

## THE SOCIAL DISCONTENT.—II. SOME REMEDIES.

THE fundamental position of the laboring man's philosophy, so far as he has a philosophy, is a sound one—that every man is entitled to what he produces; and he will generally assert that if he could get what he produces, he would be satisfied. He would not be, because in most cases he already gets all he produces, and, some economists think, considerably more. Yet undoubtedly, if he could be convinced of this, one great element of his discontent would be removed, and with it not only that soreness regarding the better endowed portion of mankind which is often among the hardest features of the poor man's lot, but also the waste of quack remedies and unjustifiable strikes.

While, in the rough, wages are a measure of production, there are of course few cases where they are an exact one. Under perfect competition they would be, as already said. The effort of all economic science is to free competition, and its efforts are aided by all education and cultivation of the finer feelings. These three categories,—free competition, education, and morality include, so far as I can see, what remedies there are for the social discontent. I do not specifically include politics and invention because, except so far as politics express anything but morality and educated opinion, they are mere wind, though sometimes a tornado; and because invention can be stimulated only by the three general agencies specified. But no remedy that I can see is going to satisfy everybody, and, in fact, I cannot see any remedy that satisfies myself. I do not believe there is any immediate remedy: it has taken some millions of years for Nature to evolve man as he is and society as it is, and, regret it as we may, there is no more reason to believe that now, all of a sudden, all men are going to become capable or enjoy the results of capability, than that they are all at once to become strong and beautiful, and enjoy the results of strength and beauty; and there is no clearer way to evenly distribute one set of results than the other. Under increased knowledge, people are rapidly growing stronger and more beautiful—and richer too: the workingman is easily three, probably

four, times as rich as he was fifty years ago. A little more than half the improvement is in wages, the rest in the cheapened production of what he buys. And the working woman is from four to six times as well off as she was, her wages having risen so much more than the man's. Moreover, if it is any comfort to the wage-earner to know it, his employer's fortune has not increased at anything near the same rate as his own. But so far as poverty has thus been cured, it has been cured like weakness and ugliness and disease, by regular processes of evolution, promoted, of course, by intelligence and morality; and there is not the slightest indication that the cure can be continued in any quicker way. Yet all the indications are that its rate can be accelerated.

I shall treat of what remedies I can see, in the order already indicated. As I intimated last month, I do not feel at all sure that I have anything new to say, and I am very sure that if such great bodies as the readers of *THE FORUM* would only read Mr. Wells' "Recent Economic Changes" and Mr. Mallock's "Labour and the Popular Welfare," there would be little justification for my saying anything at all. Moreover, as I am to treat from a different side some of the details I touched last month, I am in danger of appearing, to the casual reader, to repeat not a little that I said then.

Let us grant that we must take care of those who cannot take care of themselves; let us leave, if you please, those who won't, to the treatment I advocated here last August; and let us go on to consider what can be done for those who can, but are dissatisfied because they cannot make as good a living as some other men. Let us admit, too, that there is reason in their dissatisfaction, so far as they do not unjustly blame the other men, and claim as their own a part of what the other men make.

First, then, as to some economic details bearing upon freedom of competition among those able to compete.

As already said, if competition were perfect, wages would be an exact measure of production. The employers competing against each other would pay labor all that the laborer's production would justify, and pay each laborer according to his productive capacity. Injustice comes from one man getting another "in a hole" where he cannot compete, or from taking advantage of him when he is there by no fault of his own. If he is there by his own fault, perhaps strict

justice, aside from altruism, does not require that he should be relieved; yet it does require that any advantages which may accrue to anybody else from his being in that position, should be equitably shared with him. Competition for those advantages, if it were perfect, would secure him this, *but* if competition were perfect, it would prevent any man capable of producing anything, from being in a position where he could not exchange his productive capacity for value. It may be objected: "But men, even when healthy and capable, are constantly getting into trouble because their trades are overcrowded." True! But perfect competition implies that in response to demand, labor and capital could be instantly shifted from one industry to another—that trades making more than average would at once be entered into by men—enterprisers and laborers alike—from trades making less than average, and so all trades kept healthily and evenly productive. It also implies that laborers would not be forced to take what they could get at any one time or place or even in any one trade, but could instantly find the trade most actively responding to demand, and therefore most needing their services. By this time the objector is probably ready to say: "There's no sense in presupposing any such cases in any society which we (not including Mr. Bellamy, of course) can imagine, and your notion of perfect competition is a pure ideal." That is just what I want the objector to say, and want to say myself. Perfect competition is a pure ideal, and what is worse, there are against it, as against all ideals, innumerable obstacles—time and space (as already said) obstructing each person's being just where and when he is needed, the imperfections of financial arrangements, the limits of knowledge, the uncertainties of nature, and, in fact, of all the conditions of production. And yet, despite all the obstacles, perfect competition is an ideal toward which all civilization is progressing, which is brought nearer by every discovery that conquers time and space or friction of any kind, which all the sciences, especially Economics, are laboring toward, and which every man should strive for. Every step toward it is a step toward the relief of the social discontent, and increase of the social discontent attends every step away from it—every effort to prevent laborers competing for employment or employers competing for labor—every intimidation of a non-union man—every interference with an employer's control of his business.

But the objector may naturally ask: "Do you think you can get along without strikes and lockouts? And yet what are they but

efforts to obstruct competition?" Anything but that! They are strongly competitive, not only between employers and employees for shares of product, but a strike *legitimately conducted* is an admission, by the laborers employed, of the unemployed into freer competition; it is a statement by the former to the latter: "We hold our places to be worth so much; if you can fill them for less, well and good;" and a lockout is a statement by employers to their competitors: "We cannot do business at such and such wages: if you can, take our men and do it." It is only when either side takes the contrary attitude—when the strikers say to the unemployed, "You shall not compete for our places," and when the employers say to other employers: "You shall not compete for our men"—that the strike or lockout becomes an effort against freedom of competition.

"But how about trades-unions: are not they organizations against freedom of competition?" No, not when they live up to their principles, and do not resort to violence to prevent non-union men from competing with them. They have a right to strike, peaceably; for freedom of competition is freedom not to compete, as well as to compete: otherwise competition could not follow lines of least resistance.

I seem, then, to favor trades-unions, and even strikes, as remedies for the social discontent, and within limits I do. But every strong remedy does more harm than good unless it is used with discretion, and the fact that a remedy is good, or even the best, under some circumstances, is no indication that there may not be better remedies under others. The two remedies in question, while of proved value, are by no means yet perfected, either in constitution or application. Both, while legitimately promotive of free competition, are often illegitimately used in restraint of competition. A strike, which ought to be a peaceful, and could even be a friendly, trial of the question whether the laborers' places can be filled at the prices offered, is too often a violent and even criminal means of preventing that question being tried at all.

Yet I am not advocating strikes as *in themselves* necessarily good remedies for the social discontent; badly conducted ones are worse than useless, and at best, conflict is always wasteful. Yet in the present stage of human evolution, there are possible circumstances which are worse than war, and which war alone can cure. But when industrial war degenerates into physical war, whoever is responsible for such degeneration is not only guilty of crime, but (what is germane to the present subject) damages his own cause. A strike endorsed by

public opinion is reasonably sure of success: one marked by violence alienates public opinion, and is almost certain to fail.

The resort to physical force is now reserved by the state to itself, and whenever the state tolerates it under any circumstances except in defence against similar violence, the state permits itself to be over-ridden. The word for such a condition of affairs is simply anarchy, and that is no way out of the workingman's troubles, but is simply a destruction of all the defences of the weak against the strong.

What a strike should be, was indicated by Grand Master Sargent, of the Locomotive Firemen, when he said what it should not be: "A man who will encourage men to strike at a time when thousands of his craft are out of employment, when the business of the country is paralyzed, when men are begging for bread, and when the strike means certain defeat for those who participate in it, displays poor judgment and is unfit to be the leader and counsellor of a labor organization." I quote from an account by Mr. Carroll D. Wright in the "International Journal of Ethics": it does not seem worth while to hunt up Mr. Sargent's exact words. What they mean is that a strike is not justifiable at a time when the strikers need trouble themselves about the unemployed.

It may be questioned, however, in view of many and recent occurrences, and especially of the fact that there never yet was a railroad strike without violence, whether strikes ever can become such unadulterated specimens of free competition as I have pictured. An approximate answer to this may be found, I think, in our experience with elections. In New York City's revolutionary election of 1894, all the disputes at one of the worst polling places in the city were brought to the neighboring University Settlement for arbitration, and the judgments were peaceably accepted in every case. Forty years ago, the disputes would have been settled by the bludgeon and the pistol. At that time, elections in New York City without riot and murder were almost as scarce as railroad strikes without them are still. Labor disputes to-day are about where election disputes were forty years ago; but I believe that forty years hence, labor disputes will be where election disputes are to-day.

The blame for violence in strikes is generally laid on the trades-unions. When it is justly so laid, however, it is because the unions do not live up to their principles. The laws of the unions, although it is not generally known outside of them, prohibit violence; and although the unionists do not live up to their laws more generally

than other people, it is still true that a large portion of the disorder attending strikes is committed by outsiders who love violence for its own sake, and who even would not be admitted into the unions. I do not wish to draw any rose-colored picture of the unions, but we all know that there have been very trying times, even in strikes, when they deserved and received the sympathy of the best people in the community. The strikes of the match-girls and dockers in London, and the sweat-shop tailors in New York are recent cases in point; and a great strike now on at Haverhill, Mass., is absorbing some of the most intelligent sympathies of Boston.

I know personally trades-union officers who are clear-headed, true-hearted, and doing noble work, in leading the unions toward high ideals. Notwithstanding the disgusting and irritating exhibitions which, in spite of such members, the unions often make, they are blunderingly educating themselves by discussions and readings (some of them very bad) and, alas for all of us! by their fearful mistakes; and they have already done much to free competition, and are to do much more.

One of their great services has been to integrate the men into bodies with whom it is possible for employers to treat, and who hold their members up to the treaties. In many cases, especially in Europe, employers have helped the formation of unions, in order that they might have a responsible body of laborers to contract with. This alone has made possible the boards of conciliation and arbitration. These, too, favor freedom of competition by relieving it of many of the obstacles of misunderstanding and ill-feeling. They are composed of equal numbers of representatives of employers and employed, listen to all complaints from either side, settle disputes and establish regulations to prevent them. As the reader probably knows, by these boards the immense coal and iron industries of England and Belgium have been brought from a condition of almost chronic war, into one of almost chronic peace. They have established sliding scales of wages to correspond to changes in profits, and the books are open to the inspection of the boards and their agents. At first the scales were not always faithfully adhered to, partly because experience was not old enough to fit them fairly to all conditions, but they are becoming better fitted, work for longer periods, and are spreading into wider use. In America, the most conspicuous of these boards, so far, are those between the bricklayers and the building masons in New York, Boston and Chicago; and, as I write, the same trades in St. Louis and the other building-trades in New

York announce preparations for similar arrangements. In New York the board has kept both sides in substantial harmony for ten years; in Chicago, eight; and in Boston, four. The window-glass makers also have a joint board of masters and men, who fix wage-rates, and both sides have adhered to them against heavy temptation and loss—the workmen, to their honor be it said, setting the first example. Another important board, though newer of course, is in the electrical industries. I am told (not very authoritatively, however) that although, as in all these boards, the representatives from the two sides are equal, the chairman in this one has never had to use his casting vote. Generally too, in boards of conciliation the world over, the degree of unanimity has been far greater than one would expect from current representations of the employer's greed and the laborer's stupidity. This must be largely due to the educative influence of the boards themselves, as of the trade-unions which are an almost essential preliminary to them. Many students of the subject believe that in the educative power of these two classes of organizations, upon employers as well as employed, lies the great hope of the future. But certainly that is not the only hope.

As already intimated regarding consumption, there is much to be hoped for freedom of competition in production, from improved methods of taxation, especially from the relief of those misnamed "protective" taxes which have lately been progressing in the exact ratio of the laborer's discontent. Some industries are unduly impeded, and others unduly stimulated, by such taxes.

Despite the ignorant cry of "The rich richer and the poor poorer," the relative number of property-holders is increasing, and there is nothing more promotive of free competition than property to fall back upon. The laborer's goods can't wait: if to-day's work is not sold to-day, it can never be sold: it is more perishable than a cargo of ripe fruit; and the laborer cannot afford to do without a day's wages as well as an employer generally can afford to do without a day's profits—a fact obstructive of the laborer's competition. Moreover, there is nothing to make a man respect property like having it. Despite the workingman's frequent theory that property is robbery, in practice he will, in his own case at least, agree with the scientific conclusion that it is important still farther to increase the number of property-holders. The property-holding peasant in France is generally regarded as the bulwark of social order. One reason why he is a better bulwark than his Kansas brother is that, being less specula-

tive and ambitious, he is not so heavily mortgaged. But despite the populism of some of the western landholders (or rather, equity-holders—a much less conservative position), to deport the dwellers in city tenements to suburban cottages which they could be helped to make their own, would be an enormous preventive of many socialistic extremes—especially in that negative and most pestilent form which makes such people oblivious of their political duties. So long as they pay their taxes only in the form of rent, they do not realize that they pay them at all, and suppose that tax-paying is only a socialistic function performed by the rich, and it makes the non-property-holder indifferent by whom or how the money is spent. The error is probably not without influence in making the socialistic exemption in the income-tax appear just. There are of course other methods of increasing the number of property-holders, which should be encouraged.

Related to securing the laborer money is securing him time. A generation ago, even as good an economist as Senior believed that the profit all lay in the last fraction of working time—the weary last hours which really diminished the productive power for each succeeding day. Now the common-sense view is gaining ground that there is some stint, between twenty-four hours a day and one hour, at which a man will produce the most, and that point is rapidly being ascertained—at, in most trades, somewhere from eight to ten hours. It also appears proved, though it was long disbelieved, that there is a similar limit to the productive power of machinery, even from its own constitution, as well as from the constitution of the man tending it.

One of the greatest curses of labor is that while the goods are so perishable, the market is so restricted: a man has got to work within reach of his home, or change his home, with all the cost which that involves to both savings and associations. The only remedies for this are in widening the market and changing the character of the goods. As to the former, unless I am greatly mistaken, the greatest allies free competition has had in this generation are the bicycle and the electric railroad.

As to changing the character of the goods: management—good planning—does not, like labor, stop its production with the day, and can even act at a distance from the manager's home. The same is true of capital. Now all the remedies I have enumerated still leave the wage-earner without these: his main need is to develop the managerial and inventive Ability (we may as well follow Mr. Mallock and give the word a technical character by a big

initial) and be able to compete for its profits. Moreover, as Ability increases, over-productions, bankruptcies, credit panics, and all other commercial disasters and manufacturers' blunders which throw labor out of employment, must diminish; and increased Ability must also demand for its enterprises increased labor and new varieties of it—must, in fact, not only bid higher for labor, but lessen the imperfect adjustments of industry which leave numbers of deserving and capable persons unemployed.

Not only, then, as increasing the laborer's income, but as developing his Ability, it is desirable that he should grow to be a real sharer in the management of his own industry, instead of a machine under the management of somebody else. His second great need is that he should manage his savings as his own capital, instead of lending them to be converted into capital by others. To try to accomplish these two great ends through the state, is simply to make them impossible anywhere—to obliterate the workingman even more thoroughly than now, under an autocrat with all "the insolence of office," and to swallow up his savings in a pool which no one man could have enough interest in to take good care of.

But while this scheme, destructive of character and production, and vainly opposed to the laws of Nature, has been brayed into our ears, there have been, as everybody knows, two reasonable and helpful agencies quietly doing an enormous work toward the desired end. One is profit-sharing. To draw a theoretic distinction true in principle, but, like most economic distinctions taken separately, a little finer than always obtains in practice, managerial ability takes the varying profits, while labor without it cannot rise above fixed wages. But even on this principle, under perfect competition, a laborer exercising any managerial ability—economizing work and material, fitting his work into his neighbor's, or doing any of the thousand things which distinguish an intelligent workman from a routine one—would get, in addition to the wages that the merely routine workman receives, a share of manager's profits. In practice, of course, to thus justly distribute the profits of management is impossible; but something of it is roughly done where wages vary with the capacity of the workmen, or where there is a sliding scale. Yet the advance on the sliding scale may frequently be entirely due to the manager, and therefore unjust to him. The practice of admitting the whole force to participation in profits, generally in proportion to wages, may be more just, theoretically, than a fixed wage is, but it leaves out the

fact that, under it, wage-receivers participate only in the happy accidents, and not in the unhappy ones; and in practice it has sometimes worked discouragingly. The men are not always intelligent and fair enough to put up with lack of dividend when times were bad. In one conspicuous instance in New York, they went on strike when the establishment was making no money, because they did not get the dividends they had had in good times; and the profit-sharing system was abandoned. Nevertheless in many places, among the comparatively few employees of exceptional ability, the system is in successful use; and as workmen gain in character and intelligence, it is sure to spread downward.

The other agency akin to profit-sharing is, of course, coöperation; and so far it seems, in some aspects, to have been more successful. But naturally this is most generally the case in industries where the genius of the captain of industry is least needed. Coöperation has that great disadvantage as compared with profit-sharing—it lacks the captain. But it holds out the hope of great advantages in making the laborer both his own manager and his own capitalist. That of course would offer an ideal education in the relations of Labor, Ability, and Capital, which education will be needed until the laborer has enough of the last two to satisfy him.

Spasmodically, coöperation has been tried through all history, but continuously and increasingly only for just half a century, and that at a rate which (to one who, like me, was familiar with it thirty years ago, and has until lately lost sight of it because of other interests) is simply astounding. By it, the capacity of the British laborer to manage himself, at least up to the point where he must contend with fickle demand and other commercial risks, is already demonstrated. Coöperative production is already an established success in Great Britain *when the coöperative stores take care of the product*: but where that responsibility must be added to those of industrial management, it is still a failure.

Yet to the embryonic extent of a share in a coöperative store, and of doing the voting which ultimately determines the management, virtually one-sixth of the heads of families in England are already successful capitalist managers of labor. The latest statistics at the moment accessible to me show that "The Wholesale," the central source of supply of these stores, manufactured over a million dollars' worth of its own goods in 1892, and bought over a hundred and fifty thousand dollars' worth from other coöperative producers. Its activities alone already cover an appreciative fraction of the whole field

of industry, including banking, some building operations, and the ownership of six steamships. The transactions for the year 1892 amounted to over a hundred and fifty millions of dollars; the functionaries numbered over five thousand, and, in a real though very indirect sense, the interest owned by most of them in the enterprise makes them their own employers.

This has been a very rapid and solid growth, and in that fact lie the indications of the future. Coöperative merchandizing was a brilliant success thirty years ago, but coöperative production was not then assured, even to the limited extent where it was spared the task of marketing the product. But not only has that degree of capacity now been demonstrated within visible reach, but the amount of coöperative business has increased thirty-fold. Its prospects then do not negative the dream that it may eventually absorb all industry. Remote as that possibility must be, it is a much saner dream than the alternate one of state socialism, which proposes to give the power that coöperation reserves for the industrious and frugal and intelligent, to the vote of the stupid and venal proletariat, and by such means to complete, in some political campaign, the task that the strivings of all the ages have but just begun.

Coöperation has been comparatively little used in America, largely because our overwhelming immigration and the consequent diversity of our people render American conditions unfavorable to it. I am not sure that the facilitating of American conditions for this powerful aid to progress is not among the strongest of the many strong arguments for the regulation of immigration.

Now we reach the chief agent for realizing the coöperative dream and every other sane one—our old familiar and “only genuine” panacea, education. It ought to be genuine and a panacea, but in its usually recognized forms, what a failure it has been!—so much of a failure as to largely justify the contempt that “practical men” have felt for it, and much of the preference that the mass shows for following the apostles of the rule of thumb. But what better can be expected from the less fortunate classes, when the education of the most fortunate was until lately such a pitiable farce? Not so pitiable perhaps when every man’s status was fixed, and when the amusement of “elegant letters” met most of the necessities of the case; but ludicrously unfit for modern complications, especially in a country like

ours, of little leisure, new conditions, and seething flux. I do not think we have any idea of the power of education as a remedy for the social discontent, because, in any rational sense, we have but just begun to try it. Thirty-odd years ago, Yale, the college I knew best, while it had plenty of teachers of Theology, Latin, Greek, and Mathematics, and a fair supply in physical science, had not one whose specialty was economics or history, or even a language in which any modern contributions to economics or history have been made—not even the language of Adam Smith, though of course we could have studied him if we had had the chance, and I mention the lack of a professor of English merely as throwing light on the general situation. But we had no chance to study Adam Smith or any other real economist. Even Mill, though he was the acknowledged authority on the science until nearly a score of years later, was closed to us. He was an “infidel,” as, the score of years later, was Spencer, whose “Study of Sociology” the then president ruled out of the course. So a scholar whose specialty was Greek and, later, International Law, put us through parrot-like recitations in economics from a compilation that I often incline to think the very worst book I ever saw, and my trade leads me to see a good many bad ones. What was true of Yale was virtually true everywhere. Of course few if any of the men educated in this fashion have developed well in economics, but they nevertheless include, in various situations, most of the present leaders of popular opinion, and they naturally lead it—nowhere. What wonder that the politico-economic progress of the country, instead of being a steady course toward a definite end, is a zigzag of “landslides”?

Outside the leading universities, the new social learning has not even yet found any adequate place in education, for example: the State-university of Kansas was lately forced to take a professor who will teach, not the accumulated results of economic science, but certain exploded doctrines popular among the ignoramuses of the legislature. The common schools almost everywhere, as everybody knows, are but the footballs of politics, and very low politics at that. A few years ago, a publisher offering a history to the Boston public schools was told that it must be revised to suit the Catholic members of the board, and was directed to a young Irish lawyer who was ready to revise Freeman. The young man's suggestions were obtained, but the history was not revised. Some others undoubtedly were, however; and it would be very strange if books on economics

or civics (a word that it is time to admit into good society) were not occasionally treated in like manner. Note in passing that the education of the whole community would be reduced to the public-school and state-university standard, if you were to introduce socialism, and take the support of private wealth from education. With that pleasing picture, imagine the support of private wealth taken from the fine arts, and the country reduced to the governmental standard in them—to the architecture of the Government buildings throughout the country, and the works of art at the capital! You would reach a philistinism unparalleled in any “civilization” outside of South America and the dark ages. It is of no use to cite against this proposition the governmental support of education and the fine arts in Europe: centuries of great examples and aristocratic guidance are behind it there, and probably even they would be inadequate without the influence of the wealthy private amateur. For that matter, it even looks in France as if mere democratic government were blighting those flowers of civilization—under the Republic, the Paris Opera has gone to the dogs, the new Luxembourg galleries are not a very encouraging symptom, the *décadence* has struck literature, and I am informed by a government professor in Paris that public education is going the same way.

But to return: the best of the instruction books in social subjects, revised by the sages of the school-boards or not, nearly all attempt to cover, with as much fulness as their space permits, the whole territory of their subjects, and hence are forced to dwell entirely inadequately on the portions most needed by the average man. The elementary books on economics, for instance, give no more space to the questions of wages and profits, which concern all men, than they do to banking, though most of the youngsters studying them will never even have a bank-account, let alone manage a bank.

Faith in the saving power of education has been attacked because some of the communities where economic vagaries have flourished, most notably Kansas, have been the least illiterate. This fact only illustrates the fatuousness of what has been called education. We have already glanced at a specimen of it in Kansas itself; and everywhere, a little training, or rather I should say dogmatic instruction, in mathematics and the letters of the past, and a little less in physical science, has, until lately, done duty for education. In social matters, the only effect of such education has been to breed self-conceit—undue confidence in economic theories evolved from the inner

consciousness, and to stimulate undue activity in the evolution of such theories. We are rapidly improving education, it is true, but politics, let alone the condition of the laboring-man, has not yet felt the improvement.

Toward what points, then, should social education be directed? Most of them are, I trust, implied in what I have said of its deficiencies, but all deserve fuller treatment.

Education in the modern broad sense, or even in the hackneyed etymological sense, is the development of the individual. For the man who cannot support himself, the fundamental educational necessity is development of his productive power. This has hardly been attempted at all, and what has been attempted for so many centuries, even in the highest institutions, has been essayed almost exclusively through the second-hand knowledge to be derived from books. Now, happily, in subjects that permit, it is rapidly becoming the mark of a good teacher to use books only as supplementary—to take his pupils out of doors or into the laboratory or (shades of scholasticism!) into the workshop, and put them in the way of getting their education at first hand, and by *doing* something: and it is principally by doing, or watching others do, that the power of doing is developed.

Taking for granted, then, in the new order of things, manual training and the trade schools, let us consider some less obvious matters.

To keep the man of inevitably low productive power contented with the best he can produce, without attempting to appropriate what others produce, he needs economic teaching, and the best teaching is, like that of part of the history course at Johns Hopkins,—and, I presume, in a few other advanced places—from current events. But there is no use in attempting that unless it is going to be done free from what I hope is yet going to be generally diagnosed and recognized as the Philanthropist's Bias. The physician who loses his head through sympathy with his patient, would better seek some other field of usefulness. He and the sentimental philanthropist alike would better restrict themselves to the simple and obvious means of alleviation, but not attempt scientific treatment. Obviously the first thing in healing the discontent is to avoid uselessly exciting it. If to help it, it must be aroused, let it be aroused so far as necessary; but many so-called reformers who are impatient with the remedies Nature has granted us, but do not propose a single new one—even one of the usual wild ones—harangue poor people with recitals of their troubles,

until they are ready for anything—except reason. There is probably no evil in society which would not be mitigated by improved politics and education; and those who bewail the evils can at least point out the bearing upon them of these remedies, and so encourage their cultivation, as well as that of a spirit of hopefulness and reasonable content with the inevitable.

I will spare the reader, until next month, some suggestion of details of the needed economic education, and some discussion of the moral relations of the subject.

HENRY HOLT.

## THE TENEMENT THE REAL PROBLEM OF CIVILIZATION.

IF the report of the New York Tenement-House Committee of 1894,<sup>1</sup> recently presented to the Legislature of New York, had aimed merely to present a most graphic and striking picture of the home conditions under which the mass of wage-workers in the American metropolis live, and how these conditions have come to be what they are, it would have been an invaluable document. Since the family home is the basis upon which our modern civilization rests, and since, with the universal drift toward the cities that characterizes this civilization in the age of steam, it is coming to be more and more an urban home, such a finding of facts regarding the city upon the Western continent that, at the end of its first century, leads all the rest, ought to be instructive. New York is the type of the other great cities. What has happened there will happen elsewhere. Local conditions may differ in New York, Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, or St. Louis, as they differ in London, Glasgow, Paris, Berlin, and Naples, but essentially the same problems have to be solved in them all, in the housing of their crowded populations. It amounts to this, whether or not the readjustment from the old plan to the new, in which the city home is to be the central fact, can be made safely; whether in it *the home* can be protected. If it cannot, then this is but the beginning of far greater changes to come. The state—society itself, as we know it—is not safe. It has had its day and must yield to the forces attacking it. They are irresistible. Within the brief span of one life, most Western peoples have become nations of city-dwellers. The balance of power has passed from the country to the city. And the pace knows no slackening. The change will soon be complete.

Can the readjustment be made safely? Virtually, that is the question the Tenement-House Committee had to answer for America's chief city. It answers that it can, if the community is of a mind to so make it, and will pay the cost. There are sacrifices to be made, obstacles to be overcome. The obstacles are discovered to be

<sup>1</sup>Report of the Tenement-House Committee of 1894, as appointed by legislative authority of the State of New York.