price as we do, who let wheat in free, why on earth should not we do the same? Why shouldn't we save this £16,500,000 by encouraging wheat-growing in our own country instead of paying it to other countries to grow it for us? But we shall deal with this phase of the question later.

The question then is asked—who is going to crack this hard nut; who will solve the problem?

Ask your tricky politician, and he will surely trump up some specious explanation which, while satisfying his gullible constituency, will only serve to incense those among us who are determined to push this matter to a conclusion. This “ free trade ” fraud has been put to the sure test of everyday experience. Europe has been asked at what price she sells the 4lb. wheaten loaf on a

given day in eight of her great capitals, and the answer is: *At practically the same price in all countries. And no dearer than in your own.*

Having then placed our 4lb. loaf side by side with similar loaves from other countries, we find, in spite of all we have been told to the contrary, by those who raised the *cheap loaf* cry, that it is neither *heavier*, *bigger*, nor *cheaper* than those made and sold in countries which protect their trade by a multitude of restrictive tariffs, and in which there is not a vestige of what is fatuously called in our country "free trade."

So far as Germany is concerned this significant fact was discovered by a number of British workmen, who constituted themselves into a Commission for the express purpose of inquiring into the state of trade and labour conditions prevailing in that country. Among other things they unearthed the price of the German 4lb. loaf, and we find that it is no dearer than our own.

Now when we speak of "discovery" it argues that something has been revealed which was not known before, and this is precisely what has happened here.

**Bread in
Protected
Countries**

Not a man in a hundred thousand was aware that the Protected States of the world produced and sold their bread as cheaply as we do; not a man in ten thousand ever thought of it at all. The general belief was that our loaf was really cheap, a good deal cheaper than in other countries, and we accepted this as a fact because we were told so by those who professed to know.

Despite the fervid "cheap loaf" cry, and notwithstanding Germany's ring of tariffs which encircles her trade as with bands of steel, the German 4lb. loaf is no

dearer than our own. The writer has "discovered" that, despite the total absence of "free trade" in those countries, each one of them can make and supply their people with a 4lb. loaf as cheaply as we can.

This is a disillusionment, and we want to know why we have been deluded.

The writer was a free trader for many years because he had faith in those who taught the tenets of the belief. It is true that he never put his belief to any severe tests, nor looked for other results than those we are all so familiar with—those dire results to the body politic which we are still told are but the *natural outcome of economic laws*.

We believed in FREE TRADE *because others believed in it*, and this is precisely the position that hundreds of thousands, nay millions of our countrymen are in today. We believe in this, that, or the other, not because we have any real, solid foundations for our belief; not because we have been able to test its value by any well-defined measure of success, but simply and solely because *other people* believe in it. "What's good enough for most people is good enough for me," is a saying as common as blackberries in autumn, and with this comforting platitude we dismiss many a knotty problem which would otherwise cause us a lot of trouble to unravel.

But we have at length realised that this attitude, although conducive at the outset to a certain amount of personal ease and comfort and freedom from care, is about the most wasteful one that we could possibly assume; wasteful individually and collectively.

We find that we are being overtaken with a heavy and ever-increasing burden of taxation; that the people cannot find work and are obliged to emigrate in ever-growing numbers; that poverty increases and pauperism grows; that despite our unique position as manufacturers we are not holding our own in the markets of the world; and we therefore conclude that we had better look at this matter through our own spectacles rather than through those which have been fitted to our noses by others, and which have done nothing but obscure our vision.

We naturally want to know why the British people have been humbugged and deceived?

That we *have* been deceived there is no question, and we want to know why our politicians and statesmen, our legislators, our Governments of the past, whether Whig or Tory, Conservative or Liberal, have done nothing to *undeceive* us?

Living
Truths

In these pages we are face to face with living truths which are incontrovertible.

It has been left to a handful of laymen, men who work for their daily bread and whose business does not take them to the national legislative assemblies at Westminster—men who appoint others to administer their fiscal affairs and conduct the national business on the most economic principles—literally to *discover* that their affairs have been so badly managed as to involve the State in heavy financial losses and the people in widespread and yet *unnecessary* poverty and degradation. And these men who represent the entire section of British workers, the whole of the British tax-payers and

the body-electorate of the country, want to know why?

They want to know why none of the Governments, formed out of one or the other of those great political sections called "parties," which are elected by the people to serve national interests, have ever found it necessary to point out these truths in a simple, frank, straightforward manner? They either knew, or did not know, that the agricultural and fiscal policy pursued for the last half-century or more was bringing ruin on the country, and if they knew, it was their business, not ours, to point this out clearly and unmistakably, and to point it out unceasingly. If they knew and remained silent, then they have simply betrayed a great national trust, or if they have referred to the matter in a half-hearted, weak, unconvincing manner, then they can no longer command the confidence of the British people. If they did *not* know, then they are a sham and a fraud and deserve no place in the national councils.

These are questions which we find it absolutely essential to ask in our own interests, albeit we ask them with the conviction that no reply will be forthcoming unless we ourselves supply the answer.

The fact is that Governments have thought on these subjects, but have never dared to take the necessary steps to relieve the position, because of the bitter opposition of the party *out* of power. The curse of our administration is that every measure, however good it may be, is made the subject of fierce strife, and it is impossible to carry through Parliament any useful national measure without encountering the unrelenting hostility

The Curse
of our
Adminis-
tration

of the Opposition. One writer, in speaking of the British Parliament, has truly said:

“ Let your measure be framed by Divine Authority and brought in by angels, and it will be thrown out by the Opposition.”

At all events, that the LAND question has been in the mind of Governments more than once is evidenced by, among others, the Acts of:

1883 and 1900. Agricultural Holdings Acts.

1892. Small Holdings Act.

1899. Improvement of Land Act.

1903. Irish Land Act.

1907. Scottish Small Holdings Bill and the English Small Holdings Bill, etc.

But the poor, paltry, half-hearted measures that have been given to the country show clearly enough that although the Governments of the past realised that a change, at least in our *agricultural* system, was necessary, they had not the courage of their convictions. They knew that it was useless to bring in a Bill that would do *all* that was necessary; a real purging measure of relief, that would sweep away all those obstructions which cling to the great land industry and convert a really strong, powerful national organism into a weak, languishing, paltry thing which is a source of pity and commiseration to the country.

They knew it was useless to attempt to reform our Land Laws and to give to the country a sensible, practical code, whereby the land would be worked under conditions that would ensure the maximum measure of suc-

cess all round—to land-owner, tenant-farmer and taxpayer—no use in attempting to create that host of peasant-proprietors which, once established, would form the backbone of our national life and vigour as it does in every other civilised state in the world except our own.

They knew there was no use doing any of these things because of the Opposition. The foe was lying in wait to attack them at every point, and they knew that however good and necessary the Bill might be in the interests of the people, it would meet with the same fierce hostility as though it were a measure intended to defeat the ends of justice and bring ruin upon the country. They knew that some reform in the Land Laws, such as has been sketched in these pages, was absolutely necessary to save the country and give back to the people that meed of prosperity which they have lost; and that the longer this was deferred the more would the people suffer. Yet, in spite of this, they *dared not* bring in their Bill because of the Opposition. The party out of power was prepared for the fight; the Government knew them to be a vengeful, relentless foe, armed at all points with the ready weapons of Parliamentary warfare, and that their own defeat would mean ruin, loss of place, power and emoluments; loss pecuniary; loss individually and collectively; loss to self, loss to party, and so, *they dared not face it*.

This, in a nutshell, is exactly the state of affairs in the British Parliament. No one party is better than another.

If Liberals are in, Conservatives are in opposition. If Liberal Unionists are in, Liberals and Radicals are their sworn foes. The Irish Nationalists are deadly enemies to

What the
Govern-
ment
Knew

all other political sections, the Labour Party professes a kind of Social and Parliamentary Ishmaelitism, and there is not the toss of a coin between the lot of them. The party *out of power* is truculent and swaggering. The party *in power* is timid, weak and shrinking, and, between them all, national affairs suffer and the people are the victims.

Patriotism
not Party

Fundamentally, the "Party" system in Parliament is right enough. Theoretically, it is sound. Practically, it is unsound, because it engenders strife where there should be harmony, and sets up contention where there should be co-operation. It seriously hampers the efforts of the paid representatives of the people—the office-bearers of the Government—it blocks national work, impedes progress, and is an enemy of real reform. It strangles individual effort and kills patriotism, and, take it all round, the party system of our Parliament, which was intended to be a blessing, has proved a veritable curse.

No man wants to see it abolished, but the vast majority of Englishmen, recognising its abuses, wish for drastic changes in its methods, so that public business may be helped on and not retarded; so that the commonwealth may be benefited by co-operation and not injured by shallow contention and petty jealousies. They want to see whole-hearted support given to measures of public good, and the spirit of patriotism rank before the spirit of party.

So long as the present state of affairs exists in our national assembly, so long will national interests suffer.

Let the two great political sections, the Liberals and Liberal Unionists and the Conservatives unite over this

national question; let them recognise that our agricultural and fiscal laws require considerable alterations to meet modern requirements; that these reforms are really essential in the people's interests, and the country will then find relief, but not until then.

CHAPTER XVI

PROBLEM FOR THE BRITISH TAX-PAYER—PAUPERISM
OR HOME INDUSTRIES

ONE of the most practical, up-to-date ways of dealing with this big question of the poverty of the British people is to ask the British tax-payer whether he would prefer his money being wasted on bolstering up national pauperism or usefully spent in developing national industries?

This, at first sight, seems a ridiculous question to ask, but there is more in it than meets the eye.

The British tax-payer has really a choice between pauperism and prosperity, but he must look at the whole question from quite a different standpoint from that from which he has hitherto been in the habit of viewing it.

State and
Private
Charity

So long as he regards the poverty of the people, as he knows it to-day, and the host of paupers bred therefrom, as a *necessary* outcome of economic law, so long will the civil administration of the day call upon him to hand over the £35,000,000 annually, which it costs to support and maintain this belief; but the moment he realises that he has been throwing his money away on false ideas, and that he has really done more harm than good by his misplaced lavishness, the necessity for raising this colossal sum for that purpose, at least, will cease.

Reduced to its proper denomination, all this poor relief, whether by State aid or from public or private sources, is nothing but a STUPENDOUS CHARITY, and the moment we begin dispensing *charities* we must "go slow," or we shall do more harm than good; we shall be "done in the eye," as the saying is.

In private life the common experience is, the moment you establish a reputation for philanthropy, you are "got at" by men and women of all sorts and conditions, and despite every possible precaution, you are deceived in hundreds of cases. There is a veritable host of people, of both sexes, always on the look-out for a "soft job," and this is certain, that so long as widespread, misplaced philanthropy exists, so long will this array of loafers, tramps and ne'er-do-weels; this human scum, that batters on the poor-rates like leeches, and waxes fat on the silly credulity of the charitably disposed, grow and multiply.

There is no getting away from this fact, and it applies equally to *all* charities, whether private, public, or State.

Before we finally decide what we, as tax-payers, are to do in this matter, let us see if our millions have really done any good to the cause to which we have so liberally contributed for the last fifty years or more; and as this thing, like everything else in life, should be measured by *results*, let us apply that infallible standard to it.

The incidence per head of population of the pauper tax was shown in a previous chapter to have risen from 5s. 9d. in 1834 to 16s. 2d. in 1905. We append here some figures showing the total sum expended on paupers in Great Britain and the cost per head for several periods

**Enormous
Pauper
Taxation**

from 1860 to 1905, compiled from the Reports of the Royal Commission on Depression of Trade, and those of the Local Government Boards for England and Wales and Scotland.

ENGLAND AND WALES

Year	Amount Expended.	Amount per head		
	Annual Average of £	of Paupers. Annual Aver. of £ s. d.		
1860-64	6,052,370	6	7	8
1880-84	8,221,092	10	8	11
1900	11,567,649	14	12	0
1904-05	13,610,737	15	13	9

SCOTLAND

Year	Amount Expended.	Amount per head		
	Annual Average of £	of Paupers. Annual Aver. of £ s. d.		
1860-64	714,511	5	14	0
1880-84	895,961	8	18	8
1900	1,109,619	11	4	6
1904-05	1,351,548	12	13	0

If there is anything in this world calculated to arouse British tax-payers to a sense of their own peril and to a realisation of the cruel wrong they have suffered for long weary years from this pauper yoke, it is the fact which is here disclosed.

Not only has the cost of each pauper in England and Wales risen from £6 7s. 8d. in 1860-64 to £15 13s. 9d. in 1904-05, or considerably more than doubled, and will increase as much in the future as it has in the past, but the

most galling and humiliating feature of this wretched business is the consciousness that every penny of the hundreds of millions that have been wrung from rate-payers has been spent in vain. The greedy pauper maw is always wide open to swallow up the hard earnings of many a poor rate-payer, who can hardly support himself; and that he should be compelled to contribute yearly to support this foul growth on our civilisation is nothing but a monstrous injustice.

Increase
of Able-
bodied
Paupers

Another alarming feature that must be added to this tale of wrong-headed administration is the significant and ever-growing increase in the number of able-bodied paupers who prey upon the easily rendered millions of the complaisant British tax-payer.

Here is an extract from *The Daily Express* of May 28, last.

“And here let me point to an alarming feature in this expansion of organised pauperism. It is the increase of the able-bodied pauper. He and she are thronging into the workhouses in ever-increasing numbers, for while the paupers who are described as temporarily disabled have increased 28.6 per cent.; those who are described as being actually in good health have increased 49.6 per cent. in number. Their own temporary illness or accident has brought less than half of the whole to the workhouse, and the illness of members of their family, and drink, idleness and want of work have reduced the rest to pauperism. What an illustration of the need for thrift.”

So far as we have gone, the results are significantly disappointing, but let us carry our investigation further.

It is easy enough to give and give lavishly when Governments find the British public so yielding, but to give judiciously; to give with wisdom, and in a manner that will help a man to become prosperous and not pauperise him, is quite another matter.

Mr Andrew Carnegie, in returning thanks for the Freedom of Abergavenny, which was conferred on him on May 31, 1907, said: "The true sense of money is to help those who help themselves." And we may depend upon it that that shrewd millionaire knew what he was talking about when he gave utterance to that pithy sentence.

Help the
Poor, not
Injure
them

If it is necessary to call upon the British tax-payers for £35,000,000 annually to assist their needy compatriots, let us use that colossal sum in a way that will *help* the people and not injure them.

The writer of a letter which appeared in *The Daily Express*, on May 28 of last year, over the signature of "B," said:

"If, however, the object of all sane citizens is not to pauperise, then it follows that poor relief must not be a system of largesse, for largesse inevitably converts the merely poor into the pauper pure and simple. On the other hand, it is a national question and not a question for the individual. The State provides against destitution—and the Poor Laws are really laws for the destitute—mainly in self-defence and for its own purposes. It follows that it is not to the advantage of the State that this relief should be easy to get or pleasant to retain, and that in any case the relief should itself be as far as possible a remedial process.

"As a matter of fact, however, the present system is going all in the opposite direction, and just in the proportion in which it goes in this opposite direction so does the pauperising of the people proceed.

"The vast sums of money now being expended help the respectable poor but little, they are squandered by various bodies of bumbledom in fostering and encouraging thriftlessness, idleness, dissoluteness. Public money, hard-earned and often ill-spared, is thrown broad-cast over those whom drink or laziness or the neglect of those legally liable to maintain them—and capable of maintaining them—have rendered destitute. This money is not spent; it is wasted. And it is being wasted yearly by extravagant and irresponsible persons—for the boards of guardians spend practically all the money devoted to indoor and outdoor relief—in ever-increasing quantities, and with the deplorable result of an ever-increasing body of pauperised people. It is high time to call a halt to this waste of public money and to the futile folly of gilding and stereotyping the pauper."

These extracts put the case very clearly and in a manner that will appeal not only to the tax-payer, but to every section of the British people, save that comparatively small body of wastrels who will *not* work.

There is no getting away from the fact that our Poor Laws, taken all round, are the worst and most unsuitable that could possibly be devised. They are the worst in Europe, in the world, and so long as the people of this country submit to them, so long will the poor continue to be pauperised, degraded and brutalised.

The philanthropists of three quarters of a century ago

Worst
Poor
Laws in
Europe

meant well by urging upon Government the necessity of amending the Poor Laws, but their efforts have resulted in disaster to the cause they championed, and pauperism of a monstrous and degrading type has grown out of that mild indulgence which the Governments of the past threw over their legislative measures when dealing with this question.

In legalising pauperism we have given every able-bodied man and woman in the country the constitutional right to put his or her hand into the pockets of the British tax-payer, and worse than this, we have given every Poor Law authority in the country, all bumbledom, in fact, the same Constitutional right to spend as much of the tax-payers' money as they choose. Budgeting for *paupers* is as common in all official estimates as budgeting for the Army, Navy and Civil Services; the poor-rates item is one of the biggest in the national accounts, and all officials, whether of the Imperial Government or the Poor Law officers of small rural councils, have come to regard pauperism as a National Institution upon which millions upon millions may be spent without fear or reproach—meritoriously, in fact.

Pauperism has been with us for so long that we have become quite accustomed to its presence, and there are few among us who would care to question the validity of its claim upon the public purse, or consider the possibility of ridding ourselves of its burden altogether. Yet this overgrown monster, like many other monsters that have been subdued in past times, can be defeated and overthrown with comparative ease.

The only kind of paupers who have any claim upon the public purse are those who really and truly are unable to work, the aged and infirm, those of feeble intellect, and young children.

These poor items of the great human race have just claims on State charity, and no others. Even for cripples and the blind can suitable light work be found, and there is no need that this unfortunate section of the community should become altogether dependent upon State aid. Let these unfortunates have the same opportunities for self-help as are offered to others, and even *they* will be the better for it.

For the rest, let work be found, and found in such abundance as will afford no possible excuse for idleness and vagabondage.

Provide them with suitable work, and then make it a penal offence punishable by imprisonment if they will not work.

Let it, however, be thoroughly understood that we will no longer support a huge host of able-bodied men and women in slothful idleness, and that we will not be deterred by that squeamish, sickly sentimentality which has hitherto guided and governed the administration of this question. Let us say, firmly and unhesitatingly, that we are tired to death of this loathsome disease which has fastened on to the British people, that our treatment of it has been wrong from the first, and that it has done nothing but develop its growth and increase its virulence. Let us frankly admit that, with the best intentions possible, this pandering of Poor Law guardians all over

Pander-
ing to
Pauperism

the kingdom to pauperism has only had the effect of increasing the vast hordes of dissolute poor, who fatten like vampires on the very life-blood of the tax-payers. This advance of the pauper hosts has become a national peril, and it is time to cry "halt."

CHAPTER XVII

POSSIBILITIES OF THE LAND—HOW TO EMPLOY THE
PEOPLE

LET us now examine the capabilities of the country for employing our own people, and in order to thoroughly understand what enormous potentialities we have in this direction, we should compare our own country with neighbouring States.

It has been shown elsewhere in these pages that we have about 48,000,000 acres under cultivation, while about twelve to fifteen million acres more could be added to this cultivated area out of the 20,000,000 which are now returned as rough grazing land and heath. We then have a *cultivable* area of about 63,500,000 acres.

The following table will show the cultivated area of three other countries, the number of persons engaged in agriculture, etc.

Country.	Acres under cultivation.	Holdings.	Persons employed.	Persons employed and supported.
Germany	108,211,772	5,558,317	8,156,317	18,068,663
France	92,442,745	5,550,000	7,800,000	24,000,000
Hungary	54,303,938	2,795,885	4,500,000	12,977,419
*United Kingdom (Agricultural and Fisheries) }	48,000,000	1,104,637	2,262,452	3,900,000

* The returns for the United Kingdom are for "Agriculture and Fisheries," and it is, therefore, difficult to determine the number of people employed in agriculture alone. The above figures are, however, fairly approximate.

Judged by comparison with other countries the United Kingdom can employ and support some thirteen millions of persons on her lands. She now employs but 2,262,452, and employs and supports under 4,000,000.

Briefly, agriculture can employ and support profitably and honourably nine to ten million more people than it does to-day.

The pauper population proper, i.e., the aged and infirm and those whose bodily or mental condition renders work practically impossible, numbers 782,602 persons.

This leaves 341,820, at least, for whom work must be found, and it is evident, that with reasonable land tenures and a properly organised and liberally equipped system of agriculture, there would be no difficulty in finding suitable work for this comparatively small number of our unemployed and for millions more.

Unemployed
Paupers

Let us carry the matter a step further to see what would be the effect on the condition of the people of finding work for the unemployed and converting the pauper-population into an army of wage-earners.

Fortunately, we need not resort to speculation as to results, because we have the experience of other countries to serve as a reliable guide.

In most of the European States pauperism does not cause them much trouble, because, owing to general employment on the land, there is really no need for it. The great land industry works side by side with trades and manufactures, and tends to preserve a fairly exact equilibrium between supply and demand in the labour market.

A report on the trade of Germany by Dr Paul

Schwabach (British Consul-General at Berlin) which was issued by the Foreign Office on May 27 of last year, is full of remarkable instances of Germany's prosperity, but only two groups of figures need be given in proof of what we are urging and in illustration of the astounding progress of that country.

The first group deals with the savings of the people as a result of the application of wise and judicious fiscal laws affording reasonable protection to the great national industry, agriculture, and the other trades of the country.

It is shown that in the Prussian Savings Banks alone the deposits had increased in 1905 by £27,000,000; the total deposits at the end of that year having reached the enormous sum of £415,000,000.

The other group, which is even more significant, deals with the number of people liable for income-tax.

Here are some figures from Dr Schwabach's Report:

Year	Persons liable to income-tax	Amount liable to income-tax £
1892	2,437,886	298,069,882
1900	3,370,534	412,439,347
1906	4,675,199	536,296,834

These figures reveal the astounding fact that in consequence of Germany's prosperous condition there has been an increase in the number of persons liable to income-tax since 1892 of 90 per cent., while the *income* of the tax-payers has increased by 80 per cent. in the same period.

These figures in both cases refer only to Prussia, but

Dr Schwabach is careful to explain that they are fairly representative of the conditions through the German Empire. The position of this country is far less encouraging.

In regard to the income of the people, we find, from a statistical abstract issued by the Board of Trade on November 13, 1907, for the fifteen years 1891-2—1906, the following figures:

	1891-2	1906-7
Income Taxed	£678,193,442	£925,184,556

or an increase of only 36 per cent. in the tax-payers' income *against an increase in Germany for the same period of 80 per cent.*

As regards our savings banks we are in an even worse plight.

Our Post
Office
Savings

The annual statement of the Post Office Savings Bank for the year 1906, which was issued on July 18 of last year, shows that during the year the deposits amounted to £43,980,578 and the withdrawals to £43,675,181, or an increase in deposits of only £305,397, against an increase in the Prussian Savings Bank for the year 1905 of upwards of £27,000,000.

Here is a startling revelation. One section of the German Empire alone, out of its prosperity, can afford to put by, in one year, out of the people's savings, the enormous sum of twenty-seven millions sterling; while we, out of our poverty, can only increase our savings in one year by the insignificant sum of £300,000, less than one-third of a million sterling.

Commenting on this position, one of the London journals said:

“A noteworthy point in the return is the fact that the savings of the people, as shown in the banks account, have remained practically stationary, the withdrawals almost balancing the deposits. This has now been the case for several years, and is in direct contrast to the position in the United States, where the deposits in the savings bank have nearly quadrupled in the past twenty years, and now reach the enormous sum of over £600,000,000. In the past six years alone they have grown by nearly £200,000,000.”

Now these two instances are but examples of what is going on in most of the civilised countries of the world.

We wonder whether these startling facts will arouse the British people to a sense of their own weakness; their wretched condition in comparison with other countries.

Will they awake to a realisation of what the sacrifice of agriculture, the worship of a free trade fetish, and blind adherence to a misguided, if sincere, political party has brought them to?

Will the fact that in the United States the people, out of their savings, have added in six years, £200,000,000 to the credit side of their banking account, appeal to them as a thunderclap, or will they treat the matter with the same dull apathy with which they have treated practically all those vitally important social and economic questions upon which depends their life's well-being.

United
States
Savings

Will it ever occur to the British people that if the Prussian people can bank in one year twenty-seven millions sterling out of their savings, and the people of the United States thirty-three millions, that we, under the same sensible, wise and favourable fiscal conditions

which obtain in those countries can do precisely what they do?

Will also the fact that the single State of Prussia can put by this large sum in one year out of the people's savings, while we find the necessity of drawing out of our Savings Banks as much as we put in, have any significance for the people of this land?

Will this amazing prosperity which has overtaken Germany and which is solely the result of well-devised paternal laws, which are after all as essential in the wide government of a State as they are in the narrow domestic government of a single family, appeal to the present Government, or to any succeeding Government with the force of a mighty shock?

Will they ever realise that one of the immediate results of this startling prosperity of the German people is the enormous power it gives the State of raising money?

And lastly, will they ever awake to the important fact that when the assessable amount liable to income-tax has risen in one section of the German Empire by £238,000,000 in fourteen years, this vast sum, together with similar increases in other sections of the Empire, has to be added to the taxable area of the country?

CHAPTER XVIII

TAXATION AND WASTEFUL EXPENDITURE—SCOPE FOR
CO-OPERATIVE RELIEF

ONE of the most embarrassing problems that confronts British Chancellors of the Exchequer is the extreme difficulty of extending the taxable area of the Kingdom.

It is, moreover, perfectly obvious, that the tendency of every Government, whether Conservative or Liberal, is to throw the entire burden of any extra taxation that may be imposed on to the well-to-do classes, and, broadly, there is nothing to cavil at in this.

If, however, this be the declared policy of Governments, it becomes the positive duty of each successive administration to see that every facility be given to widen the taxable area of the country and not narrow and restrict it by unwise fiscal laws, or a policy of this kind must necessarily become a gross injustice to the entire body of British tax-payers.

The present Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr Asquith, declared, in his Budget speech of April 18, 1907, that:

“ The income-tax, as it is one of the most productive, so it is one of the most delicate parts of our fiscal machinery. There is nothing like it to be found anywhere else in the world. It produced this year something like £32,000,000 to the Exchequer. The In-
come-
Tax

“ The income-tax is really a twofold tax; it is a tax on property and a tax on earnings. I start with the proposition, and a most important proposition it is, that it must now be regarded as an integral and permanent part of our financial system.”

Good! The tax-payers are, we have no doubt, quite as ready to accept this view as Mr Asquith is to propound it, but they have a perfect right to demand, at the same time, that the present Chancellor of the Exchequer and his successors should conduct this exceedingly difficult and delicate business of taxing a people with great circumspection and with every regard to *their* interests, otherwise a cruel wrong will be done to them.

Let us glance for a moment into the Chancellor of the Exchequer's other sources of direct taxation to see what he takes from the pockets of the British tax- and rate-payers.

Income-tax accounts for	£32,000,000
Poor-rates account for	£35,000,000
Death Duties account for	£14,000,000
House Duty and Land Tax	£2,600,000
	<hr/>
Total	£83,600,000

Squandered
not Spent

It stands to reason that if this huge sum is demanded each year from the British tax-paying public, a sum representing *three-fifths* of the entire revenue of the Kingdom, those who “ pay the piper should be allowed to call the tune,” but nothing of the kind is permitted. Much of this money is squandered, not spent, and yet more and more is demanded each year.

If the *ordre de jour* is to tax the *wealthy*, and here let us thoroughly understand that the *wealthy class includes all those whose incomes are over £160 or £200 per annum*, every finance minister has a very ticklish undertaking.

It is the easiest thing in the world for the Government to tell every poor struggling clerk and shop-keeper and the poorly paid professional classes, whose chief difficulty in this life is to make both ends meet, that because their incomes may exceed £160 per annum, they are accounted as well-to-do, but it is quite another thing to make these people see the force of the argument. If you try to make them believe that it is necessary, in the interests of the commonweal, that they should be taxed, they would say:

‘ You only find it necessary to tax us because your own foolish laws have so restricted the wealth of the country, and consequently the taxable area, as to compel you to fall back upon people of our class, who find it sufficiently hard to *live* without being forced to shell out for income-tax and poor-rates.’

This would be quite a proper reply.

Let this question of taxation be, therefore, *co-operative*. If the British public are called upon to contribute £80,000,000 and more for State needs, all they ask is that Government should adopt a sensible, up-to-date fiscal arrangement and a practical agricultural system, and the general wealth of the country would at once begin to expand. Increased wealth means a large increase in the number of persons liable to taxation, and a larger

area of taxation means, *inter alia*, a lighter incidence of taxation, and perhaps, exemption altogether, at least, exemption for persons with small incomes who, under such conditions, would not be liable to a tax of the kind. Increased general prosperity means less poverty, and less pauperism means less necessity for poor-rates, and smaller poor-rates would be an immense boon to literally *millions* of people with incomes so small as to make this poor-rate impost a positive injustice.

This is a view of the case that may not strike the Chancellor of the Exchequer with the same force as it does the general body of British tax-payers, but it is a sensible and just view, nevertheless, and moreover, one that will commend itself more and more to that long-suffering community as time goes on.

Another aspect of this many-sided question, which is occupying the attention of the tax-paying community, is the shameful waste of their surrendered millions.

Waste of
Public
Money

The public prints of recent times have been full of scandals touching the doings of poor law guardians, and here are some of the many instances of reckless squandering of public funds, which have been reported. *The Daily Express* for May 31 of last year says:

PLEASURES FOR PAUPERS

“ The inmates of Romford Workhouse are to be entertained on various Sunday evenings during the summer to music by the Beacontree Heath band, and they will be permitted to promenade the grounds during the performance of the programme.”

The same paper for June 4, of last year says:

LUXURY FOR PAUPERS

“ The Risbridge (Suffolk) Guardians, having received offers of old potatoes at £3 15s. per ton and new Jersey potatoes, at 10s. 9d. per hundredweight, accepted the latter for the consumption of the paupers.”

The same edition of the above paper also contains the following:

WORKHOUSE BATHS AT £14 EACH
ARCHITECT'S REMARKABLE ADMISSIONS
MANY PROFITS

“ Mr Albert E. Gough, architect of the Hammersmith Workhouse, made some astounding admissions at the resumed Local Government Board inquiry, yesterday, concerning the allegations of extravagance, which have been levelled against the Guardians.

“ He confessed that he had not placed the plans of the alterations and additions before the Guardians before proceeding with the work. He took a free hand in the matter.

“ With reference to the £836 spent on the opening ceremony, he said the amount was dealt with in his certificate, as had been done ‘ hundreds and hundreds of times.’

“ ‘ As a result of dealing with it in that way,’ said the Inspector, ‘ the builder gets 10 per cent. commission, the quantity surveyor 2½, and you 4 per cent. making 16½ per cent. in all?’

“ ‘ Yes, sir,’ Mr Gough replied. ‘ I see the point but I never took that view before.’

“ ‘ How came you, as an architect and a man of posi-

tion to pass an account of £836 for the opening ceremony and issue your certificate?' Mr Robb asked. 'It is the usual thing.'

"THE USUAL THING.

"'Is it the usual thing to hoodwink the auditor?'

"'There was no hoodwinking.'

"'What possible means has the Local Government Board auditor of going behind your certificate and ascertaining the real nature of the transaction?' 'I see it now.'

"'If there were any hoodwinking of the Local Government Board auditor, the Guardians were privy to it?' 'I suppose so.'

"Another item referred to was fifty-nine porcelain baths at £14 each, exclusive of profit, carriage and fixing. They were chosen by a committee of the Guardians.

"'Could you not get a suitable bath of enamel at £7?' Mr Robb asked. 'Yes, but enamel wears off.'

"'But doesn't porcelain split?' 'Not the best porcelain.'

"'And nothing but the best porcelain is suitable for the lucky inhabitants of Hammersmith Workhouse?' Mr Robb retorted. 'You paid three times as much for baths for the paupers as the small householder, the man who pays for the paupers, can afford to spend on a bath for himself.'

Result of
Waste

The result of this cruel waste of public money is that, in spite of a reduction in the expenses of the Hammersmith Borough Council of one penny in the pound, they have been compelled to add *fourpence in the pound* to the

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rates, which means a net loss of *fivepence* in the pound to the rate-payers.

Here is what a London paper said on the subject in May of last year:

COST OF PAUPERS' PALACE

“ The Hammersmith Borough Council has been compelled to add fourpence in the pound to the rates, although the borough council's expenses would justify a reduction of one penny in the pound.

“ The Council gives the following explanation in the notice to rate-payers:

“ Special attention is drawn to the fact that the large increase in the rate of fourpence in the pound is due solely to the increased requirements of the late board of guardians over which the borough council has no control. The amount to be raised for that body is £16,500 more than in the last half-year, representing a rate of over fivepence in the pound, while the borough council's expenses have been reduced by a sum equal to a rate of one penny in the pound.

“ An emergency precept of £12,000 was served unexpectedly on the council by the late board of guardians.”

There are numerous instances of similar needless extravagance in other parts of the country, but these will suffice for the moment.

These disclosures are most disheartening to rate-payers, and many of them will, no doubt, think that the publicity which has been given to them and the severe terms of imprisonment inflicted on the West Ham cul-

The Augean
Stable

prits will clear out the Augean stable and serve to afford the necessary protection of public moneys.

But do not let us indulge in such fond delusions: there is more here than meets the eye.

The fact is the whole pauper administration stands on an unsound basis, and is rotten to the core.

The attitude of Government, and that of the municipal administrations, the tax-payers and the people is as wrong-headed as it possibly can be, and unless we, as a nation, assume a sensible, practical and healthy attitude towards this unsatisfactory and eminently unsavoury question, no help will be forthcoming.

Government will do nothing so long as the country does not give them what they call a *mandate*. They may well contend that pauperism has to be provided for according to the laws of the land, and in raising millions in rates and taxes, they are simply obeying the *mandate* of the country. If you want something different, you must give us another mandate, say they.

The municipal administrations, poor law guardians and the rest of the spending official bodies, simply follow the lead of the Imperial Government, their duty is to *spend* the millions subscribed by the tax-payers, and recent disclosures show how they do it.

The tax-payers, not as yet fully realising that pauperism in our country is no more a natural result of economic laws than drunkenness is, have hitherto yielded up their millions with certain misgivings that something was wrong, but what that something was they couldn't quite make out. They have recently learnt that vast sums of their money have been shamelessly squandered

rather than spent, but that fact seems to reveal corruptness or incapacity in the spending administration rather than the rottenness of the entire system of which these bodies are but an outgrowth.

The people rarely think about the matter at all. Pauperism was a recognised State institution before they were born, and they accept it at that; if it is wrong, show us how to put it right, is what they say.

Public
Attitude
towards
Pauperism

This, in a nutshell, is the attitude adopted towards pauperism by the people and the tax-payers, and a more sickly, unhealthy, harmful attitude cannot be conceived.

The whole nation has somehow contrived to set up a sort of *belief* in the NECESSITY for this plague spot on our civilisation, and this weak, flabby spirit of acquiescence in a positive evil has wrought incalculable harm in every direction.

The enormous pauper homes all over the country, many of them of costly architectural design and palatial aspect, with elaborate and luxurious fittings, which will hardly be found even in the homes of the wealthy classes, only serve to show that bumbledom, at all events, has set pauperism up as a FETISH, while the scandalous waste of public money which has been and *is* going on, proves that poor law guardians freely offer up the tax-payer's gold on the altar of their god.

At the moment it is nobody's business to take any action that would relieve the country of this loathsome incubus. There is a general grumbling all along the line of that vast array of people who are compelled to hand over their rates and taxes to the State coffers, and this means every householder in the country, rich or poor,

but they only grumble and growl. Let us, however, cease growling and *do* something. Let us make up our minds, since it is necessary for State purposes that we should be taxed, that these taxes be wisely *spent*, not *wasted*. Let us insist that our millions be laid out in a manner that will encourage the people to cultivate habits of self-help, thrift and industry, and not in a way that brings upon them the degradation of pauperism.

Practical
and Co-
operative
Relief

Let us make it abundantly clear to Government, and all concerned, that every penny we yield up in rates and taxes must be spent along utilitarian lines, and that the system of relief to the people must be practical and *co-operative*, i.e., if the State finds it necessary to call upon us to help the people, we, in turn, ask that the State set up some practical system of relief, whereby those requiring aid may be helped to become self-supporting citizens, and so, in time, find themselves in a position to pay back to the State in direct or indirect taxes, the sum spent on them in their need.

Let us make it as clear as daylight that we are tired to death of seeing our money spent to no other result than to encourage the worst and most dissolute type of pauperism that the world can show to-day; to engender a spirit of wasteful extravagance on the part of municipal officers; and to establish a feeling of apathetic indifference on the part of the Government for the time being.

We want to see *good* results from those millions which the State wrings yearly from the British tax-payers, for many of them can ill afford what they are forced to part with.

We want to see a just and proper appreciation of this

pauper question on the part of all concerned, Government, tax-payers and the people; a wise, practical interpretation of its meaning, and not the sickly, mawkish and exceedingly unwise interpretation it bears to-day.

We, the British tax-payers, ask this in all seriousness. We demand it as a right. We, who supply the funds, ask that our money be spent wisely and well and for the *good* of the people. Now, our millions are spent to the undoing of our countrymen, and we require the system to be altered and amended.

CHAPTER XIX

THE FREE TRADE SHAM EXPOSED—EMPLOYMENT
FOR FOREIGNERS

THE so-called "Free Trade" question should now be tested in one or two simple ways. This false system has still many misguided followers, and we do not want to be caught napping again by doctrinaires of a mendacious creed.

It has pleased us to speak of Great Britain as a *free trading* country and we have hitherto deluded ourselves into the belief that we are really and truly a nation of *bona fide free* traders.

A greater delusion never possessed a sensible, practical people, nor was a greater deception ever practised by political wire-pullers, who, solely for party purposes, go through the hollow farce of keeping up this ridiculous show. In the history of the British Parliament a more monstrous sham than this *free* trade humbug has never been set up before the British people with such remarkable success.

It is nothing but a party pretence, a political fraud of the hollowest, most meretricious nature, and the wonder is that we have been hoodwinked for so long a time.

This free trade business may be likened unto a fiddle upon which many and varying tunes may be played, a most useful instrument alike in the hands of Conserva-

tive and Liberal Governments, inasmuch as both have fully played upon it to suit their own purposes. If the Conservatives want a few millions, they add a penny or so to the tea tax, for example. If the Liberals are short of money, they abstain from taking off that which their predecessors, the Conservatives, put on; or they put on that which their political opponents took off.

The Conservatives wanted money during the South African War of 1902, and, among other things, they raised the duty on tea to sixpence per pound. In the following year, 1903, there was a fresh imposition, raising the duty to eightpence. On July 1, 1905, a reduction of twopence took place.

Taxes on
Food

The Liberals soon afterwards were drifted into power on the top of the anti-Chinese and Nonconformist Education wave, and they took off one penny only of this tax, because they required money to carry out certain schemes to which they were pledged.

Sugar is another string to this free trade fiddle. You can no more do without sugar than you can do without bread, and yet your *free trade* Government have no scruples about taxing sugar—every pound of which has to come from outside sources—to the tune of £6,177,953 annually.

Then we come to coal, from which the present Government derives £2,183,973 annually in export duties. This little impost was put on by a Conservative Government to defray some of their own expenses for the war, but why is it kept on by a Government which professes to detest war and abhors anything which interferes with *free trade*? WHY?

We now come to a long list of food-stuffs, all of which pay import duty before reaching the people, such as cocoa, coffee, tea, milk, and milk preparations; sugar; confectionery of all kinds; fruits dried; jams and marmalade.

A free trade Government may call these *luxuries*, and therefore, they are taxed, but the people know full well that most of these foods are no more a luxury than bread is a luxury; nevertheless *free* trade Governments have no more scruple about taxing these commodities than a *protectionist* Government would have. The new Tariff Convention between this country and the United States of America, signed on November 20, 1907, is but another example of the utter hollowness of this "Free Trade" fraud.

The present Government which calls itself Liberal—but which its political opponents dub Radical—has just entered into an arrangement which is as diametrically opposed to the principles of *Free Trade* as light is to darkness. The United States, wishing to secure still greater advantages for her goods, and freer facilities for her commercial travellers, says to us: "You give us free entry for our samples of dutiable imports, and we will give you something in return. You profess to be a free-trading nation, nevertheless, you are just as much open to a bargain, or in other words, to those principles of reciprocity under which the protected countries of the world formulate their systems of tariffs, as other nations are. You already draw £35,000,000 annually from your import duties on goods of various kinds, many of them, such as sugar for example, being necessities of life and

in daily use by the people; while we know from past experience you would just as readily tax other articles of common consumption if you wanted money for war purposes, or for other urgent State needs."

Our Pecksniffian Government, while professing to scout the very idea of *Reciprocity*, and assuming an attitude of pious horror at the mere mention of *Protection*, have, *de facto*, entered into a reciprocal commercial convention with our cousins across the Atlantic, whereby certain of their goods come into our country free of import duty, in return for a reduction in their import duty of 25 per cent. on British works of art.

In addition to this there is the still more recent instance, in December of last year, of the arrangement made between the Australian Government and our Board of Trade, in respect to some of our manufactures which Australia imports. Our slate trade has benefited to the extent of a preferential reduction of 5 per cent., while the bicycle trade has benefited even still more.

Free Trade apologists will, no doubt, by many a specious argument, attempt to explain away this extraordinary movement of the Government in favour of *Reciprocity*, this leaning towards the very principles which their political opponents, the Unionist Tariff Reformers, so strenuously advocate, but, however much they may protest, this precious *Free Trade* principle has been clearly, unmistakably and formally surrendered by their own Government in this Tariff Convention with the United States, and the matter is now *un fait accompli*.

The present *Free Trade* Government, having ad-

mitted the principles of reciprocity, and emphasised this admission by giving the country a proof of their belief in the necessity of Tariff Reform in the shape of a practical working arrangement with a foreign State, are now "between the devil and the deep sea." They cannot recede from the anomalous attitude they have assumed without still further weakening their position, while if they continue where they are they will assuredly give their political adversaries certain advantages by which they will not fail to profit.

At any rate, it is certain that although the principles of "Free Trade" may be good enough in theory, it is manifest they will not stand the rough and tumble of this practical everyday existence of ours. Silk breeches and kid gloves may be very pretty and becoming, but good honest homespun and a stout pair of leather gauntlets are better able to resist the hard wear and tear of life, and enable us to grapple with those thorns which crop up so often in our journey through this world.

To put it briefly, Governments, no more than individuals, can afford to ignore the pressing exigencies of life; nor are they proof against those temptations which touch self-interests. The United States wanted a comparatively small commercial concession. *Certainly*, says our "Free Trade" Government, but give us something in return; reduce your duty on some of our goods which you buy from us, and we will take certain duties off some of the goods you send to our country—a small bargain to serve some personal interest! and lo, Reciprocity becomes the guiding principle even of a Government which

professes to be the avowed champion of what is, by misnomer, called *Free Trade*—*Verb. Sap!*

With these instances before us, is it not true that in spite of their free trade *professions*, Liberal Governments are quite as ready to sacrifice their principles to their pockets, the moment they want money, as their political opponents are?

Is it not true that despite their much vaunted cry of *free* trade, and their declared belief in its principle, they can no more help taxing the food of the people than they can hinder the return of the equinoxes?

Is it not true that the whole business is an unmitigated farce; that *free* trade is nothing but a sham and a gigantic fraud, and that those who profess it cannot uphold their professions of faith because their acts belie their principles?

Is it not true that, for these reasons, those who profess belief in *free* trade must be the veriest humbugs among men, and that free trade itself is doomed to destruction?

Let us now proceed to the welcome task of building up out of the shattered fragments of destroyed industries and exploded fiscal systems, some intelligible scheme which shall give back to the people that measure of prosperity which it is their absolute right to enjoy. Let us confess in a frank, manly manner, that we have been regularly humbugged, and that, in sacrificing our great land industry and believing in "free trade" nonsense, we have, while adding to the *individual* wealth of a certain small section of the community, seriously impeded the growth of *national* prosperity, caused wide-

spread unemployment, and induced an enormous amount of unnecessary poverty among the people.

Let us say—we don't mind paying, and paying liberally to help the people to become self-supporting and self-respecting citizens, but we insist that our money be spent in a manner that will directly *help* them onward to general prosperity.

Employment
for Every-
body

We must find employment for every man, woman and child in the Kingdom by restoring every one of our lost industries, and where it is necessary to alter our fiscal laws to afford these industries the necessary encouragement and protection, we must alter them in a manner that will afford our people as much protection as is offered in Germany, the United States, and other States, whose manufactures have killed many of our own industries.

We must have no further paltering with this subject, neither must we listen further to political wire-pullers about "free trade" and the "cheap loaf" cry, because it is as clear as daylight that "free trade" is the cause of all our troubles, while we have discovered that those countries *which protect themselves against us* supply a loaf just as cheap as we do.

We are absolutely certain that our lost industries can only be restored to us by these means, and we will not cease in our efforts till the present laws are repealed and a code more generous and helpful to our own people set up in their place.

Full employment for the unemployed, full work for our workers, and the establishment of a sound basis, upon which will be built up the general prosperity of a

people, can only be effected by these means, and we are at last determined to see the thing carried through.

Germany and the United States (our two most formidable competitors) are not "free traders," and never have been, and yet their relative progress is greater than our own, while their prosperity, instead of being *individual*, as with us, is *national*. What we want is the prosperity of the people and not that of a few already rich individuals, who continue to make a good thing out of *free* trade.

We are called a "nation of shopkeepers." Good! Let us deserve the name: let us do that which foreign nations are now doing for us. We import yearly £150,000,000 worth of manufactured goods from foreign countries. Let us make practically all these goods ourselves and employ our own people instead of those who put up impossible barriers against a single pound's worth of our manufactures ever finding their way into *their* country.

Nation of
Shopkeepers

We import £36,000,000 worth of iron and other metal goods for example, but is there a country on earth that, given the same opportunities other States possess, can turn out metal wares to surpass our own?

Then we buy £16,000,000 worth of chemicals, dyes, etc. Why? Chemicals and dyes are largely made from by-products of mines and gasworks; yet what country can beat us in this direction?

Cutlery and hardware account for nearly £4,000,000 annually, and yet no country in the world can produce these goods equal to our own.

Nearly £4,500,000 are sent abroad every year for

earthenware and glass, and yet our own productions cannot be beaten by any foreign country.

We import nearly £6,000,000 worth of paper, every pound of which could be made in our own country with the greatest ease: Greater Britain supplying us with practically all the raw material we require.

These are but examples of what is going on, but it is the same sickening tale in every department of industry; enormous sums sent to foreign countries every year to make goods for us which our own people can make better for themselves.

**Employ-
ment for
Foreigners**

Will nothing ever teach us that we can make all these goods ourselves and that every million spent abroad simply means providing employment for foreigners instead of our own people?

Shall we never learn the bitter lesson that to spend our wealth on foreign industries is to crush out our own, and to kill our own industries is to throw tens of thousands out of employment and bring about the impoverishment of a whole people?

Let us have done with this worse than folly; this suicidal mania which possesses us, and boldly and determinedly declare that our own people shall be employed in making practically all the goods that we require for our own consumption and for export, and that, if our present fiscal system does not admit of this, then it must be altered and amended to an extent that will enable us to do all that we require.

We must not be turned from our purpose either by any political party, that for their own reasons favour free trade, or by that timid section who are afraid of adopt-

ing a rational and reasonable fiscal policy because—*foreign nations may resent it.* Of all the insane objections to necessary amendment of our fiscal laws to suit national purposes, this is, perhaps, the feeblest. Did Germany and America ask our permission when they built around their trade and industries a wall of tariffs so high and broad as to render our chance of ever scaling it absolutely impossible?

Do they ever ask our permission whenever they find it necessary to impose new tariffs or alter others to suit their own ends?

Does any country in the world ever ask our permission in regard to the alteration or continuance of existing fiscal laws or the making of new ones?

And if these questions cannot be answered in the affirmative, why should we care one straw what other nations think; why consult their interests when they never consider ours?

Do not let any consideration, any argument, however plausible, turn us from our determination to right the cruel wrong that has been done to us by supporting industries in foreign countries instead of planting them in our own midst for the support of our own people.

“SUPPORT HOME INDUSTRIES” is a perfectly intelligible cry, and quite good enough for us; and although political economists tell us that, according to all the rules of economic law, it is better for us to buy £150,000,000 worth of goods annually in foreign countries, we know that such teaching is specious and false. The application of this law has, in fact, resulted in nothing but disaster, inasmuch as it has deprived tens of

Home
Industries

thousands of our own workers of employment and brought widespread poverty and misery to vast numbers of people, who, under other conditions, would be enjoying just that measure of prosperity which is now being enjoyed by the workers in those countries whose industries we support by our insane policy.

CHAPTER XX

STATE AID FOR AGRICULTURE—EQUILIBRIUM IN THE
LABOUR MARKETS

THE greatest of all our industries is THE LAND and we may turn the enormous potential power that we find latent there into a mighty living force, that will carry us along to marvellous prosperity undreamed of to-day.

The lives of hundreds of thousands of our weary toilers are saddened and overshadowed by the ever-present consciousness that, because of the *precariousness* of labour, they may lose their employment at any moment. Let us remove this dread and give them cheerfulness and hope.

Millions of our tax-payers are conscious of the fact that, owing to our insane fiscal system, their money is spent to no purpose but to encourage and support industrial workers in other countries at the expense of pauperising our own people. If we emancipate our tax-payers from this intolerable position by building up our own industries, finding work for our own people, and creating and developing *general* prosperity, we shall reduce the *necessity* for taxation—at all events, "Poor Relief" taxation—and at least lessen their burden to that extent.

We must declare in no uncertain manner that our lands shall be worked and our people employed, and that, as we are perfectly aware this cannot be done

without State aid and encouragement, the State must come to the people's rescue.

The State must help on this industry in various ways; by sensible and helpful land tenures, by the creation of *millions* of small occupying proprietorships; by the establishment and regulation of a low scale of railway rates whereby the free movement of agricultural produce may be facilitated throughout the country; by the establishment of a multitude of municipal markets; and generally by practical, wise and helpful administration.

Having done so much, wherefrom a general improvement in the economic condition of the people will spring as surely as the sun gives us of his light and warmth; the State will be in a position to consider how it can best apply the largely increased revenue, which must be a direct result of increased prosperity.

**Agri-
cultural
Wealth**

It has already been shown in these pages that the agricultural wealth of the United Kingdom has decreased during the last thirty years by the stupendous sum of £1,000,000,000 (some writers put it at a much higher figure) and it follows, as night the day, that if this enormous wealth be restored to the country, aye, even greatly augmented as it can be *by a splendid system of universal agriculture, the like of which this country has never yet experienced*, large increases of revenue *must* result from it.

One of the cries of the tariff reformers is:

"Tariff reform means less income-tax and work for all." But as it stands it is not true.

Paraphrased as under, it means truth, absolute and positive.

“Land industry and tariff reform mean prosperity, less taxes, and work for all.”

But do not let us accept this statement without consideration. If it be true, it will bear investigation; if it be *not* true, then it will break down under the test.

It is obvious that, in certain directions, less need for taxation *must* result, while in others the incidence will be lighter owing to the large increase in the *area* of taxation.

Take “poor-rates,” for example, which are largely spent on pauper institutions of various kinds, as well as in maintaining an enormous police force of upwards of 61,000 men; a costly criminal magistracy and an elaborate system of industrial schools, reformatories and prisons, the result of a large criminal population.

Every schoolboy knows that pauper establishments are not to help the rich, and that the great army of police and the prisons are not to maintain order among the respectable British working classes, the shopkeepers and merchants, and the wealthy ones of the land.

The criminal classes are not, as a rule, recruited from the rich, the well-to-do and the respectable, self-respecting citizens, but from the ranks of the poor; from that large unfortunate section of our population which, for various reasons, is first reduced to privation and want, and then to despair and desperation.

It follows, then, in logical sequence, that if you reduce poverty and bring about a state of general prosperity, there will be less want, less crime, and less necessity for that elaborate expensive machinery which has been set up to deal with crime, and, therefore, less cost in maintaining it. Reduction
of Cost

In regard to the claims of tariff reformers for less taxation, what will surely happen is this. General increase in the prosperity of the people will have precisely the same effect as it had in Germany; it will give Governments an enormously extended taxable area, over which they will be able to spread their imposts with a lighter incidence, and this will surely mean less taxation per head, although larger revenues for Government.

As this is no dream of a hare-brained visionary, but the hard dry facts of a scientific law, we may now indulge in some speculations as to what had best be done with the extra millions which the State is sure to garner from the prosperity of a people.

Facts in a
Nutshell

There can be no question that, so far as it is necessary, it should be applied to the encouragement and relief of agriculture, for the many reasons which have already been given in these pages. But for the sake of convenience let us get these facts together in a nutshell. They are as under:

1. Without the great land industry it is seen that trades, manufactures and professions alone cannot support and employ the entire working population of the country.

2. Without any other State aid than the amendment of our fiscal system, the State encouragement of general agriculture, and co-operation with other industries, trades and manufactures can maintain themselves in a state of active and progressive prosperity.

3. A system of general agriculture will absorb so large a portion of our working population that an equilibrium will be set up between the supply and demand of labour.

4. Equilibrium in the labour markets, with the balance turned towards demand, means greater independence of workers, better demand and better wages.

5. The land industry without other State aid than suitable land tenures, a practical scheme of "small proprietary holdings," an amended fiscal system, and consistent encouragement to general agriculture, will be as self-supporting as other industries.

These are the chief contentions put forth in these pages, and we should now focus them on to the main consideration of our subject.

The entire question, as we have seen, hangs upon the development of the land industry, and its maintenance as the chief means of support to the people, and as the greatest source of wealth production in the country.

Nothing, therefore, must be allowed to interfere with the establishment of agriculture on a firm, solid basis, and if it be found that State aid, even of a direct nature, be necessary to establish it on that sure basis, then let us devote some of this extra revenue to that end. Our business is to see that our great staple industry, upon which so much depends, aye, even the life of a people and the existence of a great world empire, be first of all set up and then so carefully and jealously protected by national safeguards that nothing may be allowed to jeopardise it in any way.

Safeguard this precious possession so thoroughly that, if it be found necessary in national interests even to *subsidise* it in some way, then do so by all means; and

Subsidise
if
Necessary

once we alter the present inane fiscal and agricultural systems, this would become easy enough.

Mr Harcourt, First Commissioner of Works, in his speech on the second reading of the " Small Holdings Bill," for England, on June 12, 1907, said:

" If, as Mr Chaplin would have us believe, small holdings could not exist without protection, I would not raise my hand to bring them into being."

All Englishmen who have the welfare of their country at heart sincerely hope that agriculture will flourish *without* protection. But—and here we must commit no more blunders—if we find that it cannot do so, that it requires a little State assistance to enable it to prosper, a little leading by the hand to enable it to walk surely and firmly, then, and in that case, State aid must be given.

Mr Harcourt has raised his Party cry of " No protection " and " cheap loaf," and he asks us to follow, but we are no longer disposed to sacrifice the people's interests to the selfish spirit of any political party. We have seen that every country in the world which shows the most prosperous balance sheets, assists its trade and industries in *some* form or other, and we are firmly convinced *that the time has come for us to do the same.* " PEOPLE before PARTY " is our cry ; our answer to all political parties, whether Liberal or Conservative; and as we conceive this to be the true spirit of patriotism we cannot follow Mr Harcourt, whose policy is so harsh and uncompromising, as to imperil and even sacrifice a great NATIONAL industry for want of a little assistance, *because such a course would clash with the interests of the Party he serves.*

If, then, we find a little aid in this direction or that necessary to help on this industry, let us afford it that aid, and do not let us be deterred by so shallow, narrow and selfish a consideration as that put forward by Mr Harcourt on behalf of the present Government.

British tax-payers would much prefer to see their millions spent in helping on our great land industry, which, properly developed and judiciously administered, would regenerate the country, rather than see them squandered in creating poverty, encouraging pauperism, and maintaining 61,000 police and a huge costly criminal department, to deal with the *results* of pauperisation. Go, ask them which they prefer, nay, make it a "question" at the next General Election, and it will be found that they will vote solid for the former course. No man in his senses prefers poverty to prosperity, and every tax-payer in the country would gladly support a scheme of the kind. And this is certain, that any Government which goes to the country on this ticket—among others of a kindred nature—will surely play a trump card. The country is so sick of poverty, the unemployed question, pauperism and the rest of it, that it would gladly hail a change.

Tax-payers, moreover, bear the heavy burden of taxation which all this involves with complete consciousness that it is borne in vain; and the Government which shows them how this burden may be carried with ease and comfort, or at all events, with some satisfaction to themselves, or how it may, in time, be considerably lightened, will command this important body of electors to a man.

CHAPTER XXI

LAND REFORM AND TARIFF REFORM—NECESSITY FOR
POPULAR ACTION

THE subject we are dealing with is so vast that it is impossible in this work to do more than merely glance at a few of its more salient features, and much that is useful and important must necessarily be left unsaid. But before concluding we would refer to one or two other points, which should not be lost sight of in our consideration of this question.

There is a large section of the community which always finds difficulty in making up its mind on any question of the day, because it is so easily led this way or that; it shapes its course by what the last speaker happens to have said; and startling newspaper head-lines of the sensational order prove irresistibly attractive. People of this description might well be treated as a *quantité négligeable*, were it not for the fact that they form too large and important a body to neglect, and it is therefore necessary to warn them of what will surely happen.

Two questions that vitally affect all Englishmen are now before the public; the LAND QUESTION and TARIFF REFORM; and many a man, who has hitherto thought but little on either subject, must now make up his mind one way or the other. We are, indeed, at "the Parting of the Ways"; let us beware lest we take the wrong path.

In order to have a perfectly unbiased mind, we must cut ourselves adrift from all political entanglements, and stand free men, owing allegiance to no party, whether Liberal or Conservative. Our votes should be given to that party which governs best in the people's interests, and to no other.

We are convinced for the reasons herein given, and many others, which lack of space forbids us to give, that the salvation of the British people depends upon LAND REFORM and TARIFF REFORM, and our support will be given to that party which pledges itself to amend the laws in these respects.

The moment anything of the nature of reform be undertaken by the Party *in* power, the other Party will swear by all their gods that the people's interests are being sacrificed and the country ruined; and it is just here that we require a little stiffening in the backs of our mental fibres, or we shall surely be led astray.

Here is a specimen of what we may expect taken from one of the London dailies:

FARM HANDS' DANGER

PROTEST BY MEN WHO HAVE LOST THEIR WORK

SMALL HOLDINGS

MISERABLE COMPENSATION

SEARCH FOR WORK

"A remarkable manifesto calling attention to the hardships which farm hands will suffer by being displaced under the Government's Small Holdings Bill, has been issued by twenty-six of the labourers who lost their

Traps
for the
Unwary

work at Burwell, Cambs, when the Crown lands were turned into allotments."

These headlines first of all attract our attention and then we are induced to believe that an injustice has been done to the people, almost an outrage indeed.

The facts of the case are that Government, in their attempt to afford some relief to the strained situation, by turning a few hundred acres of Crown lands into Small Holdings, necessarily had to displace some of the hands who had been working on the land; and this trifling matter is sufficient to call forth these sensational headlines and supply "copy" for a hostile Press or a hostile party. These are traps to catch the unwary; political traps, which *both* of the great political parties are not above setting, and we should beware of them. We cannot make our omelet without breaking eggs, and we cannot have our "Small Holdings" without displacing, to begin with, those who are already working on the land, but this single fact no more sums up the position than that "one drop makes an ocean."

Question
of Re-ad-
justment

In bringing about any great NATIONAL REFORM it is highly probable, nay, almost certain, that, at the outset, some *individual* interests will suffer, but in the end it is equally certain that in the resultant general good, full compensation will follow. Small Holdings are especially designed *to help those working* on the soil, and if a farm hand be displaced to-day, he may come in to-morrow as a peasant proprietor or a tenant farmer; it is a mere question of readjustment, a reshuffling of the cards and we must not, therefore, allow ourselves to be frigh-

tened by those who would make political capital out of our fears.

But as the matter is of vital importance to us as a people, let us make it doubly sure by arriving at a just and true appreciation of its bearings. Let us measure it by the infallible standard of experience.

We have already seen that our 48,000,000 acres of what we call our "cultivated area" (38,000,000 acres of which are either in grass or *sheep feeds*) give occupation *and support* to only 3,900,000 people out of the entire population, or apparently about *one-eleventh* of the entire population of the United Kingdom is supported by the land.

In Germany the land occupies and supports nearly 19,000,000, or considerably over *one-third* of the entire population.

France actually *employs* over 8,000,000 of her active population, and M. Gourot, President de la Société Nationale d'Encouragement à l'Agriculture, speaking on the subject in July 1905, spoke of 24,000,000 *Agriculturists of France*. As we must assume that the President of this Society knew what he was talking about, we conclude that France's great land industry employs and supports the enormous total of 24,000,000 of her population.

Hungary, with a population of a little over 19,000,000 employs and supports over 13,000,000 in agriculture, or, in other words, her land industry occupies and supports nearly *two-thirds* of the entire population of the country.

To put this highly important question in another way,

it will be seen from the following table that while we, in the United Kingdom, can only manage to employ and support eight persons to every one hundred acres of our cultivated area:

Germany employs and supports	18
France employs and supports about	26
Hungary employs and supports	24

Here is a table for easy reference:

Country.	Cultivated area.	Persons employed and supported by Agriculture.	Persons emp'd & supported by every 100 acres
United Kingdom	48,000,000	3,900,000	8
Germany. . .	108,000,000	19,000,000	18
France . . .	92,000,000	24,000,000	26
Hungary. . .	54,000,000	13,000,000	24

If, however, we take Great Britain without Ireland, it will be seen that our case is even worse, for our 32,000,000 of "cultivated" area only employs 1,389,000 persons, or employs and supports about 2,250,000. This means that only *one-fourteenth* part of the entire population is supported by our land, while each 100 acres cannot employ and support more than about *six* persons.

Now that we have narrowed this matter down to the irreducible minimum of incontrovertible statistics, we are face to face with two highly important facts:

1. That our country employs fewer people in its agriculture and supports a smaller head of population on its land than any other country in Europe. (For purposes of comparison only three European States have been taken, although all of them could show similar results.)

2. That this being so, there is scope for the enormous expansion of our agricultural industry and for the employment of vast numbers of people.

Having, by this brief statement of facts and figures, shown that, if in carrying out measures of land reform, it is necessary to displace a few farm hands here and there, employment for all of them, and indeed for *millions* more of our country men and women will be found on the land as the scheme develops, the question might well be asked—*Why all this fuss about nothing?*

It must be obvious to any unprejudiced person that in the land lies the people's hope, the people's opportunity. In the land lies freedom from poverty, employment, prosperity and wealth; the people's redemption; and yet at the first attempt on the part of Government, for the time being, to help along our unfortunate countrymen to this goal we find a hostile Press, solely and wholly for political purposes, ready to stir up the people against the development of the land industry.

Now, in discussing this matter among ourselves, just in a friendly manner, we might naturally ask the following questions.

Why is there a hostile Press and a hostile Party? Why is hostility shown, practically to every measure, good, bad, or indifferent, which the Government of the day, whether Conservative or Liberal, may bring forward?

Why is administrative work retarded, and State business frequently stopped by the hostility of a political Party backed up by a hostile Press? WHY?

The answer is clear. Because they have a purpose to serve, or because they don't know and don't care that

their hostility to the Government of the day means, in many cases, inimicality to the commonweal, and, therefore, *hostility to the people*.

If they have a purpose of their own to serve, and that purpose happens to clash with the interests of the people, then it is clear they are of no use to us from that point of view, because of their inimicality.

If, in serving their own purpose, they don't care whether national interests are sacrificed, or not, then it is equally clear they are of no use to us from that point of view, because of their hostility.

It is also clear that if they be influenced by either or both of these purposes, then they are not fit to be the people's guides, to represent their interests, or champion their cause.

We cannot get rid of either the political parties or a political Press, but if we find they mislead us, *we need not follow*: and if we do not follow them, the logical conclusion of the business is that in time they will learn to follow us.

To-day, both Parties and Press profess to represent the people; arrant humbug; they no more represent the real views and wishes of the *millions* than they represent the inhabitants of Mars. They represent their own views and serve their own ends, but not ours. Rarely do the people's hopes and desires find expression in the acts of either Press or politicians, and seldom are the real *mandates* of the people carried out by them. Less and less do they express our real views, and less and less grows the disposition to listen to their teaching, or follow their lead; and so, we form our own opinions and take our own way along that path which we are sure *will lead to the uplifting of a people and the prosperity of a Nation*.

CHAPTER XXII

TRUE AND FALSE SOCIALISM—TYRANNY OF
INDIVIDUALISM

ANOTHER matter for earnest consideration is the attitude of that body of "ardent patriots" which loves to pose before the people as Socialists; and here, as in other directions, we must learn to make up our own minds or we may be led away by what may prove to be a very *ignis fatuus* of politics.

Socialism may be good or it may be bad, but we are not going to pass judgment here on a movement which, while having many adherents, has but little cohesion, and no clearly defined principles to guide it. There are many Socialists who, taken as a whole, may rightly be regarded as a new band of political wire-pullers, but theirs is not the Socialism—that is to say *true* Socialism—taught by such great Socialist philosophers as Ruskin, Owen and others.

The "Socialism" of to-day is, indeed, so ill-defined as to call forth the question: "What *is* Socialism?" and it seems as though there can be no reply forthcoming, because every man who professes to be an exponent of Socialism expounds it in a manner to harmonise with his own particular views, and thus the Socialism of one man differs materially from that of another.

This being so, we, who have our own ideas of what

true Socialism means, will put our own interpretation on what is, in reality, a great science.

Socialism means, among other things, exactly what we have been urging in these pages, viz., the combination, advancement and prosperity of the people, and a vigorous crusade against all that is untrue, unjust and tyrannous, including the tyranny of party politics; and last, but not least, against the tyranny of that band of rabid politicians who seek to dominate the British people through the sanguinary expedient of Red Revolution.

It may be taken for granted that the people of this country are just as keen for social and economic reform as those "Socialists" profess to be, and are just as determined to get it, but we prefer to get what we want by peaceful means and not by treading the bloody path of revolution.

**Socialist
Principles**

To show how some modern Socialists expound the principles of Socialism, and how they carry out their self-imposed mission as teachers of the people, we give here a few extracts from their Sunday School Catechism, which were published by one of the London daily papers, and which will admirably illustrate their methods:

"How many classes are there in society? A great number.

"Name us two? Aristocrats and workers.

"Who are the aristocrats? Those who enjoy wealth without working for it when able.

"Who are the workers? Men who work for wages and

receive only a portion of what they earn, the other part going to keep the idle classes.

“Who owns the factories and warehouses? The rich capitalist class, who will not employ men unless they can make a profit.

“What is the consequence? That men, able and willing to work, cannot get food for their wives and children.

“Do men and women die of hunger in England? Yes, in the midst of plenty.

“Do savages starve in the midst of plenty? No. When there is plenty of food they will rejoice, feast and make merry.”

Here also are two verses from a hymn which is included in the Socialist Sunday School hymn-book:

“These kings defile us with their powder,
We want no war within the land;
Let soldiers strike: for peace call louder,
Lay down arms, and join hand in hand.
Should these vile monsters still determine
Heroes to make us in despite,
They'll know full soon the kind of vermin
Our bullets hit in this last fight.

“We peasants, artisans and others
Enrolled among the sons of toil,
Let's claim the earth and henceforth for brothers,
Drive the indolent from the soil.
On our flesh long has fed the raven,
We've too long been the vulture's prey;
But now, farewell this spirit craven,
The dawn brings in a brighter day.”

The following is from a catechism called " Hungry Children ":

" What is a pauper? One who lives upon others while being able to work.

" Are the rich class able to work? Yes; because they are well cared for when young, and grow up strong.

" But do they work? No, they consider it menial and beneath them.

" Then they are paupers? Yes, because they live on others, and do no work, though capable.

" Then there must be another reason, besides saving children from pauperism why they do not want children of the common people to be fed and clothed by the Nation? Yes.

"What is the reason? They think that if the children of the working men are fed and properly educated they would become more independent, and demand a better living wage.

" Is there any body of men and women who wish to see all children properly fed and clothed, whether their parents are poor or rich? Yes, the Socialists."

And here is a verse from a hymn in the Socialist hymn-book, entitled, " Ye Poor of Wealthy England."

" Ye poor of wealthy England,
 Who starve and sweat and freeze,
 By labour sore to fill the store
 Of those who live at ease;
 'Tis time to know your real friends,
 To face your real foe,

And to fight for your right
 Till ye lay your masters low;
 Small hope for you of better days
 Till ye lay your masters low."

Now this system of teaching is bound to do harm rather than good because it misleads where it should rightly direct, and pulls down where it should build up. Its policy is *de*-destructive rather than *con*-structive, and this is a huge fundamental blunder. It, moreover, brings ridicule on a great cause, and nothing kills more quickly than ridicule.

De-struct-
 ive
 not Con-
 structive

To prate of rich, idle classes and aristocrats and then to assert that part of the workman's wages goes "to keep the idle classes" is simply to pervert the truth and with deliberate intent to injure. As a matter of fact the rich, idle classes, who, by the way, derive their wealth in many instances from sources altogether apart from the British working man, give employment, and good employment, too, to vast numbers of British workers in various ways which need not be gone into here.

Then to talk of the "rich capitalist class, who will not employ men unless they can make a profit" is simply childish nonsense.

Who on this earth, unless he be born with a golden spoon in his mouth, ever dreams of working save for a profit?

Does the seamstress, the clerk, the farmer, the professional class, the soldier, sailor, parson, the British workman, or even the Socialist himself, ever dream of working for anything but a profit, and, if so, why in the

name of common sense should the so-called *capitalist* not be allowed to work for a profit?

Has there been in the world's history any socio-economic condition in any country whereby the capitalist set up his workshops and designedly conducted his business operations so that his work people might wax rich while he became poor? Or do those who profess the Socialism of to-day really contemplate a state of affairs whereunder modern capitalists will purposely run their factories and workshops to enrich their workpeople and beggar themselves?

It would certainly appear from their catechism that our modern Socialists *do* expect something of the kind, but it is certain that nothing of the sort will ever take place. You cannot force any man to run his business at a loss, and you cannot force your capitalist to run his factory so that everybody but himself may become a gainer.

"They think that if the children of the working men are fed and properly educated they would become more independent and demand a better wage."

**Poisonous
Teaching**

Now of all the insidious, poisonous teaching this is about the worst that could possibly be devised. To teach children who naturally know nothing of such matters that rich folk do not want poor children educated and fed is to utter one of the most monstrous falsehoods of the age.

Here is what the Chancellor of the Exchequer said on this subject in introducing his Budget on April 18, 1907:

“ First of all there is the child, for whom heredity and parental care have, perhaps, done nothing or worse than nothing.”

Later on, in advocating the claims of the British child, on the British public for educational purposes, he continued:

“ Your Parliamentary grants, if you add the exchequer contributions, as you ought to, were £13,359,000; sums raised by local rates were £11,785,000, a total of £25,144,000. That is what it cost the State to recognise its duty to the children of the community.”

In face of the fact that £25,000,000 of the British taxpayers' money is spent on educating the British children, and £16,000,000 is spent on feeding and clothing the poor and needy *and the children*, to utter that wicked lie is worse than wicked, it is criminal.

As a matter of fact education is compulsory, and it was made so because it was found that the poor would *not* send their children to school; and, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer pointed out *parental care has, perhaps, done nothing or worse than nothing* to help the poor children of this country; and yet, in spite of this well-known fact, the so-called Socialists publish and put into circulation among the children of the poor so monstrous and mischievous a falsehood.

This is just the doctrine that Socialistic leaders should not teach, because it is ANARCHY and not Socialism they are advocating, and the British people don't want anarchy and bloodshed. Moreover, this doctrine is emi-

Anarchy not
Socialism

nently foolish and must be condemned by all right-minded people.

When we come to probe the depths of this spurious Socialistic doctrine we shall find that it is highly destructive to the body politic, as the following extracts before quoted will prove.

“ ’Tis time to know your real friends,
To face your real foe,
And to fight for your right
Till ye lay your masters low;
Small hope for you of better days
Till ye lay your masters low.”

“ They’ll know full soon the kind of vermin
Our bullets hit in this last fight.”

We are at bottom an eminently sensible and practical people; were it not so, we should not be what we are to-day—a great world power—let us, therefore, in the name of that practicality which has stood us in such good stead in the past, have done with this silly vapouring after things which will never be, and settle down to the practical realities of everyday life.

Socialists, real Socialists, who have the welfare of the people at heart and who have really a great and noble work to perform, should emancipate themselves from this narrow, selfish spirit of envy and jealousy, and preach the broad gospel of peace and prosperity and industry; the advancement and betterment of the people, and not national disorder, destruction and chaos. We have *all* the means of general prosperity at hand without resorting to violence; let us make use of them. Let

Socialists direct their vigour to the LAND; let their forces be directed against the destruction of those terrible foes to the people, which have been their real tyrants—IGNORANCE, APATHY, INERTIA—let them war against these and the individualism of political parties and the baneful influence they exercise over the people's interests, and they will accomplish more in a year than they will, by their present methods, even at the wane of the twentieth century.

But in this, as in all things else in life, don't let us accept what we are told too readily; let us put it to the test of experience; let us cite a case in proof of what we are contending.

Germany, again, will furnish us with a recent and most striking example of how much good can be done by the peaceful industry of the people, and how little by rabid, spurious Socialism.

In January of last year a great battle was fought at the hustings in Germany between Socialism and Imperialism, and, as everybody knows who reads the newspapers, the Socialists were so badly defeated that it is doubtful if ever they will recover from the crushing blows dealt out to them. Socialism had been making headway in Germany for some years, and it was confidently expected, at least by the great Socialist leader, Herr Bebel, and by the Socialists themselves, that the General Elections in that country would reveal an enormous development of the Socialistic spirit, but a huge surprise was awaiting them, and they found that Socialism was not popular with the masses, and that it had received a very serious check.

The Blow
to German
Socialism

What was the cause of this, what influence was at work, what foe was secretly warring against the forces of Socialism? Not the mighty army of the German Empire, for never a soldier was called out to crush Socialism; not the civil power of the State, because there was no violence. No repressive measures were taken, and yet Socialism received so deadly a blow that it may never recover. What was the cause of its downfall? The common sense of the people themselves. By their own industry, their honest toil and thrift, their own constructiveness, they have created conditions of solid prosperity that are absolutely inimical to such doctrines as those propounded in the foregoing lines.

Germany first of all built up a great barrier against the onward march of Socialism, or to call it by its proper name, Anarchism, when she commenced to conserve her great land industry, for it is certain that no section of the body-electorate is so solidly conservative as your small landed proprietor, who is, and must naturally be, on the side of law and order, prosperity and peace.

Alliance of
Capital and
Labour

The people of Germany, recognising this important fact, and seeing that their real interests lay in the development of all other industries as the surest means of bringing about a state of general prosperity, adopted a *con*-structive policy instead of a *de*-structive one. They saw that capital was necessary in this development, and they worked with it and not against it. They saw that to ensure prosperity, Labour must be *allied* to capital and not *divorced* from it, and they helped to bring about the alliance. They helped to build up and not pull down; and it is a fact that in the last few years the co-operation of

these allied forces has simply resulted in the most phenomenal commercial, industrial, and agricultural prosperity that has been witnessed in Europe in modern times.

These, then, are the forces that have arrayed themselves against Socialism in Germany with such crushing effect. Peacefully, silently, unconsciously, have these potent influences been at work and lo! Socialism has been shaken to its foundations.

Now this means nothing more or less than that this Socialistic Anarchism, which paid agitators would teach, is born of the poverty and misery of a people; that it breeds and flourishes on their weakness and degradation, and waxes bold and defiant in their despair.

This unhealthy Socialism would pull down law and order, kill capitalists as ruthless, bloodthirsty monsters; uproot social conditions and give the country nothing in return but civil war and—CHAOS.

Socialism of this type can only be likened unto a poisonous growth that feeds on the foul miasma arising from the seething mass of a people in the throes of a deadly struggle; but our better feeling and good common sense revolt against a state of affairs which means economic and financial ruin to us—the people—individually and collectively, and we will not have that.

No! No! Germany has chosen the better part in *making use* of her capitalists in helping the people along the path to general prosperity. That is what we want—GENERAL PROSPERITY.

Object
to be
Aimed at

A country that has in one of its sections alone, £477,606,350 or as another statistician states £415,000,000

in the people's savings banks, and can put by £27,000,000 of the people's savings in a single year, is good enough for us to imitate.

Socialism of the "blood and bullet" type never thrives among a people's prosperity, because in industry, peace and contentment it finds nothing to feed upon, and it languishes and fades away into nothingness.

Another reason why this spurious Socialism of the "blood and bullet" type should yield to *true* Socialism—and this reason might well be regarded as insuperable by all that large section of the British people, which relies largely upon the tax-payers and the well-to-do among the public for its maintenance and support—should be well considered.

We have seen in a former chapter to what extent the poor and needy of our land—and they are in their millions—rely partly upon the poor-rates, but chiefly on the stupendous private aid accorded so liberally each year by practically one-half of the British people.

Now, although most of this great army of helpers pay poor-rates directly or indirectly, yet it is plainly manifest that they are not disposed to allow the part they play in the poverty of the Nation to be circumscribed by the narrow limits set by the State cesses.

The amount levied by official authority bears but a small proportion to the huge sums *privately* contributed in various forms of charities, and it is this fact which claims our attention, and unless we give it that consideration which it unquestionably deserves, we may do incalculable harm.

First of all we should bear in mind that this stupen-

dous contribution of over £100,000,000 (one hundred millions sterling) annually to the needs of the people, is *purely voluntary*. Voluntary
Aid

It is a form of charity which grows out of pity and compassion, and once you crush out pity and stifle compassion, you cut off the source of charity.

Those who give so liberally, and so continuously, out of their ample means to help the helpless and cast a few bright rays of sunshine over the lives of those who, but for this help, would live on in darkness and despair, are not *obliged* to give, and this significant fact should never be lost sight of for a single moment. We are apt to think that these good people *are* obliged to hand over their millions annually, and this attitude on the part of that section of Progressivists, Socialists, or whatever they call themselves, has already had a bad effect. Many a generous giver whose hand was constantly in his pocket in aid of the poor and needy, the sick and suffering among his fellow countrymen, *has ceased to give* because of the blustering, bullying attitude of those who lead the people astray by false doctrines.

“An Englishman’s house is his castle,” and his money is his own; and in spite of the ravings of the paid agitator and the vapourings of the social iconoclast, it will remain so. England is a free country, and her sons and daughters are free; free to give or free to withhold. The wealthy and well-to-do classes have exercised that freedom by generously giving, but, given sufficient cause, they may stay their hand and withhold those many millions, which are as life-blood to a vast number of our poor, and without which the one bright beam that sheds a small

ray of light over their lives would die out, and their lot be dark indeed.

It may indeed be truly said that the attitude of these so-called Socialists is as anomalous to the philanthropic public as the Governments attitude is to the tax-payer.

Let us, for instance, take the income-tax as an example to illustrate our meaning.

National
Income

Said the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the House of Commons, on April 18 of last year, in speaking of *one* item only of the national income derivable from the rich:

“ The income-tax is one of the most productive and one of the most delicate parts of our fiscal machinery. There is nothing like it to be found anywhere else in the world. It produced this year something like £32,000,000 to the Exchequer. . . . For a tax whose effective continuance involves the annual perpetration of a gross injustice is a tax which ought to be reserved, at any rate, for great and pressing emergencies.”

Then, after considering the anomalies which are admittedly characteristic of the income-tax, and manipulating them in a manner to justify, more or less, its retention as a permanent impost, he said:

“ We now recognise the tax to be a permanent part of our system.”

Good! The income-tax, among others, is now regarded as a *permanent* part of our system of raising money, but do we regard this enormously productive source of income as a thing to be fostered and cared for, as a source of national life-blood, which, if cut off, would

cause atrophy and death to the body politic; or do we regard it as a thing to be buffeted and abused by some, envied and hated by others, and held up to slander and contumely by, perhaps, half the people of the land?

That many of us take the last-mentioned course is an indubitable fact, but in doing this we show a lamentable lack of that fair play, upon which we, as a people, pride ourselves so much, and we display, at the same time, a deplorable absence of tact, prudence and common sense.

All classes possess the inalienable right of claiming equality of consideration, and yet it delights a certain section of the people to hold the rich and well-to-do classes up to contumely, merely because they *are* rich and well-to-do; while the present Government, indeed all Governments, seem to take a positive delight in "rubbing it in," by assuming a foolish and unnecessarily hostile attitude towards British tax-payers as a body.

Now in most things of life, if we have a valuable asset, a reliable source of income, or any good thing which yields us an abundant supply of what we need, we do our best to safeguard our precious possession by wise precaution and judicious protection, so that it may come to no possible harm, and in this we are right.

**Judicious
Protection**

But in regard to the valuable national asset we possess in our rich and well-to-do folk and in our large philanthropic public, we do nothing of the kind. Governments and these modern Socialists take that course which severs rather than connects, which divorces rather than weds; and if we alienate the sympathies and good will of those who help us, of those who serve us loyally and well, we shall assuredly suffer for our folly sooner or later.

Governments' safeguard and the people's good lie in keeping on excellent terms with those who supply the wherewithal; and this is sure, that if the complaisant good will of the tax-payers of this country, and of that vast army of private helpers, upon which so much depends, be too rudely shaken and disturbed, trouble will surely arise.

CHAPTER XXIII

COUNTY COUNCILS AND SMALL HOLDINGS—MISCARRIAGE OF PUBLIC DUTY

THE power of the British tax-payer has, hitherto, been potential rather than actual, but the power is there, nevertheless. Given the opportunity, it will develop into an active living force, before which even Governments might be swept away. Combination, cohesion and organisation are all that are required to convert an easy-going passivity into strong energetic action, and those who are responsible for the present uncompromising attitude towards the entire body of British tax-payers, and towards that which is good and noble in the British people, should beware lest this thing happen.

The triumph of right over wrong in the recent London County Council Elections and the defeat of Socialism in the last Municipal Elections are but exemplifications of what can be done by even a little combination, but if the great body of the tax-payers of the Empire be once convinced that organised combination in defence of their rights be necessary, then it is not a Government nor a succession of Governments, nor a fervid band of social Ishmaelites, that will bar the way to reform.

Government and those concerned might listen to this doctrine with advantage!

Let us beware of that pernicious type of so-called Socialism that teaches violence and unrest, for it is cer-

tain that by such means national prosperity can never come.

And this is true, that, in one way and another, we find our best interests have suffered through the efforts of those who have been pulling and hauling them in this direction and that, and we are sick and tired of it all. Whigs, Tories, Liberals, Conservatives, Liberal-Unionists, Radicals and Labourites, Cobdenites, and now Socialists, have all had a turn at us, and played with us like a shuttlecock, with their own particular little Party game as a battledore, and so—our interests have been tossed about one to the other.

**Doubt,
Disbelief
and Self-
Interest**

Another thing, of which we should beware, is the fatal habit of hesitancy, doubt and disbelief, which is a marked characteristic of the day. Bring along your scheme, it matters not what it may be, and you will have a veritable host of scoffers and disputants ready to pull it to pieces.

In Parliament or out of it, it is the same, always doubt, ridicule, derision, opposition, always a " Party " against it, always somebody ready to pull down remorselessly what it has taken better men such infinite pains to build up. Your scheme may be as hollow as a drum, or as solid as Mother Earth, it is all the same to your iconoclast; his business is to destroy, and he does it in many cases. " Oh, I can't stomach that." " You won't catch me believing this." and the short, but trenchant " bally rot " are common sayings in the mouths of thousands of people, whose only warrant for their utterance is that spirit of foolish unbelief which possesses so many of our countrymen.

Coupled with this spirit of unbelief there is the powerful spirit of self-interest, which bars the way to many a scheme of reform. Financial interests, political interests, or other personal interests always have something to say against any measures necessitating alteration in existing conditions, and these *vested interests* will surely rise up in wrathful judgment against the scheme propounded in these pages.

There are those living to-day who remember the fierce opposition and the derisive contempt with which STEAM was received years ago.

Steam is a mighty power to-day.

Then it was only yesterday, as it were, that Marconi met with so deadly an opposition from those who had something to lose, or fancied they had, from the adoption of his scheme—opposition that would have broken down a weaker man; yet wireless telegraphy is an accomplished fact to-day.

And so it is all along the line. Those who build up will always find many who are ready to pull down; always doubters and deriders; always those, who, for some reason or other, will surely bar the way to progress and reform.

But in spite of this let us be loyal to ourselves.

“ This above all—to thine own self be true;
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.”

Let us banish from our minds all these doubts and fears, which those who have *some* purpose to serve would make us entertain, and believe firmly and steadfastly that

Result of
Unwise
Laws

poverty is nothing but the result of unwise laws, which may easily be altered; that pauperism is an economic condition absolutely unnecessary; that general prosperity is quite within our reach; and that the regeneration of the British people depends solely upon the amendment of fiscal laws and wise helpful State administration.

And let us, above all, realise once and for all that :

“ Our doubts are traitors
And make us lose the good we oft might win
By *fearing* to attempt.”

Attitude
Assumed

A further interesting point in the consideration of this vital question is the general attitude we assume in dealing with it, which may be described as an attitude of condonation, excuse, exoneration and puerile weakness, amounting almost to criminal negligence.

It is not surprising that there should be this general inaneness because it has been the fashion to believe for the last half-century, or thereabouts, that the agricultural industry of Great Britain was in a hopelessly impossible condition, and that it was mere waste of time and sheer nonsense to try to do anything for it.

In a few words this exactly describes the feelings of the British people towards Britain's great land industry; and when practically a whole nation holds such pernicious views, it is no wonder that failure is excused, blundering forgiven, and maladministration condoned.

The Small Holdings Act of 1892 is a case in point. This Act was especially designed to afford relief to the people by encouraging the development of Small Holdings in Great Britain. The operation of the Act was made over

to County Councils, and in ten years those municipal bodies had succeeded in acquiring but the insignificant amount of 569 acres.

Now when Parliament legislates in the interests of the people, in order that they may find some relief from the hardships of life, and entrusts the working of its measures to certain official corporate bodies, it is at least expected that those officials will take the trouble to rightly interpret the laws and administer them with intelligence and promptitude. Failing this, there should be righteous condemnation and punishment.

Righteous
Condemna-
tion

Here is an actual result.

One of the ablest contributions of modern times to the necessity of creating a great agricultural industry in the country, *Land Reform*, by the Right Hon. Jesse Collings, M.P., page 207, has the following:

“The County Councils—with some exceptions, which will be noticed—have practically ignored the duty placed upon them. For the most part they have not even appointed advisory committees to consider the question, which under the fifth clause of the Act, it made it compulsory for them to do.”

In other instances the author of *Land Reform*, points out that many of the County Councils regard the Act as:

“A land speculation, on which—out of regard for the rates—they are not warranted to enter.”

While on page 208 of the same work we find the writer, in accounting for the failure of the Act, saying:

“Members of County Councils, in the rural counties,

do not in this respect represent the agricultural labourers. They are mostly of the territorial class—of the old quarter sessions type. They are kindly disposed towards the labourers, and would do what they think is good for them, but always as labourers. They have not as yet accepted the idea that the creation of a class of land-owning peasants would be good for agriculture itself, as well as for the community.”

In a word the County Councils, for reasons which were wholly insufficient, and certainly reprehensible, have thought fit to deride and set at naught a great Parliamentary measure which was enacted in the National interests, and for the help and benefit of a large section of our workers, which finds the conditions of life so hard as to be wellnigh hopeless.

Miscarriage
of Public
Duty

So great a miscarriage of public duty calls for sharp official reprimand and fitting punishment as well as public condemnation.

This is what *Land Reform*, page 212, says on the subject:

“ Taking into consideration all these adverse circumstances, the Small Holdings Act cannot fairly be described as a failure. Up to the end of 1892 eight County Councils in England and Wales had put the Act into operation. They had, at that date, acquired a total area of 569 acres of land for the purpose of small holdings.”

It seems clear enough, even to the poorest intelligence, that if County Councils “ have practically ignored the duty placed upon them ” while only “ eight ” of them have acquired but 569 acres in ten years, the Small Hold-

ings Act of 1892 is a most unmitigated failure, and is, to all intents and purposes, as dead as a kippered herring.

It is equally clear that if County Councils have, for the insufficient reasons referred to in *Land Reform*, practically killed a useful Act, which was intended to give some relief to the people, they have committed a grave offence against the commonweal, and it follows, in logical sequence, that where an offence is committed, condemnation should follow, *not condonation and excuse*.

No great military commander in the world's history ever won his battles by excusing and condoning the faults and failures of his lieutenants; and no nation can remain great and prosperous that persistently exonerates its office-bearers from all blame attaching to maladministration of public affairs, and glosses over every offence against the commonweal. Such an attitude is worse than mawkish and imbecile; it is positively *destructive* and wellnigh criminal, and the sooner we accept this plain wholesome fact, the better it will be for us.

The men who serve the State on these corporate bodies were not pitchforked into their position, whether they liked it or no. All rate-payers are acquainted with their methods of candidature, and know full well how eagerly every seat in the council is competed for.

These municipal councillors spare no pains in getting elected to the position they occupy, and when they have secured what they covet, it is only fair to expect that they will do their duty.

This Small Holdings Act of 1892 affords a striking example of municipal administrative failure of a grave nature, and of insubordination to the Imperial Govern-

ment; and we ask:—WHY have they so cruelly wronged the people?

Another aspect of this question which requires looking into and adjusting, is the menace to the body politic involved in municipal insubordination.

Passive
Resistance

Here we have an example showing how easy it is for municipal bodies to thwart the Imperial Government and do a wrong to the people by the mere process of passive resistance, and unless the Imperial Government assumes a firm attitude in the matter, and exercises a sharper control over local governments, matters will go from bad to worse, and the unfortunate people will be as completely humbugged, and their best interests fooled away by these municipal councils, as they have been in so many other directions.

Government should never have entrusted the working of an important Act like that of 1892 to the incompetency of municipal councils; it was an Imperial measure, and its operation should have been the especial care of the central authority. Nevertheless, County Councils *were* entrusted with the working of the Act, and we have seen how signally they have betrayed their trust.

For *fifteen years* the people have been waiting and hoping for some relief from their burdens, and they have waited in vain because County Councils, forsooth, stood in their way.

The people of Great Britain have a bitter grievance against local governments, and they ask, in the name of JUSTICE, that the whole matter be looked into by Government, and their grievance redressed.

CHAPTER XXIV

COMPULSORY SALE OF LAND—WILL THE LANDLORDS
SUFFER?

NOW we come to the further considerations of, perhaps, the most important link in the long chain of lost opportunities. Though there is unanimity of ideas, those ideas are not carried out with that strong impulsive force which makes for, and commands complete success.

There is a general concensus of opinion among the best authorities on the agricultural condition of Great Britain, that relief from the present intolerable pressure, arising from congested labour markets, is only coming from the land, and they affirm that this can best be brought about by the creation of a number of small holdings.

They further point out that the surest way of guaranteeing success and securing high-class culture and the maximum yield from the land is to follow the French and German systems of creating "Occupying Owner-ships." Of this there is no room for doubt, for not only have those countries adopted this system, but it is practically universal in all European countries.

It is a perfectly sound argument, therefore, as far as it goes, but unfortunately, like so many of our measures of public utility, it does not go far enough; it falls short of the mark and lacks that one essential to complete success—thoroughness and completeness!

Thorough-
ness and
Completeness
required

A *complete* system of small occupying ownerships, spread far and wide over the length and breadth of Great Britain, would raise the people of England to a height of *general* prosperity never before attained, and there is no doubt about this because we have the example of half a dozen neighbouring States as a safe guide.

An incomplete, half-hearted measure, however, would only afford *partial* relief to the few, and this is not exactly what we want to accomplish.

We want to offer to the whole of our workers immunity from want and guarantee them against that general precariousness of life which is their portion to-day, and we know full well that this can only be accomplished by dealing with the land question in a whole-hearted, comprehensive manner.

It is not the *thousands* of small holdings that will help the position but the *millions*, and, as we have already seen, there is ample room in the Kingdom for literally and truly *millions* of such occupying ownerships. Let us, then, not make the unpardonable blunder at the very outset, of giving to the nation a paltry, timid measure of help, but one full to the brim, of generous support and assistance.

We hear it said: "Oh! but it would be a gross injustice to the landlord to take his land from him by force and give it to Jack, Tom and Harry."

Let us look into this matter for a moment.

The land on this globe of ours is intended by the Creator to produce good for, and give occupation to, the people. This, unquestionably, is its primary use.

If, by the chance of war, or the accident of circum-

stances, the land of a certain country happens, in the course of time, to get into the hands of a few owners, who, owing to economic conditions, or for other reasons, cannot, or will not, cultivate it in a manner to ensure the best results to the Nation, it follows, as an incontrovertible fact, that national interests must suffer.

If national interests suffer from such a cause, it is the manifest duty of the State to take such steps as may be necessary to ensure a return to those conditions under which national prosperity may be re-established and maintained.

This, in a nutshell, is the precise condition of our land industry to-day.

The land of our country has, for certain reasons, which need not be referred to here, got into the hands of a few men who cannot, or will not, cultivate it in a manner to ensure the best results to the Nation, and unless this condition be changed, the country will continue to suffer immense loss from neglect of this, its greatest industry.

It has been shown in these pages how colossal this loss is, and how it ramifies among all sections of the people; how the taxable area of the country has been reduced by the blighting effect of the decay of a great industry; and how Government is forced to rely more and more on direct taxation of a galling and, in some cases, of an unjust nature, because of this restricted area. It is seen how the heavy pauper burden has become intolerable because the land can neither employ nor feed the people, and, therefore, a clear case is established in favour of reform, and reform of a drastic nature.

Let us look at the matter from the landlords' stand-

point first of all. What has he done with his heritage during the last fifty years, say; has it paid him, has it brought him in that return which good property should, or has it not? The landlord himself knows best! The public have been led to believe that land is a bad investment, that in many instances it is not worth the holding, and that many a big landowner, after paying the necessary upkeep expenses on his farms, hardly gets anything out of his estates.

If this be the case then one obstacle, at least, in the way of a different condition of land tenures disappears automatically, as no man can reasonably expect to hold on to a condition of things which is distinctly inimical to his own interests.

**Small
Occupying
Ownerships**

Then what is his position in regard to sale? Can it be proved that he would be a loser under a system of compulsory sale to Government for the purpose of small occupying ownerships?

Let us also look into this question for a moment.

During the last eighteen months the writer has been looking for a little property and has had scores of first-class agricultural estates, with excellent mansions, dwelling houses, farms, cottages and farm buildings; complete estates in fact, offered to him at prices varying from £15 to £28 per acre. Several of these estates have been inspected and reported upon by a land expert, and in every case the land was said to be good agricultural land.

It stands to reason, therefore, that when the State comes in as purchaser every regard will be paid to market prices. Under the Small Holdings Act of 1892, County

Councils in all cases paid a good deal more for the land they purchased than the prices for which landowners are perfectly willing to sell it to *private* buyers; and as the Imperial Government would, in every case, be guided by market prices, we fail to see where the *injustice* comes in.

If the injustice consists in the *compulsory* nature of the business, then, while we can readily understand and appreciate such a feeling, we could not altogether condemn it for such a reason, because we could point to an equal measure of injustice in a good many other matters pertaining to the administration of the affairs of the commonwealth, which are actually acquiesced in and agreed to by that very class which would condemn this occupying ownership scheme. The income-tax, poor-rates, death-duties, and other items of a kindred nature in the domestic life of the nation are all *compulsory*, but that fact alone is insufficient to condemn them on the score of injustice. None of us like these compulsory attentions on the part of Government, but as loyal subjects we recognise the necessity for their existence, and we submit to them.

Let us adopt precisely the same course in respect to new land tenures, always bearing in mind this important difference, that, whereas in one case our millions are, as we have seen, spent in vain in many directions, in this case, those who are asked to give up something would receive in return *full market value for that which they part with*.

Then, again, there is the pressing necessity for removing this question of cultivating our soil to the best pos-

sible results all round—to the individual, the people and the State—from the region of polemics.

If we take the trouble to study the works of most of the writers on the subject, and the speeches of those who are patriotic enough to touch on the matter on public platforms, we shall find that, in nearly every case, a more or less controversial attitude is assumed.

Indeed, this simple question, the solution of which is so apparent, is treated by many writers and speakers with almost the same amount of academic discussion as astronomers contrive to cast about the origin of star clusters and those mysterious nebulae, which are sunk in space to such an appalling distance that the light takes centuries to reach our earth.

There is nothing far away or abstruse about this simple question as to whether we shall or shall not cultivate our fields, and the wonder is that we have been beguiled so long by those who would make a mystery of it. There is no room for discussion, and none for doubt; nor is there the faintest chance of losing our way, because the path, and the *only* path to our destination, lies plainly before us, and is as straight as an arrow.

This is the question:—There is a town with, for instance, a hundred thousand inhabitants; it has its usual complement of professions, trades and manufacturing industries, but, nevertheless, it cannot employ and support its entire population.

Many of the people are badly off because of lack of employment, and numbers, indeed, are on the verge of starvation; while many who possess energy and enterprise, make a bold dash for freedom and prosperity by

leaving the town and seeking their fortunes in foreign parts.

In the vicinity of the town, and surrounding it on all sides, there are, we will imagine, large tracts of splendid agricultural land lying untilled because of the foolish yet suicidal policy of the urban council, or governing body, in attracting the people to important urban industries and pursuits, and leaving out of consideration the still more important land industry, which, in their blind fatuity, they have left neglected and uncared for.

Matters having reached a crisis, it is found that, if these valuable lands be properly cultivated, employment will not only be found for all those who are unemployed in the town, but for a good many more besides; while it is also certain that the creation of a large, prosperous agricultural industry just outside the town, and encompassing it in all directions, must necessarily largely increase the demand on the town's production of manufactured wares and other goods.

A simpler question was never put before the human race, and the answer to it is so easy that the wonder is that we hesitate, for it is just at this spot that we shall find the key to the position.

We, the people, do not hesitate nor have we ever hesitated. We know how this question should be settled, and ought to have been settled long ago, but *we* have never been allowed to have a voice in the matter. The people know perfectly well that where we have valuable land it ought to be cultivated, and cultivated for all it is worth, just as we know that, wherever we possess a valuable asset of any kind, of whatsoever nature in this world, it is

**A Simple
Question
and
a Simple
Answer**

our plain duty to work it in every way to our advantage and profit.

The people know clearly enough that their real interests have been shamefully sacrificed by those whom they have set up to regulate and govern *national* affairs, just as we have seen that the interests of those who lived in the town—which we use as an illustration—were sacrificed by the weak yet destructive policy adopted by *its* governing body.

Let us then lift this simple question of whether or not we should cultivate our fields, out of the region of recondite polemics and place it in the simple category of ascertained facts.

Every schoolboy knows that a highly tilled field is more valuable than a piece of waste common of similar size, and that the one gives employment to, and produces something for, a certain number of people, while the other produces nothing.

Why, therefore, do we invest so elementary a matter with all the fuss and bother that centres round the solution of an abstruse scientific problem, which requires great skill and deep learning to unravel, instead of treating it with elementary simplicity?

WHY?—The answer is, because, in the first place, we have been “sold” by Governments which have been too weak to act up to the courage of their convictions, and secondly, because we have been humbugged and tricked by every political party in the country, whose interests do not lie in the direction of land reform.

Out of this atmosphere of weakness and political prestidigitation has been evolved a feeling of doubt and

uncertainty in the minds of the British people as to the possibilities, or capabilities, of agriculture, and our reason has become muddled and befogged to such an extent that we are really incapable of forming sound, practical, common-sense views on a subject that is, in reality, simplicity itself. Once we divest our minds of all this obfuscation, the cardinal fact will stand out clear and sharp that, in agriculture, we have the most important factor in the solution of those social and economic difficulties which envelop, as with a dark cloud, the people of this country.

CHAPTER XXV

EFFECT OF CREATING SMALL HOLDINGS—A NEW
AND POWERFUL BODY OF ELECTORS

A New and
Powerful
Body of
Electors

WE might usefully refer again to the SMALL HOLDINGS question in order to see how, if properly manipulated, it might be made one of the most potent factors ever placed in the hands of a political party. Assuming that the two great political parties in the country—the Liberals and Liberal-Unionists—are desirous of legislating in the true interests of the commonwealth, both would naturally be equally interested in the formation of a new and powerful body of electors consisting of *several millions* of small occupying owners who would vote solid for law and order or, in other words, for the conservation of all that which, in the British Constitution, is just, equitable, right, loyal and patriotic. Create your host of small-landed proprietors, occupying owners, or whatever it may please you to call them, and you will have formed the most conservative body of electors in the country; for it is an axiom that no man guards so jealously his rights and privileges, and conserves that which conduces to law and order, as does your agricultural proprietor.

But there must be no shilly-shallying, half-hearted measures. What is required is a down-right, comprehensive system of occupying ownerships, which, in its broad sweep, would embrace every acre of the land from John o' Groat's to the Land's End, and from the Wash to Milford Haven.

We have seen that France, with her 92,442,745 acres of cultivated area, has 5,550,000 small holdings; Germany, with her 108,211,772 acres of cultivated area, has 5,558,317 small holdings; Hungary, with her 54,303,938 acres of cultivated area, has 2,795,885 small holdings, while we, with our 48,000,000 acres under cultivation, have only 1,104,637 small holdings.

Foreign
Examples

Even little Belgium, with her tiny 4,350,000 acres of cultivated area, has as many as 829,625 small holdings.

Give to our country a small holding's system pretty much on the same principle as we find obtaining in every prosperous State in Europe, and our 48,000,000 of "cultivated" area will give us, on the German basis, 2,500,000 agricultural holdings; on the French basis, 2,850,000; on the Hungarian basis, 2,500,000; and on the Belgian basis, 9,000,000.

But if we bring the twelve to fourteen millions of acres of waste land before referred to, into the field of operations and add them to our 48,000,000 of cultivated area, our agricultural holdings would then amount, on the basis of the small holdings of the four countries above given, to:

3,330,000; 3,800,000; 3,333,000 and 12,000,000 respectively, instead of the miserable 1,104,637 "Holdings" of sorts now on the agricultural register.

If a vast body of new electors is imported into the politics of the State, a body, moreover, created out of the prescience of a wise Government, it follows that, apart from the well-known conservative bias of all agriculturists, the Government would, at least, ensure the

good will and support of those whom they had brought into existence. The offspring is, as a rule, loyal to the parent, and your host of new agricultural electors would naturally be loyal to those who gave them birth, particularly so if, in their wisdom, Government would but lead them by the hand and give them, while in their infancy, just that judicious amount of encouragement and support which is essential to all young life.

We want to get the "best possible" result out of the land—for the people, the tax-payers and the Government; and, above all, we want to absolutely guarantee the maintenance of law and order and the building up of that abiding, general prosperity which we know full well can only come out of the creation of widespread industries, wherefrom the people may find full and profitable employment and—PEACE.

Create your army of agricultural voters; train them to habits of thrift and industry; encourage them by wise measures of help; give them every facility for the transit of agricultural produce throughout the country; bring them into direct touch with the consumer by the establishment of a multitude of municipal markets all over the kingdom, and you will have done that which will assuredly bring about conditions of prosperity.

If you create a prosperous agriculturist, you give him a solid stake in the country, and once you do this you invest him with those attributes which make for law and order, and which are openly hostile to revolution and chaos.

Armed and equipped with the necessary weapons of offence and defence, your new army of agricultural

voters would become the most potent factor in the field of modern politics, and the Government of the day could use this new force with powerful effect. Among other things, it could be used with deadly results against the advancing ranks of Red Socialism, which, taken in flank by this new and unlooked-for foe, would have to bring about a speedy change of front or suffer crushing defeat.

We have seen, in the foregoing pages, how Socialism in Germany met with a fatal defeat in the general elections in January of last year because industrial Germany, particularly the agricultural industry, being in a highly prosperous condition, *wanted peace*, not riot and tumult, and she got it. Go to Germany to-day, and you will find a state of prosperity unequalled by any civilised State in the world—general prosperity and social and economic peace.

This powerful reinforcement of the political power of the State used against the forces of this modern destructive Socialism, would destroy them as surely as the fervid sunbeams melt the snowflakes, while they might be used with equal force in many directions to “right the wrong” and to sweep away much that is bad and hurtful in the administration of national affairs.

Create this multitude of new voters, treat them justly and with consideration, and you will have a new political power before which Irish Nationalists, Socialists, Little Englanders, Empire wreckers and paid political agitators of all sorts will be swept away as easily as the strong autumnal gales sweep away the fallen leaves of the orest.

CHAPTER XXVI

PHYSICAL DEGENERATION OF THE PEOPLE—MEANS OF
UPLIFTING THEM

IT would be unjust to the British people if, in writing on a subject so momentous to their well-being, we failed to dwell on that aspect of it which is so intimately connected with, and interwoven in, the very fibres of their physical lives.

For a good many years past the "Physical Degeneration of the British People" has been a subject of widespread public interest. Royal Commissions have been appointed to inquire into the matter; public speakers and writers galore have dwelt forcibly on the lamentable decadence of the people's physical strength; while all the evidence afforded by the reports of official investigations conclusively proves that this decadence is practically universal among the masses; that the damage has been done; the evil wrought; and that the curse clings to a large section of the British people with the same fearful tenacity as the deadly folds of the great constrictor serpent cling to his prey.

Space forbids a lengthy disquisition on the subject, but room must be found for a couple of the latest references to it.

The Daily Express of August 10, 1907, has the following, which is here given *in extenso*.

DEGENERATION AND POVERTY
REMARKABLE FIGURES FROM BOARD SCHOOLS
STUNTED GROWTH

Alarming
Statistics

“ Remarkable proof of the physical degeneration caused by poverty has been obtained by an investigation as to the heights and weights of the board-school children of Glasgow.

“ Nearly 73,000 children were examined in the course of this investigation, which was the most extensive ever undertaken in Britain. A report by Dr W. Leslie Mackenzie, medical member of the Local Government Board for Scotland, and Captain A. Foster, Inspector of Physical Training, on the statistics collected, was issued last evening as a Blue book.

“ According to this the children were divided up into four classes, those living in one room, two rooms, three rooms, and four rooms and over. The average weight and height of the boys, who ranged in age from five to eighteen years, was as follows:

	Weight in Pounds.	Height in Inches.
One-roomed.	52.6	46.6
Two-roomed.	56.1	48.1
Three-roomed	60.6	50.0
Four-roomed	64.3	51.3

For girls the figures were:

	Weight in Pounds.	Height in Inches.
One-roomed.	51.5	46.3
Two-roomed.	54.8	47.8
Three-roomed	59.4	49.6
Four-roomed	65.5	51.6

ONLY ONE CONCLUSION

“ ‘These figures show that the one-roomed child, whether boy or girl, is always on the average distinctly smaller and lighter than the two-roomed,’ states the report; ‘and the two-roomed than the three-roomed; and the three-roomed than the four-roomed. The numbers examined are so large, and the results are so uniform, that only one conclusion is possible: that the poorest child suffers most in nutrition and in growth.

“ ‘It cannot be an accident that boys from one-roomed houses should be 11.7 lb. lighter, on an average, than boys from four-roomed houses, and 4.7 inches smaller. Neither is it an accident that girls from one-roomed houses, are, on the average, 14 lb. lighter, and 5.3 inches shorter than the girls from four-roomed houses.’ ”

And in the same issue there is this evidence from a separate source and from a different part of the kingdom.

ONE CHILD IN EVERY TWO DIES

“ Dr Francis J. Allan, medical officer of health for Westminster, states in his annual report, that of 1,278 children born in 363 families during the past three years, 639, exactly one in every two, died before reaching the age of one year.”

Hundreds of similar proofs of this terrible physical degeneration of our unfortunate fellow countrymen are supplied, alas! from different directions, and there is any amount of official proof that, height, weight and chest measurement for age, the young of the British masses

are far below any European nation in these test standards of national physique, and, indeed, actually below the standard of alien races in our midst:—the Jewish children, for example. There is also equally indisputable evidence that, among the children of the poor, over 80 per cent. of them suffer from imperfect and rotten teeth: an infallible sign of physical deterioration.

Here, again, we have to ask:—WHY?

Why should the British people, of all people in the civilised world, be singled out for this fearful yet undeserved degradation?

Why should there be such Misery and Degradation?

What have they done that their rulers should take upon themselves the awful responsibility of pauperising a people, and reducing them to a state of misery, the like of which can find no parallel in any State of Europe, or in any civilised country in the world?

Why should our people be driven from healthy, life-giving occupations in the wholesome open country and herded together, like sheep in a pen, in the crowded and unhealthy purlieus of great cities, where it is known they live in hard, grinding poverty, and in a foul atmosphere of moral and physical degradation?

Why is it that millions of our fellow countrymen and women and children should be reduced to a condition that excites the pity of the more fortunate of the British people, as well as the wonder of all foreigners, and which demands the outpouring of copious and ever-flowing streams of charity from State and Public?—WHY?

Let the Governments, past and present, answer.

Let those political parties, which have been using the people's interests to serve their own needs, answer.

Let the Cobdenite school, who, over half a century ago, destroyed agriculture and cut off the people's best and surest source of employment, answer.

For half a century, and more, have Governments, political parties, and Cobdenites inflicted a cruel injustice on millions of unoffending people; and because their political or personal interests stood in the way, they would not right the wrong they had done. Let them see to it. Let them be called upon to render an account of their stewardship, so that they may receive the due reward of their work. Let them be called upon to make restitution to a cruelly wronged and undeservedly degraded people, and let that restitution be full and complete and speedily made.

Strength of
the Masses
Sapped

But in spite of the miserable condition to which so many of our people have been reduced, there are not wanting those who will endeavour to controvert the position of affairs by the usual methods of cheap scepticism, by assuming the "bally-rot" attitude, or by pointing to the fact that as we excel in various feats of athleticism and are continually "breaking records" in running, cycling and the rest of it, we cannot be deteriorating in physical fitness.

This line of argument is the quintessence of meretriciousness, but it is, nevertheless, convincing enough to some people.

In the first place our athletes are the pick of the race, and they are not drawn from that unfortunate section of the people whose deplorable condition we are here considering.

Rome had her array of splendid gladiators, who main-

tained her prowess in the public arenas, when her citizens were sunk in excesses of debauchery and vice, and her manhood effeminated by unbridled indulgence; yet physical decay had sapped the strength of the people, and Rome sank to rise no more as a great world empire.

The strength of the great masses of our people has been sapped by other causes than those which contributed to Rome's downfall, yet the results are not dissimilar.

Go, watch the crowds in any of our great manufacturing towns, and you will soon become aware of the effect of a couple of generations of town life on the people.

Watch them at our holiday resorts on any Bank Holiday, and you will seek in vain for that splendid type of manhood and womanhood which was our boast two or three generations back. Pallid, under-sized, narrow-chested and narrow-shouldered men and women you will find moving about in a listless, half-hearted way, that is, indeed, sad to behold, but you will look in vain for that breezy briskness and frolicsome gaiety which is as natural to young men and maidens as water is to the duck. Go a little further afield, to the outskirts of your holiday resorts, to your woods and quiet places, and you will find your young men and maidens, instead of indulging in that *gaieté de cœur* which is but the external evidence of a sunshiny mind, in positions which can only indicate the working of a mind depressed and degenerated by unhealthy physical and mental surroundings.

In every park or place of public resort in the Kingdom, particularly in provincial places, is the spectacle to be met with, and it is a matter for general comment. In some places it is carried to such an extent that it

Moral as well
as Physical
Deterioration

amounts to a scandal, and respectable, clean-minded citizens have taken to avoiding certain localities.

Let us carefully note this fact: nowhere else in the civilised world will such sights be met with as may be seen on any Sunday evening or holiday evening in any of our public resorts. In France, Italy, or Germany, the people enjoy themselves in a gay, bright fashion, and on the occasion of their *Fêtes* or *Festas* hundreds and thousands of young couples may be met promenading in the woods or other quiet places, but never do you see the slightest approach to indecency.

The British people, or at all events a certain section of them, stand alone in this respect, and the question naturally has to be asked:—WHY?

The answer is simple enough, yet deadly in its simplicity, because, in breaking down the physical body you have, at the same time, seriously impaired the moral being. Lower a man's physique, breed him in the stifling atmosphere of an overcrowded city; environ him with poverty and its companions—misery and despair; poison him with the foul miasma arising from life's degradations, and you will produce just the type we see about us to-day in every part of this fair country of ours.

Shame on us as a people that we have permitted this to go on for so long!

Shame, fourfold shame, on all those who are responsible for this cruel, unredressed wrong.

Who among us can blame these poor wrongdoers, when, through our own wrong done to them, they know not they are offending?

What man among us will dare to cast the stone, when,

through his own wrongdoing, he has brought about his brother's degradation?

Ask these mute millions if they have brought this foul thing on themselves by their own deliberate choice, and how will they answer you? Shall we be able to show that we have done our best to put them in that position which would enable them to help themselves?

Can we prove that we have taken that course in our administration of their affairs that would encourage, support and uplift them into such a position as would enable them to live clean, wholesome lives, and afford them a reasonable chance of attaining a fair share of the good things of this life, and becoming respected citizens, with a stake in their own country? No! a thousand times, No! We have done none of these things, and we know it.

In God's name let us wipe out this foul stain on the civilisation of a great Empire, and purge our souls of a monstrous injustice. We have the means at hand, let us use them.

Let us recognise that in spite of all the humbug and cant of this age, these millions are not represented today in the councils of the Nation, and that they never *have* been represented. They are voiceless as mutes and as impotent as the withered limbs of a cripple. Let us give them speech and motion, and start them on their way to a better life and happier surroundings. Let us infuse into their saddened lives a few bright beams of hope, and develop those conditions which will enable them to attain a higher standard of comfort, and a fair modicum of content, prosperity and peace.

The
People's
Right

This is due to them; it is the people's right, and if we deny this to them we, as a Nation, deserve to suffer.

Governments, political wire-pullers, and those who uphold false doctrines, are all equally responsible for the degradation of a vast section of the British people, and if, after the many warnings that have been given time and again by many speakers and many writers, they still continue the perpetuation of a great injustice, they, and not the people, must be held to blame if a still greater evil arise out of an unredeemed WRONG.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE ONLY POSSIBLE CONCLUSIONS—AN APPEAL TO
THE PUBLIC

THE searchlight of Truth has been freely utilised in the foregoing chapters for the purpose of illustrating to the people of this country the perils with which they are confronted. The Dragon which was slain by St George has again to be encountered, overthrown, and destroyed in the shape of the terrible modern scourge of poverty, pauperism, waste, criminal neglect, and physical degeneration. Slowly, but surely, has this monster been gripping the body politic with all-embracing tentacles, and draining away the vitality and even the life-blood of the Nation.

An earnest endeavour has been made in this book to expose to the public view this rapacious modern Dragon; to describe the many ways in which it has wrought havoc throughout the country; and to show how those who should have followed the example of St George, and have gone out to slay it, have been either too slothful, too indifferent, too self-seeking, or too cowardly to protect the people from its ravages.

The object of the writer has been to arouse the people to a sense of the necessity of taking drastic measures for their own protection and benefit before it is too late. A glorious heritage has been handed down to them by their forefathers and they are bound in honour to

pass it on unimpaired, to those who come after them. In view of the perils with which that heritage is now threatened, they find themselves at the parting of the ways.

Let them beware that they do not take the wrong path. If they continue to walk in the old, broad way of apathy, indifference, and neglect of their own interests, they will assuredly find their ever-watchful enemy ready to complete their destruction. If, on the other hand, they will seek the straight and narrow path which leads to reform and practical legislation, they may yet come into that promised land of national safety and Imperial greatness, which should be the ultimate destiny of all real lovers of their country.

Surely they are not so foolish, when shown the perils of their present position, as to refuse to make the attempt to work out their own salvation as a Nation. Hitherto, they have apparently preferred to let others "think" for them, they have even, ostrich-like, hidden their heads in the sands that they might not see their ever-active enemy.

The startling facts and anomalies revealed in the preceding chapters should be no longer ignored. It is absolutely necessary to "read, mark, learn and inwardly digest" them in order to properly realise all that they mean. The land industry has been so greatly neglected that it has become a source of weakness instead of strength to the country; it compels excessive emigration, because there is no employment on the land; it induces poverty, and creates a pestilential mass of pauperism; and it kills that demand for manufactured goods,

which, under other and better conditions, would undoubtedly come from prosperous agriculture.

It has been clearly shown that the agricultural and fiscal policy of the country for the last half-century has been bringing ruin and unemployment to the people, and that the affairs of the Nation have been so badly managed that it has been involved in heavy financial losses and widespread poverty and degradation in consequence. Indeed, the need for drastic change has been so fully illustrated that it is only necessary now to make some practical suggestions, which, if adopted, may perhaps help to remedy the existing evils and to bring about some of those long-wanted reforms, which should lead the people back into the ways of peace, plenty, and prosperity, from which they have been so sadly straying.

Without the great land industry, trades, manufactures and professions alone cannot support and employ the entire working population of the country. Without any other State aid than the amendment of our fiscal system, the State encouragement of general agriculture, and co-operation with other industries, trades and manufactures, they could maintain themselves in a state of active and progressive prosperity. A system of general agriculture would absorb so large a portion of our working population that an equilibrium would be set up between the supply and demand for labour, which would mean greater independence and better wages for the workers. The land industry, without other State aid than suitable land tenures, a practical scheme of small proprietary holdings, an amended fiscal system, and consistent encouragement to general agriculture, would be

as self-supporting as other industries. The entire question depends, therefore, upon the proper development of the land industry.

Regulations should also be made for the reduction of railway rates to enable producers to send their food-stuffs more quickly and cheaply to market. A multitude of municipal markets should be established throughout the country, and where that is scarcely possible, the producers should co-operate for the purpose of erecting centres for the receipt of their goods, the results of the sales to be placed to their credit. A much greater use could also be made of the facilities offered for the construction of light railways to link the country districts together and enable the home producers to compete with foreign importers.

With the creation of millions of small holdings employment would thus be provided for every man, woman and child in the Kingdom, and with wise and helpful administration the wealth of the country would be vastly increased.

One of the greatest obstacles to the progress and reform is the party spirit in Parliament and municipalities, for it engenders strife and contention and seriously hampers the efforts of the representatives of the people. No one wishes to see it altogether abolished, but very serious efforts must be made to remedy its evil effects and to alter existing methods. Whole-hearted support should be given to measures for the public good, quite apart from party considerations, in fact the spirit of patriotism should rank before the spirit of party, and not be sacrificed to it.

What is really required in the interests of the country is that the great political parties should unite for the amicable settlement of the agricultural and fiscal problems. The Poor Law system in the same way should be thrown into the melting-pot, and so reorganised to meet modern requirements, that it would not be necessary to go on wasting untold millions, as in the past, on State, public, and private charity.

By proceeding on these and other lines, sketched in preceding chapters, it should be comparatively easy to establish Old Age Pensions, to which the State, employers, and the employed could contribute their quotas. An atmosphere of peace, prosperity and happiness would thus be evolved from the foul miasma arising from the poverty, pauperism and despair, which are now the curse of the country, and of which those Socialists, who are really Anarchists, are endeavouring to make so much political capital for the furtherance of their own ends.

With this brief presentment of the important questions dealt with extensively in earlier pages, it only remains for us to ask ourselves:—" Shall we be found wanting as a Nation, when our time comes to be weighed in the balance? Have we used well the talents entrusted to us, or have we hidden them away in a napkin, like the man in the old parable?"

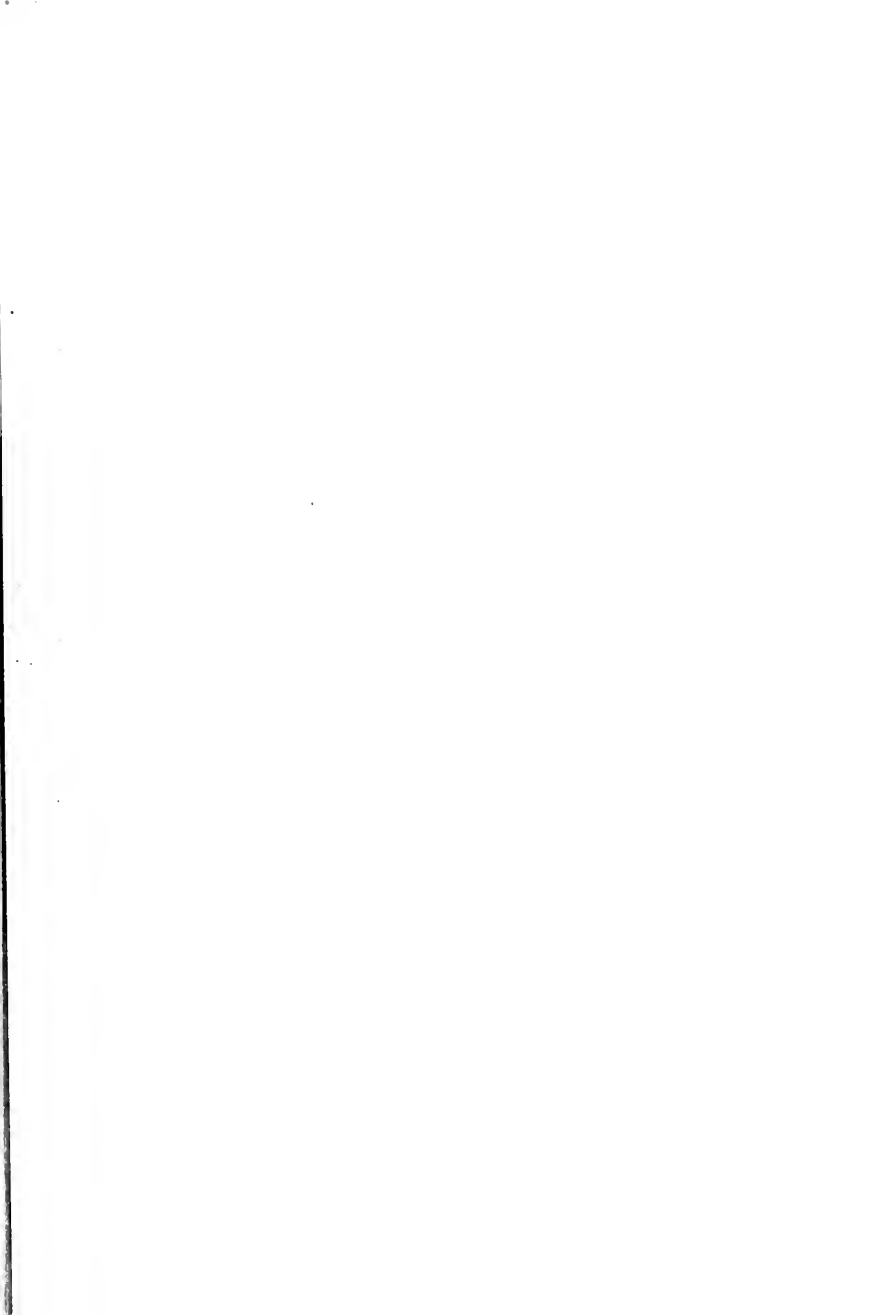
We form a part only of a great Empire. Have we set an example that our Colonies and the world at large may follow with advantage and benefit? Or have we been so neglecting our great destiny as a Nation, and our splendid opportunities as a people, that we incur the danger of

seeing inscribed on the wall, as in letters of fire, the words which foretold the fall of ancient Babylon:

Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin!

It is not too late to ask ourselves these questions, and upon our answer to them and upon the attitude we shall adopt with regard to the vital problems dealt with in this work will greatly depend the future of this country and Empire! Surely we ought to strive, as a Nation, to deserve such an inscription as that which commemorates in St Paul's Cathedral the life-work of Sir Christopher Wren: " Si monumentum requiris circumspice " (If you seek his monument look around).

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